Religious Fundamentalism in Indian Politics

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RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN INDIAN POLITICS

by

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Linda Elder
The Hindu nationalist movement, known as "Hindutva," which originated during the British colonial period in India, manifests itself in Indian politics today in the form of the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.). Its affiliates, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, V.H.P. consisting of Hindu priests and sadhus, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, R.S.S., a paramilitary organization, form the core of this party. As the organized militant arm of Hindutva, the R.S.S. is compared to other religious fundamentalist organizations worldwide, based on characteristics provided by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby in the Fundamentalist Research Project at the University of Chicago.

Since 1977 the B.J.P. has entered the mainstream of Indian politics appealing to Hindu businessmen and there has been a rise in the number of communal riots in northern India during religious festivals and election campaigns. Confidence in the government, especially on the part of minorities, has been eroded by inconsistent responses to such episodes of violence. The costs of maintaining law and order have been an added strain on India’s already overburdened economy. Nevertheless, economic gains have been made and democratic institutions have prevailed despite such anti-secular forces.
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

At the time of my travels through India in the spring and fall of 1993, India was in a state of emergency. There was heavy surveillance at airports and travellers became accustomed to thorough baggage inspections before boarding domestic and international flights. There were strict visa requirements for those entering and exiting the country. Military checkpoints and police were a common sight on the streets of New Delhi, India's capital. Inspection of purses and bags before entering hotels and other public buildings became a "normal" routine. Southern India was no different than northern India. In Madras there were protest marches and student demonstrations. To assert their regional identity, Tamils painted over or removed signs written in Hindi. People from New Delhi and on south to Madras were fearful that their household servants could not be trusted as news spread through upper and middle class neighborhoods that a revolution might be at hand.

In Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, Christians and Muslims feared the growing presence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.), Hindu religious fundamentalist parties in that city. Through conversations with a Christian Bishop, college president and physician I learned that Hindu temples were being constructed near the homes of non-Hindus as a means of irritating them
and asserting the rights of Hindus to public property.

Upon my arrival at the airport in Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh and former center of Muslim culture, I was struck by the poignancy of the framed messages lining the walls. They read

Communalism is an evil which divides man and fragments society; it goes against our very genius and cultural heritage. It holds a threat to the unity and integrity of our country which must be our foremost concern.

Indira Gandhi

We must cease to be exclusive Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, or Jews. Whilst we may staunchly adhere to our respective faiths, we must be Indians first and Indians last."

Mahatma Gandhi

Today these messages from past leaders are being challenged as India’s secular institutions are tested by fundamentalist politicians. Widespread rioting in various Indian cities after the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh on December 6, 1992 attests to the fact that counter modernist movements are gaining strength and becoming a serious threat to civil society. Terrorist bombings in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Agra and New Delhi shortly thereafter as well as lesser publicized disturbances, including strikes by truckers, teachers, postal and airline personnel became daily occurrences.

On some occasions where fundamentalist organizations were involved, state governments looked the other way, in essence, condoning violence and militancy. The police and state militia were present but failed to intervene to maintain law and order during outbreaks of violence at Ayodhya and Bombay. As a result many
innocent people, Hindus as well as Muslims, lost their lives. In some cases both communities turned against the police and the Indian Army was called in to end the disturbance. Opposition by the Hindu Right and Islamic groups are threatening to destabilize the country's political, economic and social institutions.

The rise in the intensity and frequency of communal violence has been compared to the partition by the Indian media. This analogy was made shortly after bombings at thirteen different business sites in Bombay in the spring of 1993. Partition refers to the period of time (1946-47) when India was divided into the dominions of Pakistan and India just prior to achieving independence from the British. At partition many Muslims fled north into Pakistan while Hindus migrated south into the "new" India. Communal violence broke out in the northern provinces where several thousands of Muslims and Hindus massacred one another.

The increase in the number of communal riots in the 1990s has coincided with the rising popularity of the Bharatiya Janata Party, (B.J.P.) which aims to destroy secularism and change articles in the Indian Constitution which it considers to be harmful to Hindus. Forerunners of the B.J.P. such as the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha were present during the 1920s but they were never a serious threat to Congress Party leadership. However, today the B.J.P. with its affiliates, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (V.H.P.) have amassed a significant middle class following which, in some regions, may threaten existing democratic institutions.

The strength of the B.J.P. as a political organization has been enhanced by its
"silent partner," the R.S.S. which trains its members for militancy and riots. It symbolizes the role of the warrior (Kshatriya) who ruled the Hindu princely states before the Muslim conquests. The other affiliate of the B.J.P., the V.H.P. is composed of Hindu priests and holy men who provide legitimacy to its claims to political power just as the priestly Brahmin caste supplied religious sanctions to Hindu rulers in ages past.

At the time of this author's trip to India in the spring of 1993, the B.J.P./R.S.S./V.H.P merger, also known as the Sangh Parivar, had been banned for six months due to their involvement in the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya. Charges were not brought against leaders of these organizations until after the November election in northern India allowing them time to campaign over the summer. During this period of time the B.J.P. agreed to tone down its militant, anti-Muslim rhetoric.

This was a period of uncertainty, especially after the bombings in Bombay which these right wing parties made use of to promote their own political agenda. When the bombings were linked to activities of the Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (I.S.I.) their arguments that Hindus must be prepared for an Islamic invasion both internal and external, seemed plausible. As fear spread through Hindu neighborhoods from Delhi to Madras, Muslims became potential victims regardless of their economic or social standing. Hindus were urged to believe that Muslim loyalties lay more with Pakistan than India because of their common bonds with fellow Muslims there and in other parts of the world through the Pan-Islamic
brotherhood which transcends national boundaries.

On this author's second trip to India in the fall of 1993, the Kashmir issue which has been unsettled since 1947, flared up again. Muslim militants took over a mosque in Srinigar, Kashmir and held several worshippers inside hostage. The Indian Army was sent in to surround the mosque and protect civilians from the militants. The Kashmir issue remains unsettled because India is determined to hold on to this Muslim majority state. Civil unrest in the Kashmir Valley is considered by the Indian government to be backed and supported militarily by Pakistan. Indian hegemony in that region is continually being challenged by Islamic organizations such as the Hizbul Mujahideen and Jamaat-i-Islami which have military training and armed weapons.

Both Islamic and Hindu fundamentalist organizations in India engage in extremist methods to bring about political change. At the same time, both benefit from the democratic political climate in India which tolerates their activities. Ironically, their goals to achieve theocratic rule would suppress those very freedoms which have allowed them to flourish. Hindu and Islamic fundamentalists oppose the secular state and aim to dictate rules and regulations for the public and private lives of citizens under an authoritarian model. While these organizations have not been serious political contenders in the past, activities in the 1990s indicate a possible turn of events.
CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION

The Research Problem and Its Relevance

The prevalence of religious fundamentalist groups as a world-wide phenomenon is evident as the twentieth century comes to a close. From Northern Ireland, to the Middle East, to the former Yugoslavia, to South Asia, religious fundamentalism has gained support among people who feel disenfranchised. A rise in Islamic fundamentalism has been marked especially since the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf War of 1992. The Hamas and Jihad, Islamic terrorist organizations in the Middle East, have interfered significantly in the peace negotiations between Israel and its neighbors. In the United States as well, the Christian Coalition is once again emerging with promises to "sweep the nation like a tsunami in the 1996 election campaign," though its specific agenda has not been made clear (National Public Radio, October 18, 1994). While many of these fundamentalist groups were associated with "nationalism" and nation-building during the early 1950s, their influence today has often been counterproductive for achieving democratic goals. Fundamentalist organizations have the potential to play a unifying as well as a divisive role in national and international politics. The path chosen has far-reaching consequences for nations and societies on a global level.
Fundamentalism promotes a "counter-culture" which is resistant to change and modernizing forces in society. Although it uses religious themes and rituals, it does not support conventional religious world views. Rather, it resists mainstream opinions and the dominant theology within its own religious institutions and community. It expresses the views of a discontented minority seeking a return to a traditional lifestyle which was felt to be secure and safe.

Some religious fundamentalist groups contribute to communalism, an ideology which recognizes the religious community as a political group committed to protecting and promoting social and cultural values. The term communal also refers to the "tendency of a socio-economic, religious group to attempt to maximize its economic, social and political strength at the expense of other groups" (Smith, D., 1966, p. 23). In the Indian context communalism can refer either to rivalries between two different religious groups (Muslims versus Hindus) or between two different sects within the same religion (Sunni versus Shiite Muslims) or among Hindus of different caste origins.

As the term communalism is used in India today, it "refers to the functioning of religious communities, or organizations which claim to represent them, in a way that is considered detrimental to the interests of other groups or of the nation as a whole" . . . and it "usually implies some kind of political involvement" (Smith, D., 1966, p. 454). Communalist groups have "a vested interest in conflict, both internal and international, and there is a natural temptation to create it, if it does not appear spontaneously" (Smith, D., 1966, p. 477).
This thesis focuses on Hindu-Muslim tensions in India and the growing popularity of religious fundamentalist organizations. Fundamentalists in India have a disdain for secularism and democratic ideals that are embedded in the constitution. They see some constitutional measures as contradictory to their personal religious codes and customs. They oppose uniform civil code laws, bureaucracies and court systems based on Western concepts such as the "rule of law." The outspoken assertiveness and growing popularity of Hindu fundamentalists is seen in the emergence and development of the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) and its affiliates, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (V.H.P.), which have formed an alliance referred to as the "Hindutva movement." In 1990 the B.J.P. won elections in five north Indian states, its popularity based on an appeal to a Hindu form of nationalism which called for Hindus to assert a new self-identity by creating a Hindu Rashtra (State).

Characteristics of religious fundamentalist organizations, as presented by the Fundamentalist Research Project at the University of Chicago, are applied to descriptions of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) in India in this thesis. These features, which were noted to be present cross-culturally among a variety of religious communities, are used as a guideline and source of comparison. More attention will be given to the R.S.S. than other organizations of the Hindu Right because it is the only branch of the Hindutva coalition which fits the "fundamentalist" definition as identified in the Chicago studies. As the most militant wing of the Hindu Right, the R.S.S. associates itself with communal riots and takes pride in
being prepared to defend Hindu interests. Members, leaders, and followers of the R.S.S. and its affiliates who find the fundamentalist message appealing will be addressed in this thesis. The ideology and goals of the R.S.S., activities which it engages in, and its impact on India's political development are discussed. Justifications given by R.S.S. leaders for resorting to violence and the modes which they use to disrupt government functioning are included in this discussion. Resources upon which the R.S.S. depends for funding and the relationship of socio-economic factors to the rising popularity of fundamentalist groups in the Indian context are also mentioned.

Hindu fundamentalism represents a backlash against rapid urbanization, industrialization and other changes which accompany the modernization process. In India's transition from an agrarian to an industrial society, many people have felt alienated and disempowered. Traditional Hindu culture has been buffeted by multiple transitions, which anti-modernists perceive to be destroying the spiritual and social fabric of Indian society. In this thesis the right-wing "Hindutva" movement is viewed as a reaction to Islamic forms of fundamentalism and the establishment of the Muslim League in 1906. The emergence of Hindu communal groups also coincided with the nationalist movement and Hindu revivalism during this period. However, Hindu revivalism actually originated in 1875 with the founding of the Arya Samaj. This Hindu organization was formed in reaction to massive conversions of Hindus to other religions occurring at the time.

Issues relating to India's claims to be a secular state and contradictions in the
constitution which irritate Hindu fundamentalists are included in this study, particularly those which conflict with personal code laws. The relationship of the central government and Congress Party to fundamentalist parties in the past and present is another important dimension of India’s complicated political history. Conflicts among Hindus between liberals and conservatives are noted for causing factionalism within most Indian political parties regardless of their position on the political spectrum. The influence of the Hindu right on India’s domestic policies and international affairs, especially its relationship with Islamic neighbors in the South Asian region, is another variable that cannot be overlooked in this study.

Although Muslims are a minority religious community in India, their presence in that society is significant. India has the largest Muslim population of any nation in the world. Nearly 120 million Indian citizens are Muslims, but they represent only 13 percent of the total population. Threats from Pakistan trigger Hindu nationalist sentiments and cause defensive postures. The Hindu Right fosters fears among the Hindu majority of Islamic dominance of the South Asian region now that Pakistan has developed nuclear capability. This helps justify its demands for a militant Hindu state and the development of a nuclear defense system in India. The treatment of Muslims in India, particularly in Kashmir, is closely related to India’s relationship with Pakistan. Likewise, internal clashes between Hindus and Muslims in other Indian states are both determined by and predictive of India’s relationship with its Islamic neighbors.

Media attention has placed Srinigar, Bombay, Ayodhya, Madras, and other
major Indian cities as centers of communal violence between Muslim and Hindu communities since December of 1992. While the major focus has been on religious differences, it seems that civil unrest in India is caused by a number of other significant factors. The vast discrepancies between the living conditions of the rich and poor, due to rapid economic development and modernization, have polarized Indian society. Nevertheless, politicians, including Congress leaders, find it preferable to focus the cause of problems on religious minorities rather than to address the needs of the poor and underprivileged.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter III, research data provided by The Fundamentalist Project at the University of Chicago by Martin Marty and others (1993) is used for defining characteristics which are found to be present in religious fundamentalist organizations cross-culturally. Using these common features, comparisons are made between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) of the Hindu Right and definitions of religious fundamentalist groups as offered in the Marty studies. Descriptions of the "Hindutva" movement, in which the R.S.S. plays a major role, and its origins in Hindu revivalism of the 1920s were found in writings by N. Bhattacharya (1993) and G. Pandey (1993). Authors contributing to this subject in the Fundamentalist Project were Gold, Frykenberg, Kumar, Sarkar, Datta, Kapur, Rai, and Jeffrelot (Marty & Appleby, 1993). Conversations with Jains, Hindus, Muslims and Christians while travelling through India in the spring and fall of 1993 augment these readings.
Religious fundamentalism as a phenomenon which emerges within nations under certain social and economic circumstances is discussed in writings by William McNeill and David Rapoport which appear in The Fundamentalist Research Project (Marty & Appleby, 1993) and in speeches of Simon Peres featured in India Today (1993). In Chapter III the same factors which have given rise to the popularity of religious fundamentalist organizations within nations are considered to be related to their appearance as a phenomenon worldwide in the 1990s. Based on research findings of Sandra Gordon (1993) and Sumit Ganguly (1993), specific factors and conditions which contribute to the appeal of such groups are identified. The relationship between resource scarcity and ethno-religious conflicts which impact the political, economic and social stability of a society, are considered using India as an example.

These findings are comparable to those of the Fundamentalist Research Project. Predictions made by Myron Weiner (1962) that severe political and economic instability in India could result if the Indian government continued to use coercive measures to restrain public dissent are relevant to current problems of communal rioting. Legal restraints and military coercion, which have become common practices of the Indian government since the 1950s to control communal riots and opposition parties, conflict with India’s democratic institutions and procedures as written in the constitution.

Descriptions of India as a secular state and the way in which the relationship of religion to politics there differs from that of Western nations are provided by
Donald E. Smith (1963, 1971, 1974) in Chapter IV of this thesis. Factors indigenous to Indian society which contribute to the survival of the secular state concept were found in the writings of Sarvepalli Gopal (1990) and Charles Ryerson (1988). Forces which contribute to India’s progress toward secularism, as well as those which threaten to dismantle it, are discussed by Sumit Ganguly (1962) and Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph (1967). Shri P. N. Joshi represents the Hindu Right and offers justifications for its anti-secular point of view. (His book is not dated.) Problems of religious communalism and the way in which they relate to Indian politics and secularism were reported in Muslim India (1993-94) and the writings of T. N. Madan (1993). This author’s interview with a Muslim scholar provides an opinion on India’s status as a secular state from a middle class Muslim’s point of view. Law and order problems, which exist in regard to the protection of minorities during communal riots since the 1980s and discriminatory practices in the hiring of Muslims on the police force in Uttar Pradesh, a north Indian state, are discussed in N. S. Saksena (1990) and (1993) and Muslim India (1993).

While Hindu organizations denounce secularism, they remain highly critical of the Indian constitution. Chapter V highlights articles in the constitution which fundamentalists and secularists find objectionable, albeit for different reasons. Sources for Muslim arguments that the constitution conflicts with Islamic law and personal codes were J. Esposito (1987), A. Engineer (1992), and W. C. Smith (1957). Articles in The Hindu newspaper represent a conservative Hindu point of view, which claims that the constitutional provisions interfere with age-old customs.
and "religious" laws. M. N. Srinivas (1962) and (1989) describes the Hindu reaction to limitations placed on customary laws. Discriminatory practices toward "untouchables" on the part of higher-caste Hindus, which are rooted in Brahminical law, rarely come before the courts. When they do, the court process often does not uphold "rule of law" as it is known in the West. Complications regarding the language of the constitution with regard to the reservation system and definitions of a Hindu, which designate who may qualify for government assistance, were found in writings of L. Rudolph and S. Rudolph (1967), and D. Smith (1963).

Historical and political events which led up to the formation of present day Hindutva organizations, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, all of which challenge the Congress government, are noted in Chapter VI. These organizations are the offspring of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Arya Samaj and Jana Sangh. Sources on the background of communal disturbances leading up to the creation of the R.S.S. in 1921 are Spear (1961), Bhattacharya (1993), Bandopadhyay and Das (1993), N. Chaudhuri (1951), Pandey (1993), and Gopal (1990). The origin and development of the Jana Sangh and its relationship to political and economic events of the 1960s and 1970s were found in the writings of Graham (1990), Antanova (1979), Baxter (1969), R. Hardgrave, Jr. and Kochanek (1986), Baxter, Y. K. Malik, C. Kennedy and R. Oberst (1987), C. Kim and L. Ziring (1977), and Mehra (1985).

The development of the R.S.S. from its origins in 1921 up to its political activities in 1994 are described in Chapter VII. Sources of information on the R.S.S.
and its affiliates, the B.J.P. and V.H.P., were Gopal (1990), Crossette (1993), Pandey (1993) and Bhattacharya (1993). Background on mass conversions at Meenakshipuram in the 1980s and 1990s and their relationship to the politics of Hindutva are explained by Mujahid (1992). Current activities of the R.S.S. in Indian politics during the 1990s were found in periodicals such as Muslim India, India Today, Frontline, and newspapers such as The Hindu, The Pioneer, The Indian Express, The Independent, and The Times of India. Sources on the activities of the Shiv Sena were D. Padgaonkar (1993), R. Hardgrave (1986), and The Pioneer.

The conclusion, Chapter VIII, is based on the author's thoughts and opinions after a year of research and study, three months of which were spent in India and three months in Sri Lanka. Consideration is given to opinions expressed by Indians in conversations, letters, and reports in the media as of October 1994, which indicate that communal disturbances in India are not over.

The evolutionary roots of ethnocentrism, group conformity and inter-group rivalries help explain the reactions of right wing extremists and fundamentalists (Maxwell, 1990). The breakdown of traditional social groups and cultural identity experienced in the modern urban environment has contributed to feelings of powerlessness and anomie. This has escalated prejudice between diverse groups and, in many cases, civil disobedience has been the result (Raabe & Lipset, 1970).
CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM DEFINED

Negative and positive features of religious fundamentalism as well as characteristics which help to define it are presented in the Fundamentalist Research Project, organized by Martin Marty at the University of Chicago. According to Marty, definitions of religious fundamentalism can be applied cross-culturally to all religious groups including Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist. I have used these definitions where they are comparable, to describe features of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.), a Hindu fundamentalist organization in India.

Positive and Negative Features

Religious fundamentalism can play a positive as well as a negative role as it functions within the nation-state. William H. McNeill comments on the importance of religious fundamentalist groups as a phenomenon with the potential for bringing about positive outcomes in multi-ethnic urban environments during the twenty-first century. He suggests that

all of the world’s higher religions took shape and flourished in the context of urban anomie and only subsequently penetrated the countryside and established roots among the peasannies of the earth. . . . Synagogue, church, mosque and temple all made the anonymity
and uncertainty of urban living more nearly bearable by creating a supportive community of like-minded persons within which individual private lives could attain (or maintain) meaning and value (Marty & Appleby, 1993, Vol. II, p. 564).

McNeill contends that religious groups provided stability in urban societies where it was too overwhelming for individuals to combat the evils of society alone. With the support of fellow believers, one’s personal and private life could be altered, and educational programs reflecting the distinctiveness of one’s particular religious community could be established.

Fundamentalist organizations are not a new phenomenon. They have been particularly successful in societies where extreme social and economic disparities exist. McNeill comments that

since about 700 B.C.E., in urban and civilized societies, where inequitable social relations were always present to offend tender consciences, energetic groups of reformers have persistently and perpetually sought to remake the world along juster, religiously sanctioned lines (Marty & Appleby, Vol. II, 1993, p.561).

Fundamentalist organizations attempt to unify a population along religious lines. This can be an asset or an obstacle to the development of nationalism. In a diverse society such as India, Hindu fundamentalists have tried to unify Hindus, but because there are no common religious texts or scriptures which all Hindus follow, this has been difficult. Since Hindus belong to a variety of sects depending upon their deity of choice (i.e., Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesh, or Hanuman) and practice different customs indigenous to each region, it has been impossible for the Hindu Right to unify all Hindus.
Fundamentalist organizations can be an obstacle to secular and democratic political institutions because they do not value the diverse points of view found in a pluralist society. Security rests in having fewer choices, and this usually translates into intolerance for those whose beliefs differ from one’s own. Fundamentalists view secularists as having no religion rather than being tolerant of all religions. Their attempts to combine the private and public sectors and involve the state in dictating the private affairs of citizens conflict with freedom of choice, which is basic to democracy.

At the same time, fundamentalists play a positive role in upholding and maintaining traditional ethical and moral standards of a society. Inasmuch as they function to support educational institutions, hospitals, libraries and publishing centers (which produce literature) to perpetuate the moral values of society, they have a stabilizing effect on government. Fundamentalists are social reformers and political activists who believe that a comprehensive reordering of all aspects of society—political, social, economic and spiritual—are necessary to fulfill God’s plans on earth. They can be effective as community building agents, particularly in urban areas where rapid mobilization has occurred among those seeking employment. In the unfamiliar urban environment, many experienced a loss of community after being uprooted from close village and kinship ties. Fundamentalist organizations provide a social network which operates like an extended family in urban neighborhoods.

According to the Fundamentalism Project’s findings, fundamentalism has entered a new phase of intense activism since the Persian Gulf War (1991-1992) and
the collapse of the U.S.S.R. The failure of the U.S.S.R. in its attempt to take over Afghanistan seems relevant as well. Rivalries between different religious groups have emerged in nations where authoritarian political institutions have collapsed. In India the collapse of the U.S.S.R. brought about a decline of the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.), even in Kerala where it had been particularly strong among Muslim voters. This has resulted in competition among other political parties trying to "capture" the Muslim vote.

On a visit to India in 1993 Simon Peres was asked why there was a new wave of fundamentalism in the last decade of the twentieth century. He responded that it was not a "new" wave but a protest to improve economic and social conditions. It was a demand for a more equitable distribution of wealth. He said,

The problem arises when some of the rulers try to adopt holiness to fight this protest. When holiness begins, reason stops. . . . True religion does not have to be defended or propagated by guns, bombs and knives. Religion is spread by its messengers, not murderers (India Today, June 15, 1993, p. 23).

Fundamentalism speaks to the masses in many Third World societies where modern industrial economic reforms gave promises of employment in the public and private sectors. Where governments have been unable to meet popular demands, frustrations have been channeled toward efforts outside the system. Regardless of whether the political system has been authoritarian or democratic, fundamentalist groups have gained popularity among citizens where secular governments have not delivered on promises to provide the basic necessities of life (i.e., adequate food, clothing, shelter and jobs).
In comparing militant religious fundamentalist movements, David Rapoport warns that "all major religions have enormous potentialities for creating and directing violence, which is why wars of religion are exceedingly ferocious and difficult to resolve" (Marty, Vol. I, 1991, p. 226). When people fight for the cause justified by religious doctrine, beliefs, or revelation, issues of self-identity emerge, which release the greatest emotions and passions. For this reason religious conflicts are the most difficult to resolve and bring to a compromise. It has also been the case that religious wars have been longer in duration and more costly in the loss of lives than conflicts waged for political or economic reasons. The Fundamentalism Project case studies indicate that "fundamentalists can exploit the violence a religion contains, even when that religion is rarely perceived as having a violent potential" (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p. 226).

Pointing to the failure of secular regimes, fundamentalist political parties such as the B.J.P. have gained widespread appeal among a rising middle class in India, many of whom are educated but unemployed. They appeal to the disaffected, whose expectations have not been met by the Congress government under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, and are ready to claim India for the Hindus to regain their sense of pride and identity. In doing so, their criticism of the state focuses sharply on the need for Hindu unity and Hindu nationalism, using the Muslim as the scapegoat for India's problems. The fight against the state can be kept alive by stressing corruption in government and the "enemy within," the Muslim. In times of resource scarcities, tensions between Muslims and Hindus, especially in large urban centers, have created
a national crisis.

Factors Which Contribute to the Rise of Religious Fundamentalism

Several studies have suggested non-religious factors which contribute to the rising popularity of religious fundamentalist movements in the Third World. The relationship between scarce resources necessary for human survival, combined with large-scale population movements and unchecked population growth have been associated with the rise of ethno-religious conflict. The expansion of political mobilization and participation, along with an increase in literacy among the masses, has raised expectations for employment and true representation. Other factors contributing to ethno-religious conflict include corruption among politicians and government leaders, the decay of political institutions (the Congress Party under Indira Gandhi), and the inability of the government to maintain law and order when communal riots occur.

Using India as an example, the impact of modernization has caused many citizens to become disenchanted with political and economic reforms developed during the last four decades. Following India’s independence, many expected a higher standard of living and better quality of life. Education and employment were considered to be natural outcomes of urban industrial development. However, political elites associated with modernization failed to provide an even distribution of resources and wealth. In fact, many have prospered and the spectrum of the Indian middle class has widened; nonetheless, factors such as continued population growth
and scarcity of resources have mitigated the beneficial effects of modernization.

**Rising Population, Overcrowding and Migration**

Unchecked population growth in India is reflected by the 2.1 percent rate of population increase according to the 1990 census, despite the fact that the rate of fertility fell from 5.3 to 3.9 percent in the 1980s (Gordon, 1992, p. 70). Coupled with this growth rate among India’s indigenous population, which is hard to determine, the migration of people across borders from areas of upheaval has led to overcrowded conditions in large metropolitan centers. Political and economic instability as well as floods and famine in Bangladesh over time have brought an influx of refugees from that country into many Indian cities. Most refugees live in "squatter" settlements, where conditions have become overcrowded and improper sanitation has resulted in public health problems, including the reoccurrence of such diseases as cholera, which had once been wiped out. As people compete for scarce resources (water, food), ethnic disturbances mount, fueled by the Hindu Right in states bordering Bangladesh and in Kashmir, and the Punjab where Hindu-Muslim tensions have been most acute. Resource and population issues have a direct impact on security at local and subnational levels as well (Gordon, 1992, p. 67).

**Resource Scarcity**

The need for adequate water for drinking and irrigation is a vital resource issue in many Indian states. Access to water rights has caused disputes between
states such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, as well as along India’s borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan. Negotiations over the use of the Indus and Brahmaputra Rivers have been ongoing, but decisions in regard to flood control and water access are still not settled. Access to water is naturally related to food supply as rice fields and other staple crops need irrigation because of India’s dry climate and unpredictable rainfall.

Electricity is another resource which has been unevenly distributed among populations in Indian cities; in most villages it is not available. Wood for fuel and heat has also been in short supply, and deforestation has resulted in salination of the soil. Pressures on land as a result of intensified use and deforestation have been even more severe because of the influx of refugees and their livestock in some areas. Discontent over land and forest issues affects central India’s tribal belt particularly.

Rapid Economic Development and Urbanization

Rapid economic development has operated at different rates, with some groups benefitting at the expense of others, aggravating problems of ethnic and regional unrest. Urban areas have profited the most from investments and higher per capita funding to promote industrial development (heavy industry) and for building infrastructures (roads and communication systems). However, the quality of life in India’s densely populated and sprawling cities is less than desirable. Air and water pollution from industrial waste and transportation systems has created health hazards.

The agricultural revolution which led to the consolidation of small tracts of
farmland into larger cooperatives has taken land away from many farmers. As a result, many farmers have migrated to cities, seeking employment in factories. The transition to the urban environment has been difficult. It has created feelings of "anomie" (loss of self-identity and meaning) for some who miss the security and predictability of village life, where rituals and customs set a pattern for their lives. The urban environment presented a sharp contrast to the village where one was known by fellow villagers and bound closely to relatives and kinship ties. Destabilizing conditions such as those mentioned above have contributed to the rising popularity of fundamentalist groups among educated Muslims and Hindus in the Third World. Through membership in communal organizations with others who share a common faith and language, people feel empowered to solve their own problems.

Increased Literacy and Political Awareness Accompanied by Unemployment

Since 1947 educational opportunities for Indian citizens have been expanded. This has increased political awareness among the electorate, but at the same time demands for political participation have risen, placing enormous demands on the government. These expectations have been largely unfulfilled because there are not enough jobs in the public and private sectors combined to meet the employment expectations of such a vast number of educated citizens. India's literacy rate as of 1990 was 48 percent (Gordon, 1992, p.71). Not only are middle and upper class citizens trained and qualified for employment, but a growing number of "backward and scheduled" caste people, formerly referred to as "untouchables," are now
competing in the market place for jobs. It is predicted that India will need to find 109 million new jobs in the next ten years (Gordon, 1992, p. 71). Unemployment affects the landowning castes and classes as well.

Because India has concentrated its educational expenditures on higher education in a drive to develop technological self-sufficiency, there has not been an even distribution of monies into different levels of education. Nor has the nation provided support for non-technological fields of education. As a result, students have gravitated toward fields such as math, engineering, computer and physical sciences, which have become highly competitive because of numerous applicants. Unemployment problems occur due to an overflow of applicants in these fields. Frustrated and unemployed students have been known to play a key role in separatist violence as a result of these conditions.

Expansion of political participation is also related to the rise of ethno-religious conflict. With a higher literacy rate, fair elections, and expansion of the mass media, political awareness has risen at a rapid rate in India. Under Jawarhalal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership, the Congress Party and Indian Nationalist movement changed from an elitist, anglicized movement to a mass-oriented organization which sought to represent all Indians (Ganguly, 1992, p. 90).

Since the 1940s access to the media has shaped political expectations and hastened the process of democracy in India. However, problems occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when the government was not able to fulfill its promises. Various communities were divided in order to cultivate favors among certain groups. Even
then Muslims and "untouchables" still did not feel that they were being represented according to their percentage of the population. Law enforcement was inadequate to protect the rights of citizens when riots occurred. Competition among ethnic groups was advantageous for elites who wanted to keep the status quo. By focusing on the enemy within, they were able to play one ethnic group against the other. While this strategy served to unify the Hindu majority for establishing a nation-state, it also led to a Muslim-Hindu divide. Internal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India, resulting from pre-existing tensions carried over from partition, have deeply affected its relationship with Pakistan. India's treatment of its vast Muslim population today determines the way Hindus are dealt with in Pakistan.

Definitions of Religious Fundamentalist Organizations According to the Fundamentalist Project Research Studies

Organizational Hierarchy: Leaders and Followers

While Muslims have practiced exclusivity for religious reasons, the Hindu caste system has operated for centuries as a mechanism for social exclusiveness among members of the same religion. In setting up new rules for themselves to preserve their "purity," Hindus required others to observe their social code, the Code of Manu, which draws distinctions between Hindus based on the darkness of their skin (varna) and their occupation. A hierarchical system was established whereby priests (Brahmins) were given the highest status. Kshatriya warriors, Vaiyshas, Sudras and other lower castes followed in descending order. Menial workers, called
"untouchables," were outcasts without any caste status.

The attitude of the Hindu Right held that "The Muslims, if they want to stay on in India, must become Indian in dress and manner; adopt our names, our language, our clothes, our food habits. If they wish to live in India, they must learn to live like us" (Pandey, 1993, p. 19). In the ideal theocratic Hindu state minorities would be expected to conform to the religious laws and habits of the majority. Religions which did not originate on Indian soil (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) were considered to be inferior to those which came under the broad title of Hinduism (Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism), as well as different sects of Hinduism as designated in the Indian constitution.

Fundamentalist organizations appeal to populists who seek simple solutions to complex problems. They recruit and train grass-roots leaders, young males who are easy to indoctrinate. Religious idealism appeals to young men, inspiring them to heroism and sacrificial acts for the sake of their community. Working at the local level, they seek constitutional changes. The R.S.S. recruits young, lower middle class, literate males from urban areas who are accustomed to patriarchal family life and authoritarian models of education. Young recruits are preferred because they are more likely to obey authority figures without question. In the urban environment where competition for jobs has risen and free recreational facilities are few, such organizations have become popular. The R.S.S. provides daily activities such as military drills, physical exercises, lessons in history and politics, and social events for building companionship among members. Financial assistance is also provided
when emergencies arise. For recent migrants from rural areas, the organization offers a sense of "family" in the unfamiliar and unpredictable urban setting.

Emerging from a position of powerlessness, the R.S.S. appeals to those who feel victimized. It has reacted to perceptions of Hindus as too tolerant and willing to accommodate other religious groups. It promotes a strident Hinduism ready to defend itself from "foreign invaders." It seeks to liberate and free Hindus from the image of themselves as victims of Moghul oppression and British colonialism.

Leaders of fundamentalist organizations are often authoritarian males who depend on a well-disciplined and dedicated group of full-time members who will train other followers to obey a rigorous socio-moral code. Followers are not permitted to question authority and individualism is suppressed. Leaders in such organizations tend to use authoritarian methods and styles. This is referred to as a "totalitarian impulse" by W. David and R. N. Madan (Marty & Appleby, Vol. III, 1993, p. 824).

Founders of the R.S.S., M. S. Golwalkar and K. B. Hedgewar, were influenced by Adolf Hitler's concept of "cultural nationalism." R.S.S. leaders were also influenced by Hitler's notion of the superiority of the Aryan race promoted by the Nazis. The R.S.S. ideology contains fascist elements in its anti-Muslim themes and activities. As they promote the notion that Aryans are the superior and dominant race in India today, R.S.S. leaders such as Bhau Rao Deoras have been careful to refute the south Indian (Dravidian) notion that the Aryans, who originated from northern India and central Asia, were also "foreign invaders" on Indian soil. This theme was prevalent in South India in the 1930s when the anti-Brahmin Justice Party
and later, the Dravida Kazhagam, emerged in Tamil Nadu.

Fundamentalist leaders claim to have absolute authority in order to gain power over others. Religious texts and codes, believed to be of a divine origin, provide "legitimacy" for their actions. Believing that they are God's chosen instruments, leaders of fundamentalist groups are committed to actions they believe will redeem human history. They respond to current events with a crisis orientation because they believe that the end of time is imminent. They are continually on the alert for signs of danger in their surroundings.

The R.S.S. and Islamic fundamentalist organizations emerged during the period between 1925 and 1945 when Hindu and Islamic religious communities confronted an identity crisis as India's political future was being debated and "nationalism" was being defined. Leadership in the R.S.S. has been controlled by a select core group of individuals with rigid, autocratic personalities. They demand a highly disciplined and regimented life-style filled with strict regulations for trainees. The education of volunteers is crucial and this is usually accomplished through propaganda which is widely distributed among members through printed journals, newspapers, loud speakers and radio to spread their message to people in remote areas. The R.S.S. prints The Organizer, a newspaper which keeps followers informed. Such uses of technology enable them to reach into lower and middle class neighborhoods from which they receive their greatest support.
Readiness for Service and Crisis Situations

Fundamentalist organizations are prepared to mobilize themselves to deal with crisis situations quickly and they meet human needs very well. For example, during the earthquake in Maharashtra in September of 1993, when thousands were buried under their own homes, R.S.S. volunteers quickly responded to help victims before the Indian Army arrived to commence salvage operations (Frontline, October 22, 1993, p. 15). It is quite typical of fundamentalists to offer consistent service to populations displaced or ill-served by modern secular governments (Marty & Appleby, Vol. III, 1993, p. 831).

Fundamentalist movements tend to be well organized and successful in amassing vast resources. In 1981 financial contributions from R.S.S. members alone amounted to over 10 million rupees a year. Members also tend to be careful stewards of resources. The R.S.S. has enjoyed a vast increase in members since 1980 and its financial resources have been plentiful. Since 1981 participants in the R.S.S. have grown to one million with financial contributions from members estimated to be ten million.

Preservation of Sacred Beliefs and Separate Identity

To preserve their personal and social identity fundamentalists set themselves apart from "Others" who are different from them in appearance, dietary habits, dress, language, and customs because they perceive them to be a threat. The "Other" is
seen as an enemy to be resisted psychologically, if not physically. They set up boundaries around themselves for protection and separation. In the private realm, they tend to follow rigid, well-defined behavior codes. They vehemently protect their worldview and personal codes regarding family and personal life, gender, sex roles, and the nurturing and education of children. They are patriarchal in regard to family and gender issues. They concern themselves with issues of the family, intimacy, and the life cycle such as abortion, infanticide, right to life, and prayer in the schools. In some cases appropriate social behavior for women or certain classes or castes is well defined. For example, Brahmins pledge their daughters to a chosen groom prior to the time of puberty and arrange a marriage for them by the age of twelve. Only recently have some Hindus come to recognize the value of educating daughters as men seek educated women as marriage partners.

In their private and personal lives it is very difficult for fundamentalists to seek compromise even when their customs conflict with constitutional law. They prefer to follow divine law rather than civil laws. Today fundamentalist and orthodox Muslims struggle to preserve their personal code laws and the Urdu language which they associate with their religious identity. Conservative and fundamentalist Hindus are now considering a return to some of the Hindu code laws which were abolished when India was ruled by the British Empire. Today moral codes are often used by religious leaders to reinforce their own status and privileges within the community.

Because fundamentalists view the influence of "Others" to be harmful to their
community, they set boundaries around themselves to protect the community of the
faithful. In India's large, urban centers, poor Muslims often settle in separate
mohallas or enclaves to preserve the distinctive quality of their community life.
When communal riots occur neighborhoods are cordoned off to designate Hindu from
Muslim communities. According to a taxi driver interviewed by this author in
Jaipur, neighborhood lines were literally drawn in that city shortly after rioting broke
out in the days following the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya (1992).

They also set themselves apart from others by their distinctive customs,
conduct, and clothing. In India Muslim men and boys wear white skull caps and
white, loose fitting, long shirts (shalwar kameez) while women are often covered
from head to foot with a black veil and cloak (burqa) worn as an outer garment in
public. Wearing the burqa supposedly erases class distinctions among Muslims as
all women are dressed the same. Volunteers in the R.S.S. are trained in a uniform
of khaki shorts and black hats. Women in the Rashtrasevika Samiti, an affiliate of
the R.S.S., wear white saris with a purple border.

Fundamentalists will fight against generalized or specific enemies either inside
or outside the community. They insist on tests of faith and uniformity of belief
among worshippers. They set severe punishments and exclude those whom they
perceive to have broken the rules. In India Muslims are the target of religious
resentment by the Hindu Right which uses the news media to criticize the "secular"
Indian government, the constitution and the Congress Party.

Ironically, fundamentalist organizations, which thrive and prosper in
democratic environments, have no appreciation for the freedom which permits them to operate. As autocratic institutions in their internal functioning, they would create similar political institutions on a broader scale were they to capture enough votes to become the dominant political party. Once in power they would not tolerate pluralism, dialogue or dissension. Fundamentalists do not conform to the actions of others or the ways of the world. This may account for the fact that they seldom, if ever, represent the majority or receive electoral support from the majority even in a Muslim majority state like Pakistan.

In areas of their personal, private lives fundamentalists are quick to respond to constitutional changes and judicial decisions which could affect their religious practices. They aim to protect the personal domain and do so vehemently. While some elements of the Hindu personal code laws were amended under British rule, making practices such as suttee and child marriages illegal, Muslim personal laws remain untouched and valid in the Indian constitution today. Hindus argue that since polygamy is no longer legal for them, it should not be permitted among Muslims either.

Where the Indian government has tried to interfere with the Muslim personal code as it did in 1986 under Rajiv Gandhi in the Shah Bano case, Muslim ulama (religious scholars) brought pressure to bear against it. This resulted in the Supreme Court’s rejection of Shah Bano’s plea for an extension of financial support from her ex-husband. This case antagonized fundamentalist Hindus who felt that the government was showing favoritism to Muslims. When the B.J.P. rose to power in
1991 in northern India, this case gave more credibility to their claims that the Congress government was lenient toward Muslims when it came to legal matters. At this particular time, the B.J.P. and other fundamentalist parties, including the R.S.S. and V.H.P., argued for the adoption of a uniform code law whereby all citizens would be treated equally under the law in civil court cases.

Muslims would consider the prospects of a uniform code law to be extremely threatening to their religious identity. They pledge to resist such a move even though many of their own personal laws are based on feudal practices and have no foundation in The Koran (Engineer, 1992, pp. 4-5). Since Muslim males already feel pressured as a minority in a Hindu majority state, their last bastion of supremacy is their domicile. While many liberal Muslim men have taken their wives out of purdah, allowing them to appear in public without the veil, traditional Muslims continue to "protect" their wives, keeping them close to the home and untempted by evil forces in the outside world. From a traditional Muslim’s point of view "an unveiled woman is essentially naked" (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p. 8).

Fundamentalists are opposed to the feminist position. Their thinking tends to be pre-modern as they "react with great negative emotion to women’s liberation and their unmistakable hysteria must be seen as central to a true believer’s fanaticism" (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p. 8). Keeping women in seclusion is an example of how Hindu and Islamic fundamentalists have traditionally controlled females and restricted their access to education. The dowry system, which contributes indirectly to the high rate of female infanticides and bride-burnings each year, is another
example of female exploitation. Among Muslims, males are considered to be equal but females are considered to be the property of males. In Muslim courts the murder of a woman is much less significant than that of a man. A fine may be extracted if a woman is killed, but punishment for killing a man is death.

Even though women’s roles are changing due to urbanization and employment of women has risen, there is strong opposition to women’s liberation among fundamentalists, males and females alike. Lower class Hindu women tend to be anti-feminist and many urbanized Muslim women, who had discarded the burqa (veil) in the past, are now veiling themselves again. It has been reported that many Muslim women in the United Kingdom are also returning to the veil to identify themselves.

Freedom of choice presented by the liberalized Indian economy and mass media has caused some to return to past restrictions for a sense of security. It has been interesting to note that in the Rashtrasevika Samiti, the female wing of the R.S.S., women support each other in collecting needed funds for dowry rather than campaigning against it even though it is an outmoded practice which depreciates the value and status of women (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 42).

Religious intolerance is promoted by Hindu and Islamic fundamentalists. Reports of terrorism, hate mail, and threatening phone calls have created a war of psychological intimidation. It was revealed to me by Dr. Sunil Misra that threatening phone calls were made to the home of his Brahmin relatives in Lucknow prior to their daughter’s marriage to a Muslim. The calls persisted until a prominent family member in Parliament was notified. Soon thereafter, the phone calls ceased (personal
communication, September 16, 1993). Members of the Hindutva movement were suspected because they are known to use intimidation, obscene letters, threats and physical assaults similar to those used by terrorists and insurgents in the Punjab, Kashmir and the Northeast (India Today, September 15, 1993, p. 42). In Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, a Muslim gentleman spoke of an inter-religious marriage of a Muslim to a Hindu which resulted in the death of the bride and groom in a nearby village. The R.S.S. was alleged to be responsible for the killings.

In Bombay the Shiv Sena, (Hindu activists), ransacked the office of the Marathi daily newspaper for carrying stories about corruption in its organization and predicting a change in leadership. Shiv Sena leader and journalist, Bal Thackeray, wrote several articles in the newspaper, "Samnaa" to incite anti-Muslim feelings among Hindus.

Worldview is Anti-Secular and Absolute

Fundamentalists adhere strictly to selected doctrines and texts of their sacred past which provide them with a shield for defending themselves against secular forces (materialism or unbelievers). Ancient sacred texts, (i.e., The Koran, The Bible or Vedic scriptures) are their sources of absolute truth which are to be taken literally. They serve as a guide for living according to one's beliefs. Fundamentalists tend to discount scientific evidence as valid or reliable. Their beliefs are grounded in strongly felt values which are considered to be superior to reason. Fundamentalists are dualistic in their thinking. They view the world in absolute terms: good versus
evil, right versus wrong, true versus false. Limits are clearly defined and no room is left for relativism or doubt. They require total commitment from followers and will not negotiate or compromise with those they consider to be their enemy. Accommodation and dialogue are not welcome or tolerated. Their communal orientation suppresses the will of individuals. Freedom of choice for followers is not a consideration. Due to its intolerance for debate and inability to seek compromises among diverse groups in society, neither the R.S.S. nor its counterpart, the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan or Kashmir, has successfully achieved substantial electoral support from the majority. Demands made by the R.S.S. that Muslims conform to the customs and values of the Hindu majority, as proof of their loyalty and patriotism, are not widely supported by the Indian populace.

Militancy and Martyrdom are Justified as a Means of Fulfilling a Divine Plan

According to Mr. Marty, fundamentalists often see themselves as militants who must fight back, fight for, fight with, fight under or against the corrosive effects of secular life (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, pp. ix-x). They react or fight back when their identity is challenged or threatened. They fight for their worldview with "selective" modern weapons. These may be icons, totems or symbols with ritualistic meaning. The R.S.S. uses symbols such as flags, posters, slogans and songs to promote their cause. The R.S.S., B.J.P. and V.H.P. use the saffron flag to represent a new Hindu form of nationalism separate from that of India's national flag (orange, white and green with a spinning wheel in the center) which has flown since 1947.
(independence). This saffron flag is associated with the historical figure, Shivaji, a popular Hindu ruler who was victorious in battles against Muslim rulers in India. The trident and lotus symbols which appear on B.J.P. banners are associated with creation and life in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Fundamentalist movements tend to go through active and passive cycles adjusting their strategies to fit the political climate. When it is expedient for them to be active in the bargaining process for change, they are ready. At the same time when the political environment is not favorable to their activities they retreat into isolation and lower their profile. Marty and Appleby refers to this as the "politics of withdrawal and resentment." They resent being left out, deprived, displaced, and marginalized.

As activists they propose alternative choices based on their worldviews. They seek to enter the mainstream of political debate and, if hindered, they seek extra political forums for expressing their grievances. Some engage in civil disobedience when other avenues of influence are not available to them. In open, pluralist societies they are able to negotiate and reach compromises within the political system but in authoritarian regimes they either have to ally themselves with the existing order or rebel against it (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p.22).

Their crisis mentality helps them justify extremist positions and actions. They live in constant fear of danger, whether actual or perceived, because they feel oppressed by economic, political and social conditions which have resulted from secularization and modernization.

Ironically, fundamentalists also seek to expand their borders by persuading others to adhere to their codes. Their ultimate goal is to recreate the social and
political order by protecting it from "evil forces." When the political climate is favorable, they are active in expanding their borders to attract outsiders and seek converts zealously. Where a state has been fundamentalist (i.e., Iran) or where it has been influenced by the agenda of fundamentalists (i.e., Pakistan), enclaves are encouraged and empowered to spill over from natural boundaries and permeate the larger society (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p. 4). The success of Muslims at converting Hindus in such cities as Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu will be referred to later in this thesis. In Hinduism proselytism and conversion had never been practiced prior to the 1900s. According to ancient Hindu practices one was born a Hindu and remained one for life. After British rule, prescribed rituals for such practices were designed as a means of retrieving Hindus who had converted to other faiths.

Fundamentalists believe in submission of all aspects of life to the divine will and this enables them to prove their faithfulness and devotion. In a battle against "Others," they believe they will be saved or sent to heaven. Dying for one's faith is justified and martyrdom is extolled. Some engage in "suicidal missions" to destroy the enemy. However, not all fundamentalists use violence to accomplish their messianic goals; nor are they all terrorists or suicidal. Most prefer to rely on revelation, seeking insight from their dreams. Their passions are easily aroused by slogans and signs which call them to prove their devotion.

Militants within such organizations are often young, obedient and eager to please a charismatic leader. They will readily engage in suicidal missions to prove
their commitment to the faith. Sacrificial acts and martyrdom are central to the development of military discipline in the R.S.S. Bhattacharya provides an example of women's devotion which is used repeatedly to inspire others. He is told that "Bhagat Singh's mother was crying after his death, not because she had lost her son, but because she had no other son to be offered in martyrdom" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 83). Similarly, the daily pre-meal mantra of the Rashtrasevika Samiti is "our limbs and bodies have been nurtured by our motherland and we must give them back to her in her service alone" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 84). The notion of sacrifice is associated with active fighting and the need to protect oneself against the powerful myth of "Muslim lust."

When involved in highly volatile issues which engage them in violence and destruction, such organizations are often banned by governments. The whole organization suffers when members and leaders are arrested. When banned, fundamentalist groups go underground engaging in "cultural" and "spiritual" rather than "political" activities (Pandey, 1993, p. 16). The R.S.S. was banned after Mahatma Gandhi's death because his assassin, Nathuram Gokhale, had been a former member. The Jamaat-Islami-Hind and the Islamic Sevak Sangh which are Islamic fundamentalist groups were banned in December of 1992 along with Hindutva organizations which included the R.S.S., B.J.P., V.H.P. and Shiv Sena, after riots which transpired after the mosque was destroyed at Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

When the ban was lifted in June of 1993 these fundamentalist parties returned to their usual political activities. They lost no time in preparing for the November
1993 elections in north India. Even as early as May, the leader of the banned Islamic Sevak Sangh (I.S.S.) ran as a candidate in Kerala to test out his influence in the Muslim community against the Indian Union Muslim League and Congress candidate. Similarly, the Shiv Sena emerged from being banned to run candidates in the November polls in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi, areas where the B.J.P. expected but failed to achieve a victory.

Preference for a Merger of Religion and Politics

Fundamentalists prefer not to separate religion from politics. They want the state to protect their personal domain. They do not accept a political order that makes a distinction between one's public and private life. In most democratic or parliamentary systems where there is a separation of church and state, fundamentalist and secular parties compete on equal terms in the bargaining process. When there is no constitution to protect a minority religion, such organizations may become oppressive in requiring non-fundamentalists to conform to their customs and beliefs. Even in a secular society they may be instrumental in forcing those in power to move to the right of center on popular issues to gain votes at election time. Pandey notes that "the greatest danger posed by right wing movements is that they suppress all difference of opinion, and the very possibility of debate in the name of 'true' religion, 'authentic' tradition and 'real' nationalism" (Pandey, 1993, p. 16).

An example of this occurred in Gujarat where a Jain woman was killed in August of 1993 for attempting to impose a state ban against cow slaughter. When
she was killed by Muslim butchers, vegetarian Hindus across the state became agitated. After her death, Jains, in association with the B.J.P., mounted pressure on the state government seeking a total ban on cow slaughter. (It was interesting to note that Jains held top positions in the R.S.S. hierarchy in Gujarat.) In a May by-election Jains supported the B.J.P. candidate, as advised by their Jain monk, rather than a fellow Jain running on the Congress ticket.

As the November election drew near, the Chief Minister Chimanbhai Patel (Congress Party) hoping for re-election, wasted no time in passing a state law to protect cows before the polls opened, making Gujarat the seventh state in India to ban cow slaughter. Because the B.J.P. is extremely popular in Gujarat, it was politically expedient for Patel to go along with the emotional Hindu wave on this issue in order to gain votes (India Today, October 31, 1993, p. 32). This example reveals how the Hindu fundamentalist agenda, in this case, cow slaughter, was taken up by a center party for political reasons. The V.H.P. is also active in promoting cow protection. At a showroom near the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya a V.H.P. billboard listed tasks to be accomplished by Hindu youths. One poster read, "It is the religious duty of every Hindu to slaughter those who slaughter cows" (Pandey, 1993, p. 16).

Fundamentalists give sacred events and places new meaning in the context of modern day issues with a charismatic intensity. According to their belief system the destiny of the people lies with those who control the sacred space. Believers want to reconsecrate holy ground and shield it from outside influences. Examples of holy places are Mecca and Medina where Mohammad achieved revelation and where Islam
has its origins. Muslims make a pilgrimage called the "Hajj" to these cities annually as a demonstration of their Muslim identity. When Hindus reclaim temples which they believe have been buried under Christian churches or Muslim mosques, (as they did at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 when they tore down the Babri Mosque), they are taking back "holy" ground which they believe was usurped by non-Hindus. Hindus also make pilgrimages to sacred rivers. The place where rivers join (tirtha) is considered "holy" ground, particularly where the Ganges meets the Yamuna and Saravati Rivers. For Christians, Jerusalem and Vatican City in Rome are "holy" sites and for Sikhs, the Golden Temple at Amritsar is a spiritual center.

Use of Modern Technology and Revised Texts

While most fundamentalists shun modernity in social affairs and claim to reject it, they are enamored with modern technology and use it selectively to their advantage. They use television, radio, telecommunication systems, video-tapes, cassettes, and loud speakers to further their cause, especially in outlying areas where people feel isolated, marginalized and powerless. Broadcasts over television and radio stations have been particularly useful for purposes of evangelism when new converts are sought or attempts at reconversion are made. Muslims utilize modern media to convert low caste Hindus and Dalits to Islam. Hindu fundamentalists use the media to reconvert Hindus who had become Christians, Buddhists Muslims. Even though they use modern devices to achieve their ends, they reject materialism, capitalism and communism which are considered to be products of Western culture.
Censorship of books, films, and works of art, which they perceive to be slanderous of their religious values and customs, is another function performed by religious fundamentalists.

Fundamentalists are inventive in the sense that they construct new fundamentals of religion where they have not existed before. They use myths, religious symbols, and heroes to communicate themes which will enhance the popularity of a favored politician or political party. They retrieve relevant teachings of the past that enable them to reconstruct meanings which can be adapted to modern circumstances. According to Marty and Appleby,

They are selective in retrieving doctrines, beliefs and practices from the sacred past. These are modified and given new expression. The ways they select, present and understand the fundamentals sets them apart from liberal, or moderate or orthodox believers (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p. 5).

For the R.S.S. the concept of the Hindu state was not prescribed in sacred texts or doctrine. Therefore, its leaders M. S. Golwalkar, and now B. R. Deoras, have reinterpreted and revised history and religious texts to create a new Hinduism which is highly politicized. For example, when the B.J.P. took control of five north Indian states in 1991, it revised history textbooks to be used in government schools. The revised versions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics which appear on popular national television today reflect the B.J.P.'s portrayal of mythological deities as heroic leaders to promote Hindu nationalism.

In the recently reconstructed version of the Ramayana, the evil demon, Ravana, is portrayed as a Muslim. In the original version Ravana was a dark-skinned
tribal figure representing the Dravidian south, not a Muslim. The R.S.S. version also projected Lord Ram’s life and character as a national ideal. In this version of the Ramayana, Ram also reappears as the baby Ramlalla at the site of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1949. The miraculous appearance of this baby was intended to give credence to the argument made by the Hindu Right that the site of the mosque was formerly the birthplace of Ram. This revised version was shown frequently during the spring and fall of 1993 on Indian national television. This Ramayana presentation was much more popular in northern India than in the south where Muslim and Hindu tensions have been less intense. While it was intended to unify Hindus of the north and south using Muslims as a scapegoat, its impact in the south was less clear, leaving the success of their campaign there doubtful.
CHAPTER IV

INDIA AS A SECULAR STATE

The concept of the secular state as it has evolved in Asian societies is very different from the version known in the West. The United States represents a secular state which has a strict separation of church and state. In the West a secular state cannot aid any religion or perform any religious functions, but it may opt to aid all religions impartially. Although in India the state provides aid to Hindus, it does not do this for all religious groups. Therefore, India does not fit either model of the secular state. In the U.S. model the government is held responsible for protecting minority groups from majority oppression. At the same time minorities may not impose their will upon the general public or take over public property.

Using Peter Berger's definition, secularization refers to "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols" (Madan, 1991, p. 395). As this definition is applied to Indian political culture, secularism lacks the positive and powerful connotations that it has in the West because religion still plays a central role in the lives of the people of South Asia. Religion identifies their place in society and gives life meaning more than any other social or cultural factor. Muslims, who represent India's largest minority, cling to secularism to protect themselves from the majority. Nevertheless,
they refuse to separate religion from politics claiming that they are not a "secular" people. Muslims as well as other religious groups associate secularism with atheism and materialism in Indian society.

The most significant factor distinguishing Indian secularism from Western forms of secularism has been the interdependent relationship between state and religious institutions which has existed throughout India's political history. The overlap between the two is based on ancient traditions in which the source of legitimacy for political leaders was sanctioned by religious figures. An ideology of secularism is absent and resisted in the South Asian context because religions and cultural traditions there subordinated the power of kings to the authority of priests. While Hinduism kept a distinction between the ruling caste, Kshatriyas, and the Brahmin priestly caste, their roles were interdependent. One could not function without the other. Priests performed sacred rites to legitimize the power of the ruler and preserved spiritual traditions among the people. In exchange the ruler provided warriors to defend the kingdom. He also maintained and supervised the building and renovation of temples as well as encouraged the spiritual development of subjects.

As Hindu states and kingdoms fell into the hands of the Mughals in the mid-1500s, this relationship between the ruler and religious authorities continued. Mughal rulers such as Akbar promoted religious tolerance and syncretism while others (Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb) are remembered for their fanaticism and bigotry. In Islam the ruler holds power as a trust and he is accountable to Allah. When the British government took direct control of India in 1858, they continued this tradition of state
support and maintenance of religious institutions.

While numerous examples of religious tolerance may be found throughout Indian history, historical roots of communal tension are also evident. All major religions of South Asia - Buddhism Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism - require a total commitment on a follower's life. All four traditions make a clear distinction between the "religious" and the "secular." Their exclusive practices reveal both tolerant and intolerant attitudes.

From the viewpoint of many Indians, secularism is a negative strategy in the sense that it puts the state at an equal distance from all religions of the people. Nehru viewed religious institutions as a hindrance to change and progress. As an agnostic, he opposed all forms of organized religion. In 1961 Nehru noted that he could not find a good word in Hindi for "secular" that did not also mean opposed to religion. His definition of the secular state was one which honored all faiths equally and gave them equal opportunities (Madan, 1991, p. 406). However, if Nehru did not use the coercive powers of the state to hasten the process of secularization, neither did he use the ideology of secularism to enhance the power of the state in protecting all religious communities, or in arbitrating their conflicts. Had he set a precedent for the use of force by the state to protect the life and property of citizens, regardless of minority or majority religious status, the Indian government today might be better equipped to deal with communal violence.

Secularism in the Indian context failed to end the divisive forces which resulted in the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. In 1936 Nehru argued that the
communal problem was not based on religious differences but rather on its exploitation by politicians seeking their own ends. Moreover, secularists who deny the importance of religion in society provoke a reaction against secularism in India. Secularists who are insensitive to the role religion plays in Indian life also lack the effective means to confront fundamentalism and religious fanaticism. Ashis Nandy comments on the peculiar double-bind in Indian politics as "the ills of religion have found expression in Indian society but the strengths of it have not been available for checking corruption and violence in public life" (Madan, 1991, p. 408).

On the other hand, militant secular ideology claims that all religions have the right to acquire more and more public space at the cost of other citizens. This sort of tolerance "cannot be extended indefinitely without the claims over public spaces of different religions coming into conflict as they have already done with tragic consequences" (Gopal, 1990, p. 215). This has become a recurring problem for the Indian government.

The irony of the 1950 Indian constitution which set up the framework for a secular state was that it allowed and even encouraged communal divisions in society under the title, "freedom of religion." Citizens were free to profess and practice their religions as well as "propagate" them. It also allowed educational institutions to be set up along communal lines. Not until 1976 in the 44th amendment to the constitution was there a direct reference to secularism.

The key to India's future as a democracy may depend more on its ability to apply force when needed to protect any group, be they members of a majority or
minority (linguistic, ethnic or religious) than upon its commitment to its own version of secularism. Unlike the U.S. Constitution, distinctions between public and private are not clearly spelled out for Indian citizens. While its highly educated political elite defends secularism as a necessary principle in India's parliamentary democracy, they represent only a small minority of the population. At the same time this elite seems unwilling to vigorously enforce laws which have been set in place to protect both majority and minority rights. The power of the state has not been used to protect all religious communities and arbitrate their conflicts.

During the 1960s and 1970s right wing political organizations succeeded in pushing the agenda of the dominant Congress Party to the Right, leaving minority groups fearful and uncertain about their future. These groups continued to gain support among voters during the 1980s and their presence created a serious political threat in the election of 1993 when the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) tried to recapture five north Indian states which it had won in the previous election.

Secularism in India's Past

Diversity and Tolerance Within Hinduism

The foundations for the successful development of a secular state in India may be attributed to several factors. The Hindu state was never exclusively sectarian and it relied on the patronage of various sects and religions. Hinduism has had a long tradition of religious tolerance which supports freedom of conscience and a respect
for diversity. Within Hinduism there are a variety of sects which worship different deities. Religious customs and practices among Hindus also vary from region to region. Hinduism also lacks ecclesiastical organization and centralized authority. In this regard arguments made by the R.S.S. and B.J.P. for a theocratic Hindu state are flawed because there is no one clerical institution or leadership available to replace the secular state in India in the form in which it currently exists.

Religious tolerance within Hinduism is portrayed in epics such as the *Mahabharata*, the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita*, although suggesting that all Hindus follow the rules of the caste of their birth, contains the message that God is accessible to everyone regardless of their social status. Historically, certain strains within Hinduism have tolerated diversity and accepted other religions. Periods of religious syncretism and blending occurred between Hinduism and other religions. Vaishnavite and Saivite singers swept through south and later north India bringing a revival of popular religion and liberation through ecstatic devotion. People were converted away from Buddhism and Jainism but a new form of Hinduism emerged which blended Buddhist and Jain influences. The Brahmo Samaj movement in the 1920s blended Christian concepts of morality and puritanism with Hinduism. Hindu philosophers and educated pundits have over the centuries professed that there are many paths to the divine.

Claiming that Indians have valued secular ideals prior to the Indian nationalist movement, Sarvepalli Gopal writes,
Secularism is more than laws, concessions and special considerations. It is a state of mind, almost an instinctive feeling, such as existed, by and large, for many centuries in India, when Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and followers of other faiths lived side by side in general harmony, whatever the religions of their rulers, adhering to their own practices but influencing each other in architecture, dress, music, food and even in their religious evolution (Gopal, 1990, p. 19-20).

In regard to inter-community relations in modern India mention must also be made that Hindus and Muslims shared their cultural life and social affairs with each other even before the mid 1800s. When they came under British rule that sharing of religious practices, rituals and holy days continued. Muslims of low socioeconomic class participated in Durga Puja and other Hindu festivals. They consulted Hindu almanacs, used vermillion and made joint offerings to village deities before sowing and transplanting rice seeds. One could also hear the "sounds of Muslim shehnai players joining in arti (worship) at Hindu temples" (Gopal, 1990, p. 104). During a cholera epidemic in 1930 "Muslims joined Hindus in great force to worship the goddess Bhawani to induce her to remove the pestilence" (Gopal, 1990, p. 110). To this day Indian Muslims, particularly in rural areas, observe many social customs as a result of living in a Hindu environment even though these customs are definitely not in accordance with Islamic orthodoxy.

According to Gopal, the theory of antagonism promoted by Right wing Hindu parties, which claims that Hindus in medieval society were always unified in the past, serves only to reinforce their prejudices and build upon exclusive Hindu tendencies. He opposes this theory strongly, asserting that the dominant picture of the 17th and
18th centuries was one of cooperation between Hindus and Muslims in cultural life and social affairs (Gopal, 1990, p. 103). Today Muslims and Hindus continue to share religious festivals and cross communal alliances among elites in leadership positions is quite common.

During her visit to Lucknow, U.P. in the spring of 1993, this author observed Hindus visiting Muslim friends for the celebration of Id, a Muslim holy day. This tradition of Hindu religious tolerance enabled India’s diverse religious groups to coexist relatively peacefully for long periods of time prior to British rule and also expedited the imposition of western concepts of the secular state brought to India under foreign rule. However, one cannot deny that there were episodic Muslim-Hindu conflicts and a period during which Buddhism was nearly wiped out. The effacement of many Buddhist statues at religious sites such as the Ellora caves in Aurangabad may be witnessed to this day. In some areas of India where Buddhists are reclaiming rights to temple property, disputes with Hindus over ownership rights have occurred. Many Hindu temples were constructed over Buddhist sites and Buddhist monks seek to reclaim them. Today religious differences, which extremists stress for political reasons create a burden for the Indian government.

**Political Factors Supporting Secularism**

India’s development toward a secular state has been enhanced by a number of factors. Leaders such as Jawarhalal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi were dedicated to the protection of minorities and to non-communal politics in the early formative years
of India's development as a parliamentary democracy. In addition the Congress Party was divided into two factions, the Moderates and Extremists, consisting of Muslims and other minority group members as well as Hindus. The Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah also influenced the move toward secularism. The fact that neither Muslims nor Hindus agreed with one another on religious interpretations or political issues fostered a need for objectivity at government levels in regard to religion. Muslim opinion and leadership was split between both the Muslim League and Congress Party. The Muslim League was part of the Nationalist movement until the latter became linked with Hindu revivalism. When this occurred the Muslim League disassociated itself from the Nationalist movement. As a result the position of moderate Hindus and Muslims within the central government was weakened when issues of minority rights were being formulated.

The presence of a vast influential religious minority in India who rely upon the government to guard and protect their communities lends further support to secularism. The British policy of religious neutrality as well as the introduction of legal and administrative institutions prior to the formation of the Indian constitution contributed to the development of the notion of common citizenship among the Indian people. While the Indian National Congress and the Congress Party have tolerated some communal elements and made concessions to Right and Left wing extremists, for the most part, they have remained faithful to secular values. They have been relatively less communal in orientation and more protective of minority religious groups than the majority parties in other Asian states surrounding them (Smith, D.,
1963, p. 28).

Today Hindus as well as Muslims are divided along lines associated with educational background, some being educated in Muslim or Hindu universities along traditional religious lines as opposed to those who have been educated in secular, westernized schools which teach English, modern sciences and western political thought. Differences in educational background tend to polarize both religious communities into conservative as opposed to liberal camps, which ultimately promote secular outcomes. Intra-religious differences divide Muslims and Hindus as well. Muslims separate into Sunnis and Shiites while Hindus may be Shivaites or Vishnaivites depending on their deity of choice. Moreover, caste differences create frictions among both Hindu and Muslim orders.

The Ambiguities of the Secular State Concept in India

The Caste System

India’s caste system which is a formal social structure setting limits and boundaries of one’s social life are based on Hindu Brahminic codes which conflict with the concept of equality. One is born into a caste and the court system makes distinctions between members of different castes. "Under traditional law, rights, privileges, obligations and duties, property, and even punishments for crimes varied with an individual’s corporate identity" (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p. 279). Brahmins were penalized much less severely for crimes than lower caste members.
The very presence of the hierarchical caste system which designated obligations and
duties and set rigid laws of pollution separating one Hindu from another contradict
the secular state concept of equality. Institutionalized violence against Dalits
(untouchables), tribals and women has existed in Hinduism for centuries (Goriawalla,

Religious intolerance is based on the Shastras (religious texts) which regulate
social behavior, mores and religious rituals. Many of these Hindu social practices
resulted from historical factors. K. M. Panikkar contends that caste and Hindu law
were absorbed into the religious complex and enforced by religious sanctions but
have no religious origin (Smith, D., 1963, p. 29). The Code of Manu segregated
Hindus into castes based on occupation and set strict limits on acceptable behavior
of women and "untouchables." Pollution laws designating which castes were "clean"
and "unclean" by virtue of their occupation have been a source of intercaste rivalry
among Hindus for centuries. For example, restrictions preventing "untouchables"
from entering Hindu temples continue to cause conflicts.

During an interview with Mr. Ismail, a Muslim scholar in Tiruchirapalli,
Tamil Nadu, this author asked, "What does it mean to you to live in a 'secular
state'?" He responded,

There is no hope for equality in India as long as the caste system
prevails. Secularism is a farce where caste exists. If Hindus practice
such inequality among themselves, where is religious freedom and
tolerance? Because the Hindu Vedic law persists, Muslims feel they
have the right to retain their personal code laws as well. (Personal
communication, February 24, 1993)
When asked about Muslims in Canada, England, and the United States who abide by a uniform civil code Mr. Ismail said, "This can happen because there the legal system guarantees everyone the same rights and everyone is treated the same according to the law. In India this is not the case."

Caste Versus Citizenship Loyalties

In India’s underdeveloped economy where resources necessary for survival are in scarce supply, communal loyalties can easily lead to rivalries as groups compete with one another for precious commodities. Loyalties to caste and communal groups have traditionally provided a network for getting needs met and this continues to be the case. People tend to vote for members of their caste and this often cuts across party lines. However, such loyalties conflict with the individual’s identification as an Indian citizen. Problems of the secular state in India today are directly related to the lack of civic consciousness because it is difficult for many Indians to subordinate their caste and community affiliations to their Indian citizenship.

An added dimension to this problem is the identification of economic, social and educational need on the basis of caste groups on the part of the national and state governments. This only serves to perpetuate caste consciousness. The constitution provides for an eventual enactment of a uniform civil code so that all citizens may be treated equally before the law but Muslims and Hindus, especially conservatives in both communities, resist any movement in this direction. India has not yet defined itself clearly as a secular state.
The Congress Party has shown a lack of commitment to secularism in several ways and this has contributed to negative consequences for secularism. Instead of promoting religious tolerance, religiosity was denied a role in Indian public life under Nehru (Ganguly, 1992, p. 102).

Religious ceremonies were forbidden in the public arena and this convinced many in the Hindu community that the state was hostile to their faith. The Jana Sangh Party emerged to focus on the legitimate grievances of the Hindu community and "pseudo-secularism" of the Congress Party. The Jana Sangh harped on the "pampering" of minorities, especially Muslims, by the Congress Party.

Later, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi made "tactical concessions" to particular communities for electoral support (Ganguly, 1992, p. 103). When the B.J.P. (which emerged from the Jana Sangh) gained popular support in north Indian constituencies in the 1980s and 1990s, it challenged the Congress Party in its own territory. The Congress Party made promises to both the Hindu and Muslim communities. At the same time it was not willing to negotiate with Sikhs in the Punjab who had grievances to express.

The Congress Party has been just as guilty of using a communal approach as any other party on several occasions. It often chooses Muslim candidates to run in regions where Muslims are dominant and Brahmin candidates to run where Brahmins predominate. It has been as involved in mixing politics with religion as any other
According to V. Muniaswamy, Commissioner at the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, "It is a well known fact that politicians of all political parties make the most of public appearances going to temple processions to carry chariots of deities on special festival days. This gives them visibility among the people and increases their chances of being elected. Politicians also participate in garlanding and giving alms to temple priests and religious leaders" (Personal communication, March 2, 1993). In his office within the temple grounds, Mr. Muniaswamy had a picture of his favorite politician, the late M. G. Ramchandran of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (A.I.A.D.M.K.) Party, who was popular as a film star before becoming Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

**Law and Order Problems**

Aside from inconsistencies in the framework of India’s constitution, the lack of adequate law enforcement is another factor which contributes to rising inter-caste and ethno-religious conflict. In N. S. Saksena's study of communal violence in Uttar Pradesh, he notes that in the 1970s Muslims were being told by the Muslim League to organize their own self-defense because they could no longer rely upon the government to keep law and order or protect them. They were advised to train themselves in the use of lathis, knives and other weapons for self-defense during riots (Saksena, 1990, p. 111). The emergence of Muslim League branches in Uttar Pradesh was also causing resentment among Hindus who considered that organization
to be responsible for partition in 1947.

Noting the lack of Muslims on the police forces in many cities of U.P. during the 1980s, Saksena looked at areas which had been most affected by communal riots to see if the numbers of Muslims on the police force made a difference. Muslims had criticized the U.P. government for the lack of representation on the police force and the Provincial Armed Constabulary (P.A.C.) Saksena’s findings indicated that the relationship between criminals and politicians creates lawlessness. Police will not enforce the law unless they are backed by politicians in authority. Very few arrests are made or criminals convicted because they have the protection of (are hired by) politicians or Government officials. . . . When the number of Muslim police on the force is low, the number of communal riots are low. When Muslims on the P.A.C. increased from 2 to 4%, U.P. went from 0 to over a dozen major riots in 1986-87. In 1989 there were many communal riots. Hyderabad city police had a high percentage of Muslims and repeated communal riots. . . . While a fair representation for all castes and communities is desirable, it has nothing to do with the effectiveness of the force in dealing with communal riots (Saksena, 1990, pp. 136-137).

While only two percent of Muslims on the P.A.C. were considered as "fair representation" the percentage of Muslims in the state of U.P. at the time Saksena conducted his study was at nearly 13 percent. Saksena’s study does not mention this discrepancy. Discrimination in the hiring of Muslims on police forces in the state of U.P. as reported in Muslim India are presented as in Table 1.

The lack of reported data in 1986-87, 1989-90 and 1992-93 leads one to suspect that no Muslims were selected in those years. In any case there never was a critical mass of Muslims hired and in Muslim areas this could have had a significant impact on the effectiveness of riot control. As long as the number
Table 1

Number of Muslims Trained for Recruitment on the Police Force in Uttar Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Trained</th>
<th>Number Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>N.A. (Not available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Muslim India, July 1993, p. 320)

selected remained negligible as "token" representation, the reverse effect may have resulted. One might expect that the most frustration could occur among Muslims in years when the largest number were trained but very few or none were selected. There appears to be inconclusive evidence to show whether or not a critical mass of Muslims on the police force, especially in Muslim areas, would have actually made a difference in the number of communal riots reported in a given year.

Saksena's study also revealed that one of the chiefs of police in U.P. was given an extension even though he had been known to promote communalism. This officer was later found to be a favorite of the chief minister and a leading light of the V.H.P., organization of priests and sadhus of the Hindu Right. He notes that several Indian Armed Service (I.A.S.) and Indian Police Service (I.P.S.) officers in U.P. had communal attitudes and were involved in corruption.

Saksena concluded that in a secular state one expects that police will deal with lawbreakers in the same manner irregardless of their faith. When the government
does not insist on impartiality among law enforcement officers, the confidence of the
people in their government is undermined. The lack of police protection provided
for Muslims in communal riots in Hyderabad in the 1980s, in Ayodhya in December
of 1992, Bombay in March of 1993, Surat, Kashi and various other cities forced
many to lose their confidence in the government. As a result some communities
formed their own vigilante organizations for self-defense. Some of these
organizations which appeal to fearful Hindus and Muslims are tied to religious
fundamentalist parties which become increasingly popular when communal violence
is widespread.

In Kashmir, where Islamic militants had formerly been unwelcomed by
civilians, they are now being cheered on as "heroes" of the Kashmiri freedom
struggle. In Ayodhya, Bombay, and more recently Bangalore, the number of
educated, middle-class supporters of the B.J.P. are spreading and riots have been so
uncontrollable that the Army’s, Terrorist and Detention (T.A.D.A.) troops have had
to be mobilized. Political stability was at stake in each of these instances because
during riots Hindu and Muslim vigilantes directed their fire not only at each other but
at government troops and police as well.

Sumit Ganguly suggests that Indian secularists will have to address the
following important issues. First, secularism should not mean hostility to any form
of religious expression. Second, the leaders of minority communities will have to
change their strategies for seeking equity and social justice. They should not focus
on religious issues in demanding rights guaranteed in the constitution. Third, if the
secular state ends in India, it would jeopardize India's commitment to democracy. The creation of a Hindu Raj would sever ties between Hindus and other ethno-religious communities in India. As the largest democratic state in South Asia, India has special responsibilities to protect the rights of minorities. Failure to do so would have a disastrous effect on the whole region (Ganguly, 1992, p. 107).
CHAPTER V

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Contradictions and inconsistencies within the Indian constitution have been a source of debate among Hindus, Muslims and other minority groups. At times they have created more problems than they have solved. Nevertheless, the government has found no better means of dealing with minority and majority issues, public versus private interests, or economic disparities. The Freedom of Religion Act, the Untouchability Act, laws dealing with the relationship between religion and the state, and personal code laws are criticized with frequency in the Indian press. Criticisms stem from conservative religious groups (Hindu, Muslim, etc.) as well as ardent secularists who feel that such contradictions need to be addressed if India is going to commit itself to becoming a truly secular state. Some fundamentalist groups actively oppose secularism and aim to end government tolerance of minority points of view. The following Acts and Articles in the constitution have been debated frequently by conservatives, moderates and liberals.

The Reservation Act

The reservation system is an affirmative action measure conceived by the British under pressure from Muslims and untouchables during the early 1900s. Its
purpose was to reduce inequalities and limitations imposed by the caste system upon certain groups. As it appears in the First Amendment Act of the constitution, special "protective discrimination" is allotted to scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes. The Reservation Act provides fees for their education, quotas for government offices, and reserved seats in state legislatures.

The Reservation Act is both inclusive and exclusive. The constitution includes Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs but not Muslims or Christians in its definition of Hindus. A scheduled caste person may be eligible for benefits under the reservation system only if they are a Hindu according to this definition. Therefore "scheduled" caste persons who are not Hindus must convert or reconvert to Hinduism in order to qualify for government benefits. This also contradicts a basic tenet of Hinduism that one must be born a Hindu. Conversion and proselytism were not practiced by Hindus prior to British colonialism. These concepts were introduced with Islam and Christianity in the early 1800s. This Act contradicts Article 15, Section I of the constitution which guarantees non-discrimination on the basis of caste, sex, language or religion in matters of public employment, admission to state educational institutions, voting and representation in legislatures.

The reservation system was originally intended to be a temporary measure. As part of the constitution it has now become a thorn in the side of the government because it has been abused by many and it does not always take into account either need or merit. It also draws more attention to caste and socio-economic differences as agencies sift through records to decide who qualifies. Rather than erasing caste
and class distinctions it has intensified them. The Backward Classes Commission of 1953 listed those sections of the population besides scheduled castes and tribes who qualified as being socially and educationally deprived. Some economically successful and educated scheduled caste members continue to qualify for privileges while poorer, uneducated higher caste members receive no benefits. Resentment has risen among lower middle class Hindus who claim that the government caters to the "creamy layer" who claim to be deprived but who have actually become wealthy and powerful.

Over time the Reservation Act has presented conflicts in the courts with regard to claims made by individual's seeking eligibility. While some members of the "scheduled" caste have become educated and economically comfortable, their claim to "scheduled" caste status continues to work against them socially. Rather than "progressive discrimination," there is really reverse discrimination. Traditional social definitions are used to accomplish modern goals and promote social equality and this has some negative results (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p. 291).

As competition for placement in universities, colleges and government positions becomes intense, middle and low caste Hindus resent the "special concessions" given to scheduled castes who are perceived to be beneath them in social status. Recognizing flaws within the Reservation Act, the government planned to shift the criterion for eligibility from caste to economic need in order to alleviate the need for anyone to identify themselves as "scheduled." However, this policy shift did not eradicate the moral and practical consequences of untouchability. The stigma
persists for anyone seeking access to opportunity and power under the reservation system. Untouchables will continue to "incriminate themselves socially by seeking eligibility and this is a source of alienation and rebellion" (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p. 150).

Under the reservation system as it was introduced by President’s order, "no person professing a religion different from Hinduism could be deemed a member of a scheduled caste" (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p. 146). The courts have upheld this by interpreting caste to mean a sacral order of Hinduism rather than a body of persons bound by social ties. Thus, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians could not qualify even though many keep caste relationships in their communities. The Indian courts have regularly made decisions which have not supported guarantees of freedom of religion. Courts have said that a person who converts from Hinduism loses their caste identity. However, behavior and attitudes recognized by the courts in other contexts contradict such findings (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p. 147).

In 1956, Sikh scheduled castes were recognized as eligible for scheduled caste benefits but Christians, Muslims and Buddhists were not. In 1964, Ambedkar’s Republican Party called for extension of privileges to scheduled caste persons who embraced Buddhism, and Prime Minister Shastri agreed to drop the "Hinduism test" for access to the privileges of backwardness.

Many "untouchables" have used conversion as a form of political protest. Ambedkar led many Harijans to convert to Buddhism in the 1930s and in Tamil Nadu during 1986-87 many Dalits converted to Islam to protest the power of the Brahmin
elite. Mass conversions continue to take place despite the fact that those who participate will no longer qualify for government benefits under the reservation system. For many the desire for equal treatment and social justice seems more important than access to an education and employment in a system that continues to treat them as outcasts.

Today India continues to use scheduled caste status for qualifying under the reservation system. Some have converted or reconverted to Hinduism in order to qualify. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (V.H.P.), has created special rituals for those who wish to re-convert. Others have chosen to reject the reservation system for themselves and their offspring because it has not brought them the social equality they had hoped for. Some under this category have purposely converted to Buddhism or Islam as a means of achieving social acceptance and equality.

Although members of middle and low castes may wish to do away with the reservation system because it has created intense competition for those seeking jobs and higher education, dominant higher classes and castes have used it to their advantage. It has been observed that there is "a pattern of vested interests committed to preserving and even to expanding the boundaries and privileges of ascribed backwardness which conflict with the goal to replace ascriptive with economic criteria for eligibility for privileges" (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967, p. 292).

In reality backward castes represent 52 percent of the total population but only 27 percent reservation is made for them at the federal level. The Mandal Commission points to the caste system as the cause of social backwardness in Indian
society and wants the government to acknowledge this fact. The government response to the Backward Commission Report was that each state government should choose its own criteria for defining backwardness. The government of India prefers to apply economic tests rather than caste to determine who may qualify for government assistance.

Public Franchise: The End of Separate Electorates

Article 325 gives all Indian citizens the right to vote regardless of their religion, caste, race or sex. Separate communal electorates have been abolished on paper. However, some seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and tribes in the House of Parliament and in the Legislative Assembly of every state. In practice representative government still does not operate in many rural villages with the head man of the panchayat raj controlling the vote of the entire village or caste. In some cases caste associations also vote as a block, supporting the candidate who makes the most concessions to their interests. The concept of "one man, one vote" is discussed but not widely practiced because those in power do not want to give it up.

Hindu Religious and Charities Endowments Board

Although the constitution claims to observe neutrality in regard to all religions by claiming no official state religion and it does not give special recognition to the religion of the majority (Hinduism), state interference in Hindu religious affairs is significant. The government appoints a Hindu Religious and Charities Endowment
Board which administers finances at temples and maths (Hindu monastic institutions). These provide an ecclesiastical structure which had been lacking in Hinduism. As a result, the prestige of Hinduism in Indian society has been promoted. There is also a new emphasis placed on social welfare institutions and the revival of temple worship as old temples are restored (Smith, D., 1963, p. 252).

The government also reserves the right to regulate or restrict any economic, financial, political or other secular activities associated with religious practices. Salaries and allowances of Temple and Charity Boards are paid by the government. In return Boards are required to pay an annual contribution back to the government.

As mentioned earlier, many Hindus resent differential treatment and complain about government interference in their temple affairs while mosques, churches, gurdwaras, (Sikh temples) and Buddhist temples are unaffected. The law states that subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to establish institutions for religious and charitable purposes, manage its own affairs in matters of religion, own and acquire property and administer such property according to the law (Smith, D., 1963, p. 135).

This collective freedom of religion in Article 27 assures citizens that they may not be taxed to promote or maintain a particular religion or religious denomination, but taxes benefitting all religions are possible. This contradicts Article 290A which provides for state contributions for the maintenance of Hindu temples and shrines.

The Untouchability Act

Article 17 of the Indian Constitution makes untouchability illegal. The
Untouchability Act of 1955 allows for the free entry of Harijans ("untouchables") to all Hindu temples. Prevention of their entry is punishable by imprisonment or fines. Nevertheless, tensions continue to occur between upper castes and "untouchables" in many regions of India today. In the spring of 1993 The Hindu reported inter-caste tensions between Lingayat Brahmins and scheduled caste Dalits over access to the temple for worship. Lingayats wanted to keep Dalits out of their temple but the court upheld the constitutional rights of Dalits allowing them temple access. Only on certain limited occasions were Lingayats allowed to keep the temple for themselves. (The Hindu, February 28, 1993, p. 8.) The government also does not allow religious communities to excommunicate members under this Act.

The Protection of Places of Worship Act

The Protection of Places of Worship Act (1991) appears in the Indian Penal Code Sections 295-298 making it a crime to injure or defile a place of worship or to disturb a religious assembly even if they are sanctioned by the offender's own religion. The destruction of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya and events leading up to it are an example of the Indian government’s lack of resolve to enforce this Act. When Hindus placed their idols inside the mosque so that Muslims would no longer worship there in 1986, the Supreme Court did not demand that the idols be removed. This led Hindus to believe that they had a right to access the mosque. Delays in the Supreme Court’s decision-making angered both Hindus and Muslims which contributed to the march on the mosque on December 6, 1992.
In the fall of 1993 when Muslim militants laid siege to the Hazratbal Mosque in Srinigar, Kashmir, holding several worshippers hostage, the Indian Army was sent in to surround the mosque. The Indian Army negotiated cautiously with the Muslim militants who eventually surrendered. The Indian Government in this case was careful not to upset Muslim civilians, the militants, or Hindu voters as the siege occurred at a politically sensitive time. Elections were to be held the next month in five north Indian states where the Congress Party had lost to the B.J.P. (Hindu Right) in the previous election.

Customary and Personal Code Laws

For purposes of social welfare and legal reform the Indian government has seen fit to interfere with Hindu customary code laws. Matters of marriage, divorce and adoption have been dealt with in the Supreme Court. Suttee (the burning of Hindu widows on their husband's funeral pyre) and dowry (money and other assets given by a bride's family to her husband at the time of marriage) are illegal according to the Dowry Prohibition Amendment Act in the constitution. Nevertheless, dowry remains a popular custom among most Hindus and even among those of other faiths because it gives one a chance to change their social status. Through marriage and sanscritization (emulation and practice of higher caste life-styles and customs) lower caste people have risen socially. According to M. N. Srinivas, some lower caste men have begun the practice of "bride price" whereby the groom's family pays money to a higher caste bride's family in order to improve their
Srinivas refers to dowry as the "suttee of the twentieth century." While suttee occurs very rarely in India today, the practice of "bride burning" has increased. If a groom's family is not satisfied with the amount of dowry paid by a bride's family, "accidental" injuries have been known to occur which often result in death. A mother-in-law may spill kerosene on her daughter-in-law's saree while she is cooking, setting her body on fire. "Accidental" burns on young women are quite common in city hospitals in Tamil Nadu today, according to physician Dr. R. Vedimanikam. She explained that victims, if they survive, never reveal the true cause of the accident because they do not want to disgrace their husband's family. During times of economic stress there is a greater tendency for people to rely on dowry to make up financial losses or incur profits. Proper investigations into such matters are costly and time consuming. As a result, cases are not pursued with the proper attention by the Indian court system.

The high female infanticide rate in India is also related to dowry practices (Personal communication, February 27, 1993).

The constitution also requires Hindus to practice monogamy and Hindu women have gained rights in regard to owning and inheriting property. However, Muslims are exempt and are allowed to follow their separate Islamic codes as prescribed in the Koran. At the time when the Koran was written men were allowed to take more than one wife because the male population had been drastically reduced due to losses in battle. Today Muslims in India are allowed to practice polygamy and keep separate courts for settling civil disputes which results in decision-making with
a male bias, leaving justice and fairness according to the law unattainable for Muslim women. While some Hindus perceive that Muslims have more children because they practice polygamy, this has not proven to be the case. In actuality very few Muslim men practice polygamy today.

Arguments made by Hindu and Muslim secularists for dispensing with the Muslim personal codes include opposition to instant divorce because of the destabilizing effect it has on families, and to purdah as an inhibiting practice to modernization for women. Hindu fundamentalists oppose polygamy because they claim that it has resulted in a higher birth rate among Muslims. Problems of overpopulation are often blamed on Muslims whom some Hindus claim have many more children. However, population surveys indicate that poverty rather than religious affiliation is the main predictor of high birth rates.

The Shah Bano Court case of 1986 is an example of an attempt on the part of the Indian government to enforce a uniform civil code and treat all citizens equally under the law. Originally, the Supreme Court upheld a Muslim woman’s right to continue to receive financial support from her husband beyond iddah (the three month period allotted to a woman in the Islamic code after being divorced by her husband). However, when pressured by Muslim religious leaders, the government under Rajiv Gandhi reversed the Court’s decision allowing Islamic law to prevail. The Supreme Court’s decision was reversed in order to "appease" Muslims once again, according to Hindu fundamentalists who are now demanding that all Indian citizens be subject to a uniform civil code. The absence of a uniform civil code law weakens India's
claim to be a secular state because there is a difference in how the courts treat individuals based on their religious affiliation.

Indian Muslims object to Article 44 of the constitution which indicates that the state is to take steps to secure a uniform civil code for all citizens. Muslims perceive that a uniform code law would threaten their religious identity since they feel that their personal codes laws, as prescribed in the sharia, come from God and, therefore, must be obeyed. Article 48 of the constitution conflicts with Muslim dietary habits in that it prohibits the slaughter of cows and calves.

According to John Esposito their have been "curtailment of religious rites, like Qurbani (the ritual slaughter of lambs) and Azan (the call to prayers)" (Esposito, 1987, p. 173). There have also been "constraints on construction of mosques, on allotment of land for graveyards; forcible occupation of wakf properties; motivated criticism of Muslim personal law; persistent discrimination in employment; imposition of Hindu culture and the denial of facilities for learning Urdu in government schools; under-enumeration in the census and disenfranchisement in elections; police and administrative harassment, and the governments demand of loyalty" (Esposito, 1987, p. 174). Esposito asserts that the goal of Muslims in India is neither dominance nor separatism but a desire to preserve their identity and to achieve equality in a society that claims to support pluralism.

Laws Regarding Linguistic and Religious Minorities

Several articles in the Indian constitution relate to the rights of linguistic
minorities. Urdu is the lingua franca of Muslims in north India and it has become a salient issue for all Muslims despite the fact that the origins of Hindi and Urdu are basically the same and the vocabulary is very similar. Nevertheless, the script used by each language is different. Urdu is written in a Persian script and Hindi is in the devanagari, a derivative of Sanscrit.

The laws state that every child has a basic right to a primary education using his/her mother tongue and that the mother tongue should be taught even if another language is used for instruction. However, in Uttar Pradesh and other north Indian states Urdu has been taken out of the public schools since the B.J.P. took control of these states in 1991 in an attempt to "Indianize" the Muslim minority by removing language as one source of separate identity.

The Indian constitution provides structure for a full and equal participation of Muslims in public life. However, an enormous gap exists between the constitutional safeguards and their actual implementation. The reality of fair representation for Muslims is not the case. Statistics on Muslim membership in the Lok Sabha indicate that Muslims were underrepresented according to their percentage of the population every year between 1952-1985 except for 1980 when Muslims had 13 percent of the seats. Muslim presence in the less powerful upper house, the Rajya Sabha, has always been proportionately higher than in the lower house, the Lok Sabha (Esposito, 1987, p. 171). It must also be noted that since the adoption of the 1950 constitution, India has had five presidents and two were Muslims. The Congress Party elected Zakir Hussain president in 1967 followed by Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed in 1974.
While Muslims do hold office in national and state legislatures, are appointed to cabinets, and become governors and judges of the Supreme Court and high courts, they are not represented in proportion to their percentage of the population. Prior to independence Muslims had disproportionately higher representation on legislatures due to the separate communal electorate system and reserved seats provided through proportional reservation. Since independence, Muslims can win only by contesting in common constituencies. As a result only Muslims who have a broad based electoral appeal can win office. However, only in Kashmir, West Bengal and Kerala can Muslims win on the strength of the Muslim vote alone. In Kerala the entire Muslim community has been classified as backward and entitled to reservations in education and employment under Article 16 Section IV of the constitution due to the bargaining skills of the Muslim League (Esposito, 1987, p. 165).

In the 1980s and 1990s many Muslims went to the Gulf states in search of employment. From earnings sent home to family and relatives in Kerala they have been able to repair or acquire property, provide education for their children, renovate mosques and revitalize Muslim institutions (Esposito, 1987, p. 164). After partition, Muslims in Kerala were excluded from the police force but in recent years they have been recruited back on an "experimental" basis for dealing with communal violence.

Muslim politicians, press, parties and pressure groups have established some basic issues which are vital to the interests of north Indian Muslims. These include a share of government employment, control of Aligarh Muslim University, preservation of the Urdu language and Muslim personal law. They also request an
end to communal violence. Article 16 states that all minorities shall enjoy equality of opportunity in matters of public employment and underrepresented "backward classes" may have reservations for entry.

Between the 1950s and 1980s Muslims were not employed in government jobs in proportion to their percentage of the population. In 1983, statistics on public sector jobs showed that at lower levels, where there was no organized system of recruitment such as interviews or tests, systematic discrimination was evident. For higher level jobs there appeared to be a lack of qualified Muslim applicants. Young educated Muslims often failed to apply because of earlier low acceptance rates. Job discrimination against Muslims is even more prevalent in the private sector especially in commercial and industrial jobs. Muslim businessmen have great difficulty getting government loans and permits to start up new shops and factories (Esposito, 1987, p. 163).

While the constitution does provide safeguards to minorities, the actual implementation of these laws has not been achieved and Muslims fear being blended into Hindu society to the point of their own extinction. With the rise of Hindu militancy many Muslims fear enforced assimilation, expulsion and even extermination.
CHAPTER VI

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF HINDU FUNDAMENTALIST ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA

Outcomes of British Rule

While communal tensions between Muslims and Hindus were present in the years prior to the British colonial period, Hindu revivalist movements during the early 1900s deepened feelings of animosity between the two communities. Concepts of nationalism and secularism emerged as outcomes of British rule. Possible applications of these concepts in the Indian context became the focus of heated debates within Muslim as well as Hindu circles. British policies in regard to the Muslim minority community were considered to be overly tolerant from a Hindu point of view. At the same time Hindus objected to interference with their code laws regarding marriage, divorce and other personal issues. British legal terms, such as "rule of law," justice, and fairness, conflicted with Hindu customary law which had been practiced unchallenged for centuries. As mentioned previously, secularism, which insists upon a separation of religion from political affairs, was new in the Indian context. Perceival Spear refers to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 as a turning point which ushered in concepts of nationalism and secularism.

That unrest [the Mutiny] was caused by the clash of old and new on the material, ideological, and religious planes. It was a last
passionate protest of the conservative forces in India against the relentless penetration of the West. . . soldiers were torn to distraction between loyalty and affection on the one hand and the belief that their religion and way of life were threatened on the other. The mutiny was the swan song of the old India (Spear, 1961, pp. 260-261).

Hindu revivalism was also a reaction to the colonial experience which brought infrastructural changes to India. Roads, railroads, telegraph lines and industrial development altered the landscape. Cities grew rapidly as people seeking employment migrated from villages. Western culture spread through the establishment of the English system of education, which introduced modern science and technology. Colonialism and the modernization it brought were considered threatening to the social structure of traditional Indian society. Together they loosened loyalties to caste and kinship ties, which were the basis for order and moral accountability in village life.

Hindu revivalism became even more popular in reaction to British policies which allowed Muslims to engage in higher levels of political participation. The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 and the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 were attempts to give Muslims more equal representation in the emerging legislative system. The creation of separate electorates actually favored upper-class Muslim interests, notably older, conservative Muslim landowners, as opposed to those younger Muslim professionals who had allied themselves with the Congress Party. The above-mentioned reforms created an alliance between British colonial administrators and wealthy Muslims, "a marriage of convenience" that combined
political necessity with upper class Muslim interests (Hardy, 1972, p. 157-8). With the separate electorate system, Indian Muslims were elected to provincial and legislative councils by an electoral college consisting of Muslims. Moreover, the Indian Councils Act of 1909 established a disproportionate number of seats on the Imperial Legislative Council for Muslim landowners. By conceding separate electorates, the British provided wealthy and influential Muslims with the political power to isolate their younger opposition (Hardy, 1972, p.167). Thus, it was the Muslim landed elite, nurtured by the British, that articulated Muslim sentiment.

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms introduced the constitutional principle of dyarchy, which led to dual systems of government in the provinces. Indian ministers were permitted to administer subjects of less significance while British officials maintained their control over the central government, making decisions on the important matters of defense and revenue. The dyarchy concept led the Indian National Congress to demand a greater voice in governing the country, as well as more positions in the higher civil service. The Congress cited the introduction of the principle of self-government, but members also argued it did not meet the needs, let alone the growing demands, of the more politically active population.

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 also had its critics. This pact, proposed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was an agreement between leaders of the Muslim League and the Congress Party. It accepted separate Muslim electorates in exchange for Muslim support in opposing British rule. The Pact also provided the younger Muslim professionals with the necessary leverage to compete with their landlord counterparts.
Congress agreed to a percentage of Muslim seats in those provinces where Muslims were in the minority. In Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bombay and Madras, Muslims were given 30, 25, 33 and 15 percent of the Indian positions on the legislative councils. In provinces where Muslims were in the majority (Bengal and Punjab), they received 40 and 50 percent of the votes (Mehra, 1985, pp. 408-409).

During this period of organized Hindu-Muslim cooperation, mass conversions of outcaste Hindus to Buddhism and Islam took place. In Maharashtra alone, a mass conversion of Hindu untouchables to Buddhism took place under the influence of the untouchable leader, B. R. Ambedkar. In East Bengal, low caste Hindus (Namasudras), collaborated with Muslims to oppose the Hindu revival movement championed by the Hindu business and professional elite. Low caste Hindus protested the social injustices inflicted upon them by higher caste Hindus and claimed the Nationalist movement was "a high caste affair which would not bring freedom or democracy to lower caste people" (Bandopadhyay & Das, 1993, p. 155).

Significant numbers of untouchable Hindus converted to Islam as a consequence of their increasing political awareness. The Nationalist movement also aimed to reverse the 1905 partition of Bengal. Needless to say, the combination of British-Muslim rapport, Congress-Muslim League cooperation, and Hindu conversion to Buddhism and Islam, was received in more radical Hindu circles with considerable apprehension. Moreover, more extreme Hindu organizations judged militancy to be their only recourse.
During the early 1900s when caste consciousness among untouchables seeking political and economic advancement was rising, Hindu revivalism was also gaining momentum to counter the anti-Hindu and anti-Brahmin movement. This movement was expressed most forcefully in the Arya Samaj, an organization which promoted Hindu cultural values, i.e., cow protection and the superiority of Sanscritic Hindi as opposed to Moghul Urdu, then prominent in northern India. The Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 in Bombay by a Gujarati Brahmin, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who took an aggressive revivalist approach to achieving a return to Vedic traditions and reliance on early Hindu scriptures. Saraswati’s objective was the recovery and restoration of India’s Aryan past. It should be mentioned that the sanctity of the cow did not have Vedic justifications, but Saraswati’s use of the animal had great symbolic importance (Smith, D., 1963, p. 455).

Arya Samajists believed in one God. They renounced idolatry, child marriage and restrictions of caste. Asserting that all truths were to be found in the Vedas, they rejected Western knowledge and scientific modes of inquiry. The Arya Samaj reacted strongly against the influences of Islam and Christianity and became actively involved in promoting hostilities against Muslims, particularly in the Punjab and United Provinces, where the organization was most successful. According to Robert Hardgrave, Jr., the Arya Samaj contributed to the alienation of the Muslim community in India (Hardgrave, 1970, p. 23).
In a reaction against massive conversions of Hindus to other religions, particularly Buddhism, the Arya Samaj appealed to untouchables with its own counter-conversion scheme, referred to as "shuddhi." This "shuddhi" campaign was intended to reconvert Hindus who had become Christians and Muslims. Through ritual bathing and head shaving, Harijans were "purified" to make them acceptable and "touchable" in the eyes of caste Hindus. Through reconversion to Hinduism, Harijans could reclaim their rights to eligibility under the reservation system for educational and job opportunities. Shuddhi was both a device for countering proselytism by non-Hindus and a strategy for tackling the problems of untouchability.

During this Hindu revivalist period, the Arya Samaj tried to recover pride in the Hindu culture through the practice of religious rituals and traditions. Issues such as cow protection, temple construction and maintenance, as well as conversion, became popular. Religious processions, temple visitations, and public versus private modes of worship came into vogue for the first time. New interpretations and versions of religious myths originally found in the Ramayana and Bhagavad Gita were composed and popularized.

The Partition of Bengal and the Formation of the Hindu Mahasabha

In 1905, the British divided Bengal into two provinces with the intention of achieving greater administrative efficiency. One of these provinces had a majority Muslim population, and hence a Muslim government, the first since the termination of Moghul rule in India in 1859. In 1906 the Muslim League was established as the
sole, genuine representative of the Muslim community. The Hindu Mahasabha began as a protest movement against the partition of Bengal and the formation of the Muslim League. Its founders were Hindu extremists who had little faith in the Congress leadership. The Hindu Mahasabha protested the partition of Bengal through mass street demonstrations and a boycott of British-made goods. Given the emphasis on the utilization of indigenous goods, the boycott won the support of the Bengali political leader, Surendranath Banerjea, and the region’s most renowned poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

Referred to as the "swadeshi movement," the boycott generated mass participation that soon spiralled into civil disobedience, violence, and terror in its aim to promote homemade Indian textiles and the development of cloth mills in India. Moreover, extremist Hindus called upon Kali, their demonic goddess of destruction, for guidance and some practiced ritual murder to demonstrate their resolve (Hardgrave, 1970, p. 27).

The Congress Party was pressured to join with the Mahasabha that was demanding the reunification of Bengal. Moreover, the agitation against Bengal’s partition, and both the swadeshi movement and the boycott of British goods spread through greater India, crystallizing national sentiment and leading many historians to conclude that the end of British rule in India was approaching (Mehra, 1985, p. 88).

Hindu revivalism and the swadeshi movement restored the self-confidence of Hindus, but it also led to communal unrest and increased rioting between Hindus and Muslims. Although originally intended as a movement to unify Hindus in opposition
to British rule, the movement really emphasized anti-Muslim slogans, songs, and literature. Remembering his childhood, the noted Indian Bengali author, Nirad Chaudhuri, recalls that the feelings of Hindus towards Muslims had long been a mixture of hostility, indifference, occasional friendliness, but also concern and contempt (Chaudhuri, 1951, p. 235). According to Chaudhuri, Britain's "divide and rule" policy was not entirely to blame for the rise in communal tensions. He observed that Muslims and Hindus who had tolerated each other earlier, had become less tolerant when issues of modernization and westernization threatened to erode their moral values and customs. Hindus believed the British favored the Muslims by allowing them to retain their personal codes and Islamic sharia courts. They also cited British land grants to Muslims and the imposition of separate electorates. Indeed, upper-class Muslim landowners in the United Provinces were given magisterial powers, that is, judicial powers over civil, revenue, and criminal cases, as well as positions as deputy collectors, often with greater frequency than Hindus. Government educational institutions beckoned to Muslims, who, once trained, could assist the British in tax collection and other administrative functions.

Furthermore, divisions within the Congress between extremists and moderates had weakened the party, and it could no longer claim to represent all (Hindu) constituencies. Congress extremists such as B. G. Tilak of Maharashtra and Aurobindo Ghose of Bengal wanted to return India to its past glory prior to Moghul rule. The Mahasabha's endorsement of the shuddhi conversion campaign also led to opposition within the Congress Party. Congress moderates—G. K. Gokhale, for
one—wanted responsible government within the British parliamentary framework, a position firmly rejected by extremists. In a Congress meeting at Surat in December of 1907, extremists led by B. G. Tilak and A. Ghosh walked out, insisting that violence and political warfare were the best means for achieving narrowly defined Hindu objectives. Given the wave of terrorism provoked by such personalities, the colonial authority was forced to arrest Tilak, but the nationalist cause he represented did not die. Summarizing the events of this period, Mehra writes:

The most celebrated casualty of Bengal’s partition was the unity of the Indian Nationalist Congress. The disagreements over agitational methods in Bengal led to the division of the Congress into two factions—the Moderates and the Extremists... and to the latter’s exclusion from the Congress for a decade thereafter (Mehra, 1985, p. 66).

By 1910 an All India Hindu Mahasabha was organized, but it could not overtake the Indian National Congress, which enjoyed a broader, popular appeal as a national organization. The Hindu Mahasabha, nevertheless, pressed its opposition to separate electorates and raised the demand for a "one-man, one-vote" clause in the Indian constitution. Moreover, to counter the anti-Hindu, anti-Brahmin movement, which was gaining ground in the southern states, the Hindu Mahasabha called for an organization of Hindu self-defense squads made up of disciplined cadres who could unite Hindus and restore Hindu hegemony.

The partition of Bengal was rescinded in 1912, and four political entities emerged to replace the two divided provinces of Bengal. These new states were Orissa and Bihar (originally one administrative unit), Assam, and a united Bengal that
dissolved the Muslim dominant province. But the "reunification" of Bengal only intensified conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, with the Muslim League gaining supporters because Muslims no longer trusted the British, who had yielded to militant Hindu demands (Kim & Ziring, 1977, p. 181).

When the first session of the All Indian Hindu Mahasabha was held in Hardwar in 1914, Hindu leaders gathered to counteract the growing influence of the Muslim League. Members of the Mahasabha could also be members of the Congress Party. In fact, dual membership was encouraged. The Hindu Mahasabha enhanced its position as an adjunct of the Congress Party with a membership which included many nationalist leaders, among them Dr. Keshav B. Hedgewar, who later founded the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and Lajpat Rai, an ardent Indian nationalist.

Religious and Caste-Based Communal Differences Widen

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 represents the only time that the Muslim League and the Congress party shared common views on a future Indian constitution. It specified that Muslims were to be given one-third of the elective seats in any future All-India parliament. At the center, as well as in the provinces, the Muslims were to be granted separate electorates. By its recognition of a separate political identity for Muslims, the Pact may have inadvertently set the stage for a separate Muslim state. But the Pact also drew together moderate and extremist factions within the Congress Party, their common goal being the achievement of self-government. With the Muslim League, the Congress, and the Mahasabha driving in different directions,
the Lucknow Pact failed to unite the communities, and the parties seemed all the more determined to lead their constituents away from consensus. Jinnah blamed Hindu leadership in the Congress party for breaking the agreement, and this response resulted in the further deterioration of relationships between Hindus and Muslims (Kim & Ziring, 1977, p. 182).

The Moplah Rebellion in Malabar in 1921, in which landless tenants revolted against wealthy Hindu landlords, police forces and government troops represented the first intense and widespread episode of open defiance of British authority. Although it was not seen as a communal disturbance in the beginning, the Moplah Rebellion was provoked by what was perceived as forced conversion of some 2500 Hindus to Islam. The rebellion sparked large-scale looting and destruction of Muslim property which met with a harsh British reaction (Mehra, 1985, p. 463). Thousands of rebels were killed, wounded, or captured, and a large number of prisoners died of suffocation when packed into a closed train.

During the early 1920s Arya Samaj leader, Swami Shraddhananda, worked on the Congress Working Committee to devise a program to help untouchables. Although an advocate of the Hindu conversion movement, he also regarded untouchability as a curse upon the Hindu religion. He worked for the inclusion of the downtrodden to help them gain their full religious and social rights. But, despite his attempts to persuade the Congress to abolish untouchability, his efforts were in vain. When he was replaced on the sub-committee for the welfare of untouchables by an orthodox Brahmin, Shraddhananda saw his ideas for the poor dropped and he
resigned from the Congress party in protest. When another of his proposals was rejected by the Congress in 1922, the work for the advancement of untouchables was turned over to the Hindu Mahasabha (Bandopadhyay & Das, 1993, p. 124).

The program for providing welfare to the depressed classes did not lack funds for implementation. According to Bandopadhyay and Das, grants were received from a number of organizations for improving the conditions of untouchables, but they were never spent by Congress for the purpose intended. In December of 1922, Congress reported that "nothing could be done as no substitute for Swami Shraddhananda could be found" (Bandopadhyay & Das, 1993, p. 125). In 1926 Shraddhananda was murdered, allegedly by a Muslim because of his aggressive efforts to reconvert "lost" Hindus. His death has been regarded as instrumental in strengthening separatist tendencies among untouchables in India.

The communal riots which occurred in Calcutta, Delhi, and Lucknow in 1924 represent the Muslim reaction to the Hindu shuddhi conversion campaign. Moreover, the more active and organized Muslims motivated a number of Hindu Congressmen to join forces with the Mahasabha. The sporadic riots and continuing Muslim efforts at conversion only enhanced the growth of communal organizations. Furthermore, the rising sense of class and caste consciousness among untouchables, increased the pressure on the orthodox Hindu community and even the Congress government opted to exploit anti-Muslim feelings as a means to deterring class-caste warfare.
Hindu Militancy Emerges in the Mahasabha

Political developments in the 1920s and 1930s contributed further to Hindu-Muslim rivalries. In 1925, following the non-cooperation movement, Keshav Hedgewar and other members of the Hindu Mahasabha opposed Gandhi’s ideology of non-violent resistance. It was they who created the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. During this same period, other militant Hindu groups, such as the Hindustan National Guard and Hindu Rashtra Dal, also emerged, ostensibly to protect Hindus.

The Communal Award of 1932, announced by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, reiterated the right of Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans to vote in separate electorates. Voters who did not belong to any of these communities voted in a "general" constituency. Depressed classes voted both in separate special constituencies and in the general constituency. In Bengal, Muslims were given 48.4 percent seats while Hindus obtained 39.2 percent; in the Punjab, Sikhs were given 18.8 percent while Hindus were allowed 27 percent (Mehra, 1985, p. 147). This Communal Award led to disagreements within the Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, but the provision regarding the depressed classes caused the greatest controversy. Gandhi, who was in prison at the time, announced a fast unto death if the Communal Award was not altered. The Hindu Mahasabha however, opposed the Award altogether, claiming the British favored the Muslims. The Mahasabha insisted communal representation and separate electorates were nothing more than "divide and rule" measures. It was not until 1937 and following
mounting Mahasabha-led opposition, that the Congress took a stand firmly against the Communal Award, claiming it was anti-national and anti-democratic.

By 1937 the Mahasabha was advocating nothing less than independence for India. A leader of the Mahasabha, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, became its president even though he had been forced to leave the country. While in exile, he wrote Hindutva, a text upon which the contemporary Hindutva movement is based. In this work Savarkar describes a Hindu as one who regards India as his Fatherland and holyland. In the context of the Hindu Mahasabha this meant that Muslims and Christians could never be regarded as full citizens in a future Hindu raj (state).

Thus, after 1938 the Mahasabha became increasingly more aggressive. It trained young men in the use of firearms and it organized them into a corps called the Hindu Militia. This Hindu Militia was linked with the R.S.S. and together they became the militant arm of the Mahasabha.

Close ties between the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. united them in a common destiny. When the Quit India movement failed, i.e., the movement to oust the British, and many Congress leaders were arrested, membership in the R.S.S. (founded in 1925) and Mahasabha grew more rapidly. But while the Hindu Mahasabha supported the shuddhi campaign, it opposed the partition of British India and defiantly rejected the creation of an independent Muslim dominated Pakistan. The Mahasabha declared it stood for the unity and integrity of India's ancient borders and would not tolerate a truncated state. [Even today members of the Hindu Mahasabha insist "there will never be peace unless the separated areas are brought
back into the Indian Union and made its integral parts" (Baxter, 1969, 24).] The Mahasabha did not participate in the 1946 Cabinet Mission deliberations and it was not included in the discussions leading up to India’s independence. After the partition was announced by Lord Mountbatten in 1947, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, a Bengali Mahasabha leader, repeated the Mahasabha threat that Hindus would never accept partition.

Resistance to Hindu Militancy

Mahatma Gandhi’s role in the partition of India enraged extremists within the Mahasabha and R.S.S., and in 1948 he was assassinated by Nathuram Godse, a Chitpawan Brahmin, and former member of the R.S.S. Nevertheless, the R.S.S. was banned by the new Indian government and members of the militant organization as well as the Hindu Mahasabha were held under the Preventive Detention Act. Godse had joined the R.S.S. in 1930, but had broken with it four years later because it was reluctant to take a more violent stand.

This event turned opinion against the communalists, notably the Mahasabha and the R.S.S., but especially the Chitpawan Brahmin community of Maharashtra (Baxter, 1969, p. 41). But although the government outlawed the R.S.S., and arrested 20,000 R.S.S. workers, the available evidence never directly connected the organization with Gandhi’s murder (Baxter, 1969, p. 42).

The R.S.S. leader, Madhavrao Sadashiv Golwalkar wrote several letters to Nehru and Sardar Patel, pleading for the evidence against him and his organization.
When the government found its case weak, he and most of his followers were released to continue their political activities. By this time the consequences of partition impacted on India with a vengeance. Millions of Hindu refugees fled Pakistan and sought refuge in Bharat (India). Golwalkar ordered all R.S.S. members to defy the ban and resume their meetings. Under pressure, the Congress government lifted the ban on the R.S.S., but the Congress government never formally acknowledged the organization's bona fides. The R.S.S. had agreed to stay out of the political arena, but a new right wing party, the Jana Sangh, opened its ranks to R.S.S. members. Moreover, it was the Jana Sangh that gave the R.S.S. new respectability and enabled some of its members to run for political office.

The Hindu Mahasabha had declined in popularity following Gandhi's assassination. Shortly thereafter, the Mahasabha Working Committee voted to suspend its political activities and concentrate its efforts on service, relief and the rehabilitation of refugees. The party was also split by a controversy between president, L. B. Bhopatkar and S. P. Mookerjee (Baxter, 1969, p. 65). Mookerjee wanted "to see the party drop its communal membership requirement and open its rolls to members of all communities" (Baxter, 1969, p. 26). He proposed that the party "'consider among other things whether the membership' should be 'thrown open to all citizens irrespective of caste or religion'" (Baxter, 1969, p. 26). When his proposal was rejected, he resigned and took many of his supporters with him.

As a central government minister between 1947 to 1950, Mookerjee opposed Nehru's softer policies and threw his weight to Patel, who pressed the immediate
integration of the Indian princely states. He was most forceful in demanding the "police action" against the state of Hyderabad, which a Muslim ruler sought to sustain as an independent entity. In spite of his success in this effort, Mookerjee resigned from the Nehru Cabinet when a deal was arranged with Pakistan that voided extra-territorial claims for the protection of minorities in the other country. Mookerjee felt that this Liaquat-Nehru Pact 'violated' the pledge to the Hindus of East Bengal "that they would not be deserted if the Pakistan government denied them the full rights of citizenship" (Baxter, 1969, p. 66). It was Mookerjee's resignation that led to the founding of the Jana Sangh.

The Jana Sangh

In the 1952 election Mookerjee announced the official formation of the Jana Sangh, (People's Party). The ideology of the Jana Sangh stressed Indian unity, nationalism, and the reintegration of the territory that was now Pakistan. The R.S.S. immediately threw its support to the new Hindu party and became an essential component of the organization. The two organizations complemented one another, each providing the other with the range it could not develop alone. The Jana Sangh's objectives centered on rebuilding India as a modern, democratic society, free of all foreign cultural influences. Toward this end, the party adopted four fundamentals: "one country, one culture, one nation, and the rule of law."

Mookerjee set up a program that especially appealed to Bengalis in Calcutta, as well as the Hindus of Jammu and Kashmir, and in the 1952 election, the Jana
Sangh relied upon the R.S.S. for its grassroots support. The R.S.S. thus became the backbone of the Jana Sangh. Urban-based Hindus also supported the Jana Sangh and the party won four seats in the national Parliament and more than two score seats in the state legislatures. Although a minor party in relation to the Congress, the Jana Sangh drew support from disgruntled urban shopkeepers, small traders, members of the intelligentsia, some rich peasants and not a small number of middle class city dwellers. Businessmen from the Bania caste, wealthy Brahmins, and Rajputs became noted followers of the conservative party.

Following the 1952 election, Mookerjee showed respect for the rule of law, the constitution, and parliamentary democratic institutions. Compared with the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jana Sangh developed a more moderate stance and chose to concentrate on the unity of the Indian nation. Mookerjee’s call was for the creation of a united Indian state rather than an exclusive Hindu state and he seemed to welcome non-Hindus and Harijans into the party. While suspicious of both Pakistan and China, he postured an open pragmatic style that even irritated his followers who were more accustomed to rigid authoritarian leadership. Those especially disturbed were members of the R.S.S. who continued to emphasize Hinduism as the sole basis for Indian citizenship. For Mookerjee, however, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism were all included in the "Bharatiya" (Indian) culture because they were religions originating on Indian soil. Mookerjee’s Jana Sangh also advocated abolishing untouchability and the caste system; it supported a unitary government and a strong center; it advocated Hindi as the national language, and it called for a strong military
defense system that would make India the dominant power in South Asia.

Mookerjee played a role in encouraging the Congress party to try socialist economic policies and to enlarge industry in the public sector. Being highly regarded by the more moderate members of the Jana Sangh, Mookerjee curbed the more impulsive R.S.S. workers he had recruited to work with him. Had he not died in 1953, he might have brought the Jana Sangh toward the mainstream and into a broad-based alliance with the other national democratic parties. However, as B. Graham comments, "in the states and districts the organization was firmly in the hands of R.S.S. men and the strength and durability of their networks of supporters gave them an important advantage over rival groupings within the party" (Graham, 1990, p. 56). Mookerjee sustained the uneasy equilibrium between the R.S.S. and non-R.S.S. factions in the party, but his death produced a period of in-fighting which changed the party markedly.

After Mookerjee’s death, the new leaders favored stronger organizational discipline, closer ties with the R.S.S., and a more militant expression of Hindu nationalism. These new leaders isolated the party and the Jana Sangh no longer appealed to moderate Hindus, nor could it claim to represent those groups opposed to the Congress Party’s economic policies (Graham, 1990, p. 255).

Mookerjee’s successor, Mauli Chandra Sharma, became acting president and agreed to a merger with the Hindu Mahasabha as long as the latter accepted Jana Sangh’s policies. But when the R.S.S. faction rebelled against Sharma he was forced to resign. The assumption of the presidency by Prem Nath Dogra brought in other
defections, leaving the R.S.S. faction with no one to challenge their position. The Jana Sangh developed into a monolithic, highly centralized organization, demanding absolute discipline and blind obedience from its remaining members (Baxter, Malik, Kennedy & Oberst, 1987, p. 154).

In the 1957 election the R.S.S.-dominated Jana Sangh argued for repeal of the Preventive Detention Act, it endorsed union membership for industrial workers, an end to untouchability and casteism, and it supported the Niyogi Commission Report, which restricted the activities of foreign missionaries. It also called for the "nationalizing" of all non-Hindus, an objective that was never clearly spelled out. According to this new Jana Sangh doctrine, Muslims could worship the Islamic way but they were expected to live the "Indian" way.

After the 1957 election the Jana Sangh was almost exclusively identified with the north Indian Hindi-speaking area and its urban middle class. It was a strong anti-communist party, active during the early 1950s in defending the country against communist influence. The Jana Sangh also wanted to make Hindi the national language of India, and it argued for the elimination of the English language. As the only communal party to gain the necessary three percent of the popular vote, the Jana Sangh retained its status as a national party (Smith, D., 1963, p. 474).

Jana Sangh policies promoting Hindi as India’s national language were not well received in the South, where regional loyalties and languages were exceptionally strong. The Jana Sangh’s championing of high caste Brahmins also disturbed the Dravidian Hindu population and it made little headway in states like Tamil Nadu.
The party tried to overcome these problems by posing as the champion of "true nationalism" and by appealing to the poor and illiterate masses. Indeed, caste conflicts between the rural poor and landlords, as well as class struggles among the working class in urban areas, were on the rise and had contributed to a polarization of political forces. The Jana Sangh anticipated exploiting these conflicts at the polls and in the 1962 election, it formed a coalition that surprisingly won 13.2 percent of the votes (Smith, 1963, p. 472-3).

By 1967 the Jana Sangh had learned the importance of alliances and it joined with the Swatantra Party, a moderate secular party. Success in this election was also due to the fact that the Jana Sangh avoided the Hindu communal parties, received considerable financial support and offered a reasonably moderate platform. The alliance also allowed the Jana Sangh to extend its influence in the rural as well as urban areas of the south. Of the 268 seats won by the Jana Sangh, however, only 32 were from outside the Hindi-speaking northern areas. Nevertheless, as a result of its alliance with the Swatantra Party, the Jana Sangh became the second largest party in India and in the Lok Sabha, the Jana Sangh was third, just behind the Swatantra Party (Baxter, 1969, p. 289).

The significance of Jana Sangh success was underlined by the failure of the Congress Party, which lost in nine of India's seventeen states. These nine states represented three-fifths of the total Indian population, and all of them opted for coalition governments controlled by right wing parties. The Hindi-speaking states of the north, where urban votes were more numerous than rural votes, were most
important to the Jana Sangh. In urban seats nation-wide, voters gave the Jana Sangh
34.32 percent of the vote (Baxter, 1969, p. 289). Its support among rural voters rose
to 5.62 percent, as compared to 3.69 percent in the 1962 election. Together the
Jana-Sangh-Swatantra alliance won 33.79 percent of the votes and 70 seats, while
Congress took 41.42 percent and 89 seats nationally (Baxter, 1969, p. 282). For the
first time in India’s history the Congress Party faced strong opposition in the
Parliament. It was even more significant in that Congress control had been broken
in the Punjab, Rajasthan, U.P., Bihar, and West Bengal.

The Jana Sangh reached a peak as an electoral force in 1967, and its power
quickly waned when its coalition with Swatantra broke down. In states such as U.P.,
Bihar, and Gujarat, the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party ran opposing candidates and
they suffered the consequences. Votes were split between them, leaving the Congress
to capture the prize. To the detriment of both parties, they opposed each other in
403 state assembly contests and 74 Lok Sabha contests. Baxter suggests that the two
parties "might" have come closer to winning a majority if they had maintained a
united front. Their marriage of convenience, however, proved ephemeral.
Moreover, their open competition ultimately defeated their purpose and allowed the
Congress to regroup and reassert its dominance.

The Jana Sangh’s party manifesto remained relatively consistent. It
emphasized regaining land lost to Pakistan and China; the decentralization of
political power; the repeal of the Defense of India Rules (emergency measures); the
prohibition of cow slaughter; the implementation of micro-economic planning to
balance development opportunities among the broader population; and the development of an independent foreign policy. But factionalism within the Jana Sangh caused major problems for the party during this period. Numerous communal riots over language issues (Hindi vs. Urdu) were increasing. Suspicions of R.S.S. involvement in these riots led to questions about the Jana Sangh’s association with the R.S.S.

Taunts of R.S.S. infiltration into the education, local government and cooperative departments were openly leveled at the Jana Sangh by its coalition partners. Within the Jana Sangh the old question of R.S.S. vs. non-R.S.S. came up again and again (Baxter, 1969, p. 298).

Emergency Rule and Its Impact on the Hindu Right

Under Emergency Rule (1975-77) the government of India assumed extraordinary powers which were justified under Article 352, Clause (1) of the constitution. A blackout of news in New Delhi occurred when electricity was denied the major newspapers. Gandhi controlled All India Radio and used that medium to address the nation. Along with censorship of the press, 26 organizations were banned, including the R.S.S. Mass arrests which followed included a large number of R.S.S. members. A total of 110,000 people were detained without trial during the emergency period which lasted 21 months (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 215). In addition to arbitrary arrests, incidents of murder and torture of prisoners in jails were quite common (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 215). Fundamental rights were abrogated and constitutional protections suspended. Parliament, active as a
rubber stamp, formally approved the Emergency by a vote of 336 to 59, and opposition leaders, with the exception of the Communist Party of India, walked out in protest. Parliament was dominated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Legislation, including constitutional amendments, made temporary "emergency" measures permanent, thus restricting the power of the courts and prohibiting strikes.

During the Emergency, Parliament was empowered to ban all "anti-national" associations and activities. Sanjay Gandhi, with the approval of his mother, had introduced a five-point program, which included family planning measures aimed at limiting the number of children per family to no more than two. This program also called for elimination of the dowry system and a literacy campaign. An intensive vasectomy program, promoted in North India, provided incentives for forced sterilizations and slum clearance. Harijans and poor Muslims, who had supported Indira Gandhi in 1971-72, opposed these "progressive" social schemes, but under the state of emergency they were pressed despite a rising tide of resentment and resistance.

Although claiming to safeguard democracy, Indira Gandhi postponed elections twice before the 1977 parliamentary polls were permitted. The prime minister had replaced entrenched chief ministers with her own nominees, but the new appointees lacked support from established bases of power in their own states (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 210). Nevertheless, Gandhi’s tight control over the Congress Party organization led her to believe she could expect a victory when she called for elections in 1977, but anger over her arbitrary rule was mounting even though
inflation had been brought under control, law and order had been restored, the
economy was recovering, and industrial production was rising. Firm in the belief her
emergency measures were necessary to safeguard democracy, Indira unexpectedly
announced the holding of new elections. She did not anticipate that the opposition
parties could organize and form a common platform to oppose her on such short
notice.

Janata Victory in the 1977 Election

In the election of 1977 four parties merged in a Janata coalition led by Morarji
Desai. Jagjivan Ram's Congress for Democrats and the Janata Party had earlier
opposed Emergency Rule and the personal "authoritarian" rule of Indira Gandhi. The
Janata coalition consisted of Congress (O), the Jana Sangh, the Socialist Party, and
the Bharatiya Lok Dal. The bonds that united these parties had been forged in the
country's jails during the Emergency. This coalition also emerged as a result of
alliances formed in Bihar and Gujarat during the student-led movements against the
Congress Party. Slogans used by the Janata Party were "Bread and Liberty" and
"Save Democracy." The choice presented to voters was that of democracy or
dictatorship. The Janata coalition pledged to revive democracy by restoring
fundamental freedoms and revitalizing the judiciary.

The Janata coalition won heavily in the urban areas of north India where the
impact of the emergency was felt the most. Moreover, the Harijans and Muslims,
affected greatly by the forced sterilizations and slum clearance programs, added their

The outcome of the 1977 election showed the Indian electorate had lost patience with arbitrary government and the authoritarian rule of Indira Gandhi. The victory won by the Janata coalition was a clear rejection of Emergency Rule and the oppressive measures imposed upon various sectors of the population. Conservative Hindu parties became the beneficiaries of the harsh measures imposed against untouchables, the poor, and the Muslims. They also gained adherents among the industrial workers and middle class businessmen, the former because they were prevented from striking, and the latter because they were heavily taxed during the emergency. The Janata Party claimed to represent the working class as well as the propertied class, big businesses, merchants, and the rural elite.

The 1977 election revealed little of any significant difference between rural and urban votes. Adding insult to injury, Indira Gandhi lost her seat in Parliament to Raj Narain, and her son, Sanjay, was also defeated. Although Congress was left with only 154 seats in Parliament, it had enough to be the major opposition party, but the Janata victory was unprecedented. It was also short-lived.

The momentum that the Janata coalition gained was extremely difficult to sustain after the election had been won. Ideological contradictions and diverse interests fed group and personality conflicts within the Janata Party. Some favored non-alignment in foreign policy as well as decentralization of industry and rural development. Others were opposed to such measures. Policies for redistributing
resources to those below the poverty line met with resistance from the vested interests upon which power in India rested. The Janata party could not deliver on its promises to reduce poverty among those at the bottom any more successfully than the Congress Party. As a result, inflation and strikes increased and student demonstrations again closed universities in the north. Caste tensions mounted leading to attacks against Harijans, and Hindu-Muslim riots reoccurred. By 1979 India was in a state of anarchy with troops and police battling one another.

The Janata coalition’s inability to reconcile differences between the working class and industrialists, and rivalries among party leaders contributed to factionalism. But the most significant reason for its demise was the old reoccurring problem of the Hindu Right, the tensions between the R.S.S. faction and moderates. The catalyst for the crisis within the Janata Party was attributed to the controversy over the role of the Jana Sangh and its continued ties with the R.S.S. Raj Narain resigned from the Janata Party taking 46 Lok Sabha members with him to form the Janata (secular) Party. Narain denounced the R.S.S. as "fascist" and a source of communal unrest (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 244). These defections denied the former Janata government its majority in Parliament, and the leader of the opposition was ousted by a motion of no confidence. Responding to pressure within the Janata Party, Morarji Desai stepped down as prime minister.

The Janata government was replaced by a coalition government under the leadership of Charan Singh (Janata secular Party), who became prime minister. Singh’s term of office was shortened by a vote of no confidence, and, after his
resignation, the Janata and Congress parties were both subjected to defections and realignments. When Janata Party rule collapsed in 1979, the coalition ended. The Jana Sangh faction renamed itself the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) and the Janata Party continued under the leadership of Raj Narain.

To summarize the development of the Hindu Right, several stages may be noted. In its early years, the Jana Sangh, under the leadership of Mookerjee, portrayed itself as a moderate Hindu political party which sought to unify and nationalize the Indian people. Mindful of the 1948 ban on the R.S.S., the Jana Sangh was careful to express a tolerant and moderate philosophy in public. In actuality, however, it remained a political front for the expression of R.S.S. goals and ideals (Smith, D., 1963, p. 470). As such it was a powerful Hindu communal party, but after Mookerjee's death, it did not have the benefit of a leader with national stature. Although its "hidden" agenda has been communal, the Jana Sangh avoided criticism for its communalist activities by focusing on issues that related to Hindu interests only indirectly. At the same time, it continued to incite fear in Muslims. In Uttar Pradesh, it poured its energy into an anti-Urdu language issue. In Kerala, heavily populated by Christians and Muslims, it worked aggressively against Marxist elements. In other states (Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat) it concentrated its attention on cow protection.

Between the 1950s and the mid-1960s the party was led by extremists who opposed an open membership policy and favored close ties with the R.S.S. In the mid-1960s the Jana Sangh merged with other non-Congress parties for a brief time,
and by 1967 it benefitted from these coalitions and gained some support from rural and south Indian voters. Under the leadership of Balraj Madhok, the Jana Sangh showed some potential for returning to a more moderate communal position, but this did not last because the extremists within the R.S.S. continued to dominate the organization. In 1977, the Jana Sangh joined the Janata Party coalition, which was short-lived because of irreconcilable differences.

Seeking the support of landless farmers and lower castes, the Janata Party was a moderate party with socialist tendencies. It separated from the Jana Sangh faction which continued to represent Hindu majority interests, small businessmen, and the urban middle class. Despite its major base of support in urban areas among professionals and the educated Hindu middle class, the Jana Sangh did not succeed in amassing enough support among farmers and villagers, particularly in the south. Since the majority of India's people live in rural villages, this has been a clear disadvantage. Urban support was not sufficient for the Jana Sangh to establish itself as a national party. In the south it was also opposed by regional parties, such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, that freely attacked its promotion of the Hindi language and Brahmin values.

The Jana Sangh appealed only to a small minority because its rigid policies did not have broad voter appeal. Its electoral record indicates that it would either need to alter its policies or make alliances with similar parties in order to survive. It did not succeed in becoming a mass movement for Hindus to assert their territorial and linguistic claims. Its initial ties to the Hindi-speaking heartland and its
preoccupation with such northern issues as resistance to Pakistan, the promotion of Hindi, and the defense of refugee interests kept it at a disadvantage in national elections. Its interpretation of Hinduism was too conservative, restrictive, and exclusive. Its militant version of Hindu nationalism and its rigid Brahminism no longer represented the Indian mainstream. What the Jana Sangh failed to do, the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.) now seeks to accomplish. Indeed, the Jana Sangh may have passed into Indian history but the R.S.S., its surviving core, lives on and draws strength from this more recent political metamorphosis.
CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HINDUTVA MOVEMENT

Assertive expressions of Hindu communalism today may be observed in the activities of the coalition of parties consisting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (V.H.P.), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.), which form the nucleus of the Hindutva movement. As mentioned earlier, the R.S.S. wing of the party had already played the role of the militant guardian of Hinduism in its association with the Hindu Mahasabha and Jana Sangh. The V.H.P., on the other hand, has provided the Hindutva movement legitimacy through its organization of Hindu priests and holy men, a role which the priestly Brahmin caste has traditionally played throughout Indian history, and notably, in the pre-Moghul and pre-colonial period. The role played by the V.H.P., the R.S.S. and the B.J.P. in the Hindutva movement will be explored in this chapter. As mentioned in Chapter VI, the B.J.P. represented the politically active branch of the coalition, and as such, engaged in electoral politics at the national party level since 1951. But its roots are to be found in the Jana Sangh, and for all practical purposes the B.J.P. can be considered the present day version of the Jana Sangh.

Since the R.S.S. had to pledge itself to stay out of politics according to its own written constitution of 1949, its survival made it necessary to form alliances with
other more "political" parties, especially those promoting the interests of Hindu nationalism. During the course of its history the R.S.S. has displayed flexibility in its partnerships with other parties, including the Congress Party, shifting its allegiance and adjusting to political, economic and social events where necessary. The R.S.S. has been identified in the Fundamentalist Research Project as a fundamentalist party which fits many of the characteristics of similar organizations worldwide, as mentioned in Chapter III. This chapter provides a detailed description of the R.S.S. and its affiliates focusing on the role they play in Indian politics today. From the time of its inception, the ultimate goal of the Hindutva movement has been and continues to be the creation of a Hindu India.

Origins and Ideology of the R.S.S.

After riots in Nagpur, Maharashtra in 1925, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar organized the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.), a national society of volunteers that were ready for combat. Hedgewar formed the R.S.S. with four associates, all members of the Hindu Mahasabha and other volunteer groups that were organized after these riots. While Hedgewar eventually left the Hindu Mahasabha, other R.S.S. members kept their association with that organization.

The R.S.S. promoted the Hindutva ideology provided by V. D. Savarkar who wrote, "Who Is A Hindu?" His definition of a Hindu is "a person who regards the land of Bharatvarsha from the Indus to the seas as his Fatherland, as well as his holy land, that is the cradle of his religion" (Pandey, 1993, p. 248). His reference to the
fatherland identified the Hindus as a racial and national unit (Smith, D., 1963, p. 459). Aspects of Hindutva presented by Savarkar identified the ideal Hindu state with "Hinduness" and Hindus were considered to be a nation more than a religious group. This provided the ideology upon which Hindu communalism was and continues to be based.

In 1927 the R.S.S. played a major role in a second Nagpur riot. Repeated use of its communal propaganda gave the R.S.S. a negative reputation. Moreover, it was judged the principal agent promoting anti-Muslim as well as anti-Christian riots. Believing Hindus had suffered because of their more liberal, generous ways, R.S.S. leaders stressed the need for a new militancy. As communal riots and conversions from Hinduism were increasing, Savarkar recognized that India was not homogenous. In a speech to the Mahasabha in 1937, he spoke of the Muslims as a nation as well. He said, "India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main; the Hindus and the Muslims. . . . There are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India" (Smith, D., 1963, p. 459). Statements to this effect resemble Mohammad Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory which was formulated ten years later. While Savarkar idealized ancient Hindu values and culture, he also valued social reforms. Unlike Tilak, he wanted to abolish the caste system and untouchability. Temple access for untouchables was another issue of concern.

The R.S.S. originated in reaction to perceived threats to Hindu middle and upper caste society. While the R.S.S. claims to be a non-political organization, its
objectives are deeply political as it reaches into all areas of society seeking to create a new Hindu identity. The Hindu image conveyed is that of a virile, masculine and aggressively communal warrior opposed to other faiths and differing conceptions of Hinduism. The events of December 6 (at Ayodhya) and after reaffirm that the R.S.S. and V.H.P. dictate the politics of the Hindu Right. They define the goals of the B.J.P. "The R.S.S. constitutes the fountainhead of aggressive Hindu communalism (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 2).

The Hindu culture promoted by the R.S.S. through its shakhas (branches) is one of a majority ruled authoritarian Hindu state, led by the R.S.S., and capable of establishing the rules by which minorities must live. Its rhetoric is antagonistic toward non-Hindus, especially Muslims. The R.S.S. uses a saffron flag as its identity symbol. According to the R.S.S. version of Indian history, this is the same flag which they say belonged to Lord Ram, a Hindu deity, and was carried by Shivaji, a Hindu ruler known for his success in defeating Muslims armies. Shakha meetings provide daily rituals consisting of ideological discussions, physical exercises, military drills and discipline, and the recitation of prayers and slogans. Shakhas are organized locally with a strong neighborhood base of participation. Sessions are usually conducted in the languages of Hindi and Marathi.

In 1938 R.S.S. leader, M. S. Golwalkar, published a book, We or Our Nationhood Defined, which advocated a cultural nationalism similar to that of Adolf Hitler’s Mein Kampf. For example, Golwalkar stated
the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion . . . cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen’s right (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 26).

His definition of the Hindu state rejected any possibility for equal rights for religious minorities and any notion of a composite nationalism both of which are written into the Indian constitution.

Opposition to the R.S.S. was expressed by Nehru during a Congress address in which he stated, "Frankly my Government does not trust the R.S.S. very much. We shall keep a very vigilant watch on it" (Baxter, 1969, p. 57). When the Jana Sangh became affiliated with the R.S.S., he referred to the Jana Sangh as its "illegitimate child."

R.S.S. Membership

Today members of the R.S.S. are all male, mostly from high caste middle and lower middle class families. Boys are recruited at an impressionable age (12-15 years) when they can be easily trained, like "clean slates." They are taught to follow directions without asking questions. No dialogue or argument is permitted in their mode of learning. The R.S.S. requires total surrender of individuality for the sake of ideals. It provides identity with a group of like-minded and trained peers.

For youths in crowded urban areas, the R.S.S. is appealing because it offers recreational activities, physical exercise as well as a corporate identity which are all
lacking in a rapidly changing urban environment. Classes in the shakhas are held once a week led by full-time cadres. These full-timers practice a celibate way of life and are expected to remain unmarried. R.S.S. youths wear a uniform of khaki shorts and black hats. They celebrate six festivals each year, four of which are celebrated in Hindu temples, where members work among devotees to dispense propaganda.

The student affiliate of the R.S.S., Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, structures the relationship between students, teachers, and college management on a family model. It organizes the Vijas Puja (Hindu religious festival), which pays homage to teachers and elder family members. At this September festival members make donations to the R.S.S., but no records or receipts are kept, allowing for secretiveness and control over finances by its leaders. From these college students the R.S.S. recruits its future cadre. Recruitment of teenage boys and young men is a practice common to revolutionary terrorist organizations. Hedgewar carefully recruited only those who showed a capacity for loyalty and unquestioning obedience. 

"He was developing a group loyal to him personally, a militant coterie which would not stand duality of allegiance either to persons or to principles" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 17). This association among young men created a close, cohesive peer group with strong emotional and political ties. Hedgewar supervised their physical training and told stories of Hindu heroes who had fought Muslims in the past. He also took the young men on outings, such as sports events and picnics.

In 1927 the R.S.S. set up a training camp for twenty volunteers in the use of the lathi, javelin, sword, and dagger, weapons which could be used in a street brawl
with fellow Indians. Officer training camps blend martial discipline with a human touch, referring to members as "family." Bhattacharya has described the R.S.S. leader's way of life as follows: "We go to shakhas. We visit people's homes, we look after people's problems. If a person is ill, we ask if he has money. If the answer is negative, we borrow from others to lend him some" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 41).

In cities the R.S.S. is composed mainly of middle class shopkeepers, mostly of the Bania and Brahmin castes, who felt the need to train themselves in self-defense. After the anti-Brahmin conflicts, literate upper caste Hindus felt that they could no longer rely on lower caste police or guards to defend their interests.

Barbara Crossette notes that the Hindu Right is "supported by shopkeepers and owners of small businesses of upper class birth and middle class income who were opposed to secularism, socialism, non-alignment and democracy," (Crossette, 1993, p.72) and that it provided a proper breeding ground for militant individuals. The R.S.S. offers status and pride in Hinduism to both upper caste Hindus and those on the rise from lower socio-economic groups. Members of its various front organizations included farmers, students, teachers and leaders of the intelligentsia.

In 1934 the Congress Party passed a resolution forbidding its members from joining the R.S.S., the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. Nevertheless, between 1937 and 1940 the R.S.S. expanded its membership from 40,000 in 1938 to 100,000 by 1940 setting up 400 centers. It focused on recruiting university students, shopkeepers, and clerks of the lower middle classes. By 1975 the number of
branches had risen to 11,000. By 1985 there were 20,000 R.S.S. branches in the country. Expansion in membership was greatest in the four southern states where it had been negligible earlier (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 53). It is estimated that by the mid-1990s the R.S.S. will have over 25,000 branches, some 2.7 million volunteers, and nearly 2,500 leaders in its organization (Muslim India, February 1993, p. 86).

Among its 53 front organizations, the expansion has been tremendous. In many areas it has even acquired official recognition, housed as it is in government buildings... and it has infiltrated various political organizations and the bureaucracy (Muslim India, February 1993, p. 86).

**Women's Branch of the R.S.S.**

The R.S.S. has a woman's branch, called the Rashtrasevika Samiti, which was formed in 1936. Its full-time cadre leaders are unmarried women. Members help each other at home especially during a domestic crisis and they keep in touch with inactive members. Education is carried on in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs (primary schools) and Bal Mandirs (high schools). These schools identify themselves with the Hindu goddess of learning, Saraswati. Teaching is directed toward the upper middle class as opposed to the masses. Their purpose is to educate children "from 'good' families—factory owners, businessmen, doctors and teachers who are able to pay fairly high fees" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 45). A network of over 4000 of these institutions exist currently.

The role of women is to train children and spread the Hindutva ideology through domestic and neighborhood contacts. Members pool resources to reduce the
burden of dowry rather than campaigning against it (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 42). Divorce is disapproved of and no legal counseling is offered in cases of domestic abuse. Although there are no caste restrictions on members, the issue is never discussed.

The Samiti empowers Hindu women using a strategy of intense, yet private mobilization at the grass roots level. Informal discussions in homes are easily understood and they appeal to women from socially conservative backgrounds. There is very little emphasis on charity or social welfare which reaches out to non-members in the community.

Political Development of the R.S.S.

In the early 1940s, the R.S.S. became even more aggressive in demanding respect and reverence to Hinduism as a true test of patriotism for Indian citizens. All Muslims were considered as traitors and Urdu was to be condemned as a foreign language. Using the language of the Arya Samaj, the R.S.S. promoted "Hindu-Hindi-Hindu" identity as a sign of patriotism. During this period many recruits joined the shakhas and money poured in as Hindus were becoming convinced that the R.S.S. was their best and possibly only defender (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 30).

Internal tensions caused by disagreements between its older and younger members emerged as communal rioting spread. The latter wanted to become more politically active while older members preferred that the organization remain focused on Hindu culture. Ultimately, Golwalkar’s philosophy was adopted, setting a
hierarchical and paternalistic model for all relationships society, which carried over into family life. It emphasized one’s duty towards community as opposed to individualism and materialism. It stressed the integration of the family and community through "dharma" (law) based on old Brahminical law. Man could reach God through reverence for society and nature. The Ganges River and the cow were to be considered sacred. Golwalkar defined a nation as a people united by a common country, race, religion, culture and language. Hindus were a nation but Muslims, Christians and other minorities were not included. He believed minorities should be assimilated into the larger Hindu nation.

The R.S.S. Constitution

The Preamble to the R.S.S. constitution states that the organization’s purpose is to eradicate fissiparous tendencies arising from diversities of sect, faith, caste and creed and from political, economic, linguistic and provincial differences, amongst Hindus to make them realize the greatness of their past; to inculcate in them a spirit of service, sacrifice and selfless devotion to the Hindu Samaj (state) as a whole: to build up an organized and well-disciplined corporate life; and to bring about an all-round regeneration of the Hindu Samaj (Baxter, Malik, Kennedy & Oberst, 1993, p. 45).

Diverse groups in India were to be united under the laws of dharma, using the Sanskriti literary tradition. In Article 4 the R.S.S. pledged to adhere to peaceful and legitimate means for the realization of its goals in an orderly and evolutionary
manner. It upheld the principle of tolerance towards all faiths and claimed to be devoted to social work as opposed to politics. However, it reserved the right for its individual members to join any political party except those that "resort to violent or secretive methods to achieve their ends" (Baxter et al., 1993, p. 46). Although it recognized the duty of every citizen to be loyal to and respect the Indian national flag, the Sangh (Hindutva movement) had its own flag, the Bhagwa-Dhwaj—the age-old control of Hindu culture.

In Article 8 the smaller units of the R.S.S. are described at the level of the province, division, district, tehsil, and town organizations. Cities with a population above 100,000 were considered as districts. Election of members, terms of office, descriptions of the supreme leader's role and that of other officers are also included in the R.S.S. constitution.

Political Activities of the R.S.S. (1950s-1970s)

In 1952 R.S.S. volunteers joined a satyagraha (truth-force, non-violent resistance) campaign against cow slaughter. Between 1956-62 it held a low profile and worked on party expansion and discipline. After the 1962 Indo-China war, right-wing forces in India became stronger and the R.S.S. gained in stature. When India was invaded by China, the Congress government acknowledged that India needed a strong military. Moreover, the R.S.S. gained some legitimacy during this period and was given permission to participate in the government's Republic Day parade in 1963.
In 1964 Golwalkar held a conference to organize Hindu religious leaders (sadhus, sants, and purohits) of various sects naming an R.S.S. leader the general secretary in the newly formed organization, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (V.H.P.). During the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, the V.H.P. joined the Jana Sangh and instigated rumors, questioning the patriotism of Indian Muslims. The V.H.P. capitalized on the growing unpopularity of the Congress Party, especially in the Hindi belt. Violent agitations against cow slaughter occurred again in 1967 led by the V.H.P. and R.S.S. From this point forward the association of the R.S.S. with sadhus in the V.H.P. has been strengthened and this has been beneficial to the R.S.S.'s image and legitimacy among some orthodox Hindus. The R.S.S. continues to be involved in issues which relate to cow slaughter, especially in Gujarat where many of its leaders are Jains.

The shakhas centered their activities around elections, legislatures, trade unions and student cultural organizations. In 1973 Balasaheb Deoras succeeded Golwalkar as supreme leader of the R.S.S. in time to lead the R.S.S. in joining a countrywide campaign against Indira Gandhi in 1974-75. The R.S.S. provided the paramilitary troops for Jayaprakash Narayan's "total revolution" (socialist) to transform Indian society. The R.S.S. was involved in student demonstrations against the Congress Party in Bihar and participated in the national railway strike of 1974. Opposition parties, including the Jana Sangh cooperated in this anti-government and anti-Gandhi revolt. When Gandhi imposed the June 1975 Emergency, the R.S.S was banned and Deoras was arrested along with thousands of other R.S.S. members.
After Deoras pleaded with Indira Gandhi for his release and promised cooperation, the ban was lifted.

Along with other opposition parties, the Jana Sangh served as a key force of pressure on some Congress members. Opposition parties "served as building blocks for the creation of a series of alliances, coalitions, and united fronts that were ultimately successful in challenging Congress hegemony" (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 236). Many defections occurred within the Congress Party during the 1967-77 period with some members turning to the Socialist and Jana Sangh Parties. By 1977 these forces merged in forming the Janata Party, bringing an end to thirty years of Congress Party dominance.

The success of the Janata Party coalition in 1977, backed by the support of the R.S.S. and Jana Sangh, was discussed in Chapter VI. In the 1977 election, R.S.S. members Atal Behari Vajpayee Lal Krishna Advani and Brijlal Verma became central ministers. The Jana Sangh, formed in 1951 by the R.S.S. cadres, became the political extension of the R.S.S. and forerunner of the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.). As mentioned previously, the success of the Janata coalition was largely due to the negative reaction to Emergency Rule among the Indian electorate.

Since 1983 the Bharatiya Janata Party has shifted its strategy several times. In seeking to broaden its social base, it has claimed to be a secular party. Moderate leaders such as L. K. Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee continue to draw some support from the Hindu mainstream. On the other hand, Manohar Joshi has taken a more radical, anti-secular position favored by the R.S.S. cadre who form the core
of the organization.

In 1983 the R.S.S. withdrew its support from the B.J.P. and in the 1984 election it worked for Indira’s Congress Party. The reason for this split was that R.S.S. members felt alienated when the B.J.P. took a more secular course. It also became quite clear during the 1980s that Indira’s tolerance for R.S.S. activities had risen when contacts between the R.S.S. and the Congress Party increased. During Indira Gandhi’s last years in power the Congress "moved steadily to the right and displayed considerable eagerness to compete for the Hindu vote in an increasingly opportunistic manner" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 53). In the 1983 assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir, Indira Gandhi appealed to Hindu sentiments and convinced many R.S.S. workers to shift to the Congress Party.

During the 1984 parliamentary election the R.S.S. campaigned for the Congress Party as opposed to the B.J.P. This weakened the B.J.P. and signalled the beginning of extra-parliamentary politics of an openly and aggressively Hindu communal type. Sanjay Gandhi’s vehicle for organizing and expanding Congress support was the Youth Congress which eventually claimed a membership of more than 10 million. Sanjay had right wing leanings and denounced the influence of the Communist party in the Congress, despite its support for his mother (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 218).

In the 1984 election the B.J.P. was defeated in the north and B.J.P. president, Vajpayee lost his seat in Parliament. The Congress Party undermined the B.J.P.’s support base in its appeal to urban lower middle class Hindus. After Indira Gandhi’s
assassination The Organizer announced its support for Rajiv Gandhi. A new Hindu assertiveness emerged under Rajiv Gandhi's government which led to a shift in caste Hindu support for the Congress Party. But, "the B.J.P. more than the other non-Communist opposition parties, has a committed core of support that is unlikely to be permanently lost" in North India. (Hardgrave & Kochanek, 1986, p. 249).

Despite its defeat in 1984, the B.J.P. regained strength and in 1991 it won control of the government in five north Indian states: Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and the district of Delhi. Its shift away from a moderate, secular course to that of a more aggressive communal party resulted from pressures of its V.H.P. wing, which was gathering vast support for the Ram Jamabhoomi movement to destroy a mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. This shift also brought R.S.S. cadres back into the party. Since 1979 the R.S.S. seems to have achieved a degree of autonomy, and it supports the parties and candidates that it believes are committed to the promotion of Hindu interests of Hindus. The R.S.S. "has maintained a militant anti-Muslim posture, and its workers are frequently blamed for inciting anti-Muslim rioting in urban areas" (Baxter et al., 1987, p. 129).

The Bharatiya Janata Party continues to be a viable contender for power in northern India in the 1990s. It has benefitted greatly from the support of the Hindutva coalition, which has gained center stage in the Indian media today for its efforts to challenge the "pseudo-secular" Congress government.
The issue of conversion has been a source of Hindu-Muslim conflict for centuries. However, since the 1980s it has become more significant as a political issue because most Indians tend to vote along religious and caste lines. It has also been suggested that mass conversions, particularly the ones at Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu in 1981-82, marked a turning point in Hindu-Muslim relations. In the 1980s many Dalits and other scheduled caste Hindus became involved in mass conversions given their aspirations for social equality. Many had already acquired economic success and educational benefits under the reservation system, but they still did not have social equality. Their conversion to Islam was based on claims that Muslims allowed them to worship, eat and socialize among them as brothers.

Between 1981 and 1982 at Meenakshipuram, over 1,000 untouchables were converted to Islam. In a study conducted by Mujahid figures of converts ranged from 2,000 to 32,000 during this period (Mujahid, 1989, p. 1). The R.S.S. and the Arya Samaj responded to the conversions by calling for a ban on conversions to Islam and Christianity. The V.H.P., organization of Hindu priests, began a reconversion campaign at Meenakshipuram to bring Indian Muslims back into the Hindu fold.

These conversions led Hindu politicians and priests to retaliate by forming a committee to plan the "recapture" of the Ram Janmabhumi (Temple), which they believe lay buried under the Babri Masjid. They set up a conference of the Virat
Hindu Sammelan in New Delhi to mobilize Hindu organizations for a revival. This conference was attended by 800,000 people mostly from the middle class who opposed the conversion of untouchables to Islam (Mujahid, 1989, p. 94). Shortly thereafter the V.H.P. began to expand its branches throughout India.

Major Hindu-Muslim riots occurred in Tamil Nadu after 1982. Some Hindus predicted that Tamil Nadu would become a Muslim majority state by the year 2231 and demanded that conversions from Hinduism to other religions be made illegal. In a nation-wide poll 57 percent of all Indians surveyed wanted government intervention to stop conversions. In North Indian cities 78 percent favored such action. Indira Gandhi sided with Hindu sentiments for which she was praised by the R.S.S. The government stepped in to stop conversions on August 15, 1981 at Kanpur, U.P. Dalit Panther leaders were arrested on the day designated for the conversions after which over three hundred riots occurred throughout India. Riots continued into the next year during which over 1,400 untouchables were killed (Mujahid, 1989, p. 95).

During this period the Hindu revivalist movement in Punjab and Kashmir was strengthened as well as the movement to reclaim the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya, U.P. At the same time political leaders in the Congress Party lost no time in engaging in symbolic activities similar to those of Hindu revivalists in the B.J.P. They held yatras, visited temples, enforced bans on cow slaughter, and took part in temple processions (Mujahid, 1989, p. 98). The close connection between Congress Party politicians, the B.J.P. and R.S.S. led up to the incident at Ayodhya.
The Babri-Mosque - Ram Janmabhumi Temple Controversy

There is a long history to the dispute between Hindus and Muslims over the rightful ownership of the Babri Masjid, built in 1520 by Mir Baqi at the command of the Muslim ruler, Babar. Hindus claim that the mosque was built over the ruins of a Hindu temple constructed to commemorate the birthplace of Lord Ram. Although archaeologists and the Indian Supreme Court have not been able to prove or disprove this claim, for fundamentalist Hindus the issue at stake is highly symbolic as a triumph of Hinduism after five hundred years of "oppression" under foreign rule. In this atmosphere, Hindu militants led by the R.S.S. took matters in their own hands. They destroyed the Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992 and reclaimed it as Hindu holy ground in order to "rebuild" a Ram temple.

Earlier disputes over the shrine in 1949 caused Jawarhalal Nehru to close the mosque, but images of Hindu deities appeared in the mosque shortly thereafter. Many Hindus believed their Lord Ram was manifesting himself and had ordered his believers to reclaim his birthplace. In 1980, Rajiv Gandhi ordered the mosque to be reopened. Hindus placed idols inside the mosque for purposes of worship, and, when the government did not intervene to stop them, Hindus assumed that the site was rightfully theirs.

In the 1991 election the B.J.P. won control of the state assemblies in five north Indian states using the Ayodhya issue as its main drawing card. Once in power, the coalition of Hindu fundamentalist parties, B.J.P./R.S.S./V.H.P. and Shiv
Sena (an anti-immigrant organization founded in Bombay, Maharashtra in 1966) launched a national campaign throughout India to gather support for building a Ram temple over the mosque. They appealed to Hindu emotional sentiments claiming that such a deed would be an act of devotion to Lord Ram. During the week prior to December 6th, thousands of Hindus arrived by train, bus and bullock cart from all parts of the country led by this political coalition. L. K. Advani of the B.J.P. led a chariot procession from Somnath to Ayodhya urging Hindus to bring bricks for the construction of Ram's birth site.

This communal uprising was well-organized, pre-planned and had a broad base of support. The state government of Uttar Pradesh, controlled by the B.J.P., had full knowledge of the plan but state troops were not called until the destruction of the mosque was nearly complete. When the central government asked the U.P. government if the situation was under control, the latter responded affirmatively. Both the U.P. government and central government had knowledge of the mobilization of the masses prior to the incident, but neither tried to interrupt the flow of people toward the Babri Mosque.

The "kar sevaks" (worker servants) who tore down the mosque were referred to as "defenders of the faith" and heroes of a renewed spirit of Hindu national pride in the news media. These kar sevaks were young boys who belonged to the Balrang Dal, a subaffiliate of the V.H.P. They appeared to be untrained, volatile and undisciplined as they set out to destroy the mosque at Ayodhya with the V.H.P.'s consent. They were also supported and cheered on by middle class Hindus. They
were described as wearing "city clothes, shirts and trousers, not the kurta and dhotis of villagers or the urban poor. They looked like clerks, boys from urban lower-middle class families, the educated, unemployed . . . victims of modernization seeking to victimize others (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1993, p. 28).

Samiti women also turned out in large numbers displaying an aggressive demeanor in public to promote the communal cause. The storming of the mosque ultimately led to the downfall of the B.J.P. government in Uttar Pradesh, the resignation of Chief Minister Charan Singh, and the imposition of President's Rule over the state.

It was reported that the kar sevaks at Ayodhya went against a B.J.P. party directive to leave the Babri Mosque alone. Led by a R.S.S. leader, directions were given to the demolition squad. This same leader was instrumental in planning the operation of the R.S.S. workers and had close connections with Murli Manohar Joshi of the B.J.P. (Muslim India, March 1993, p. 134). Many of the top B.J.P. leaders are considered to be puppets of the "mother" organization, the R.S.S. (Muslim India, February 1993, p. 87). This article implies that there may have been differences of opinion among B.J.P. leaders in regard to the actual plan to destroy the Babri Mosque. Joshi represents the most militant and anti-Muslim faction of the B.J.P. He has also played a leadership role in the Shiv Sena, organized in Bombay since 1966.

Prior to the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya, a B.J.P. leader, claimed that riots were needed to perpetuate Congress rule in northern India. It was
recalled that in 1977 and 1989 when communal feelings receded, the Congress Party lost elections in the north. "The riots, therefore, were needed to perpetuate Congress rule . . ." (Muslim India, November 1992, p. 524).

After the Babri Mosque was destroyed, the Congress Government imposed President’s Rule and dismissed the B.J.P. government in the five north Indian states it controlled. Leaders of the B.J.P., L. K. Advani, M. Joshi and 2,600 other activists were arrested. All fundamentalist parties and organizations were banned (Hindu and Muslim) regardless of their role in the destruction of the mosque and the rioting that followed. Hindu temples at Ayodhya were confiscated by the central government and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao declared that the mosque would be rebuilt out of a government trust fund. Later, he changed his mind and promised to build a temple and a mosque on the site.

The state of anarchy which prevailed after the Babri Mosque was destroyed caused many Indians citizens to lose faith in the Congress government. Communal riots broke out in several major Indian cities. National Security Guards and state police officers were unable to keep law and order, and, in some instances, biases led them to either participate in the violence or look away when atrocities occurred against Muslims. Over 3,500 Muslims lost their lives in riots after Ayodhya. Many Muslims were forced to flee from their homes in cities like Bombay, where 600 were killed. The question of police protection was also a major issue in areas such as Welcome Colony, New Delhi, where curfews were imposed, but the "police force, made up mostly of Hindus, allowed Hindu mobs to rampage unimpeded through
Muslims districts" (The Chicago Tribune, December 20, 1992, p. 4).

Riots also broke out in Surat, Jaipur, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Seelampur (Delhi) and Imphal. In Seelampur police were alleged to be guilty of torturing Muslims. In Surat, it was reported that the B.J.P. electoral candidates had provided information to help Hindu rioters locate Muslim homes, shops, and businesses which were later burned and looted. The Hindu crowds carried weapons and events appeared to be pre-planned, occurring one day after the mosque at Ayodhya was destroyed, according to Asghar Ali Engineer (Muslim India, May 1993, p. 226).

Of major concern to most Muslims was the government's inaction at Ayodhya which shattered their confidence in its ability and will to enforce Article 356 of the constitution, which guarantees protection of places of worship. After the Ayodhya incident and the riots that followed, many Muslims and Christians no longer trusted the Congress government to protect minority rights. Meanwhile, Hindus set up a Board of Trustees for a Temple Fund for building the Ram-Janmabhumi at the site and the government did not restrict developments of this Board.

At the same time prominent Muslim leaders, including some who held Parliament seats rejected the government's plan to allow a mosque and temple to be built on the site. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board rejected the government plan in their meeting with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. Instead, they asked the government to withdraw a land notice, stating that "taking of places of worship, whether a temple, mosque, church or gurdwara is against national policy and violates the spirit of the Constitution" (The Independent, April 6, 1993, p. 4). But, fearing
that the government might give in to Hindu claims to other mosques, particularly those at Varanasi and Mathura, Muslim leaders insisted that the Babri Mosque should be kept under government control until the case was settled in Court.

Muslim leaders also requested the release of the 25,000 Muslims who had been arrested during riots which followed the destruction of the Babri Mosque. Five months after the riots, Suliaman Sait of the All India Muslim League and other Muslim leaders rebuked the government for the "indiscriminate arrests" of innocent people and sought their release. They were assured by the Congress government that all innocent people would be released. This matter was taken up by moderates of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board who were prepared to bring the issue to the United Nations if the government did not respond.

A third issue which was dealt with in the meeting between Muslim leaders and Prime Minister Rao was the removal of Muslim names from voter's lists. This meeting between Rao and Muslims narrowed the communication gap between the government and Muslims on the Ayodhya issue which had been festering since December of 1992 when he had pledged to the Muslims that he would commit himself to rebuilding a mosque on the same site.

Religious Processions

Quite typically the R.S.S. has stirred up communal tension during religious festivals and on Fridays when Muslims gather at mosques to pray. Conflicts have often occurred when Hindu processions were routed through Muslim neighborhoods
or past mosques during times when namaz (worship) is conducted. At times Hindus have used musical instruments or loud-speakers to interfere with Muslim prayers. Events surrounding temple processions also become highly political because they are often led or attended by politicians. When they occur close to elections, processions often lead to quarrels between Hindus and Muslims.

After the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya and the riots that followed, Prime Minister Rao ordered politicians to try to avoid communal clashes. Some state officials refused to allow religious processions, but this is illegal, according to Article 226 of the constitution, which states that police must allow processions through a prominent center of town by both communities. If one community is allowed to engage in street processions on holy days, other communities must also have permission. Hindus and Muslims were entitled to take out their processions and it was the duty of the police authorities to handle law and order problems. But it is often the case that the majority community takes advantage of its size and numbers to do what it wants regardless of government bans. Little is done to stop violations when they occur.

For example, in August of 1993 the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Ms. Jayalalitha Jayaram, appealed to Muslims in several districts not to make religious processions to celebrate Meelad-un-Nabi (the birth of the Prophet Mohammad) in light of the continuing communal clashes. She announced that the Tamil Nadu government would ban all religious processions because they
would set at naught the secular character of the country . . . and would lead to serious law and order problems, particularly in the wake of communal clashes in Chidambaranar, Quide-e-Milleth and other districts (The Hindu, September 24, 1993, p. 6).

Various political parties, women's organizations, associations for communal harmony, traders, businessmen and 1,000 residents signed a petition demanding the ban. Governor T. N. Reddy supported the ban as well. The Muslim Meelad Committee cooperated with Jayalalitha and canceled their procession. However, the Hindu Munnani was determined to carry its processions during the Vinayaka Chathurthi (Ganesh) festival in September of 1993. They intended to follow the usual route passing the Big Mosque where riots had occurred in 1990.

Jayalalitha's decision to permit the Hindu procession in Madras City followed her success in winning by-elections in Ranipet and Palani (districts heavily populated by Muslims) and confirmed reports that she was "hobnobbing" with the B.J.P. The Hindu Munnani had been reassured that their Ganesh procession would not be canceled as early as June. In July, Muslims were discouraged from marching and they did not try to carry out scheduled processions in August or September. It was noted by opposition parties that organizations like the R.S.S. were trying to incite communal clashes by insisting on taking out the Ganesh processions in September. The Congress Party of India State Council advised the Government of Tamil Nadu to enforce the ban and "termed irresponsible the decision to permit the Vinayaka Chathurthi procession as it would only encourage communal forces" (The Hindu, September 24, 1993, p. 6). The general secretary of the Dravidar Kazhagam political
party announced that the procession was only for the revival of the R.S.S. and Hindu Munnani and that it was aimed at the minority communities (The Hindu, September 22, 1993, p. 6).

On the day of the procession Jayalalitha instructed that certain conditions be followed so that the procession could take place peacefully. The procession was to pass the mosque long before 4:00 p.m. so as not to interrupt the Friday namaz (prayers). Hindus were forbidden to explode firecrackers in the direction of the mosque or play music over loudspeakers. As the Hindu Munnani was prepared to march with 5001 idols, its leader claimed that police permission was not needed for the religious procession. However, the commissioner of police disagreed, saying that Section 41 of the City Police Act was in force and that permission was needed for a procession organized on such a massive scale. It was reported that Jayalalitha may have disregarded this Act to appease Hindus because "it is common knowledge that the ultimate purpose of such processions is political, to unify Hindus as a voting bloc" (Frontline, October, 8, p. 128).

At this September 1993 Vinayaka Procession 13,000 police were on duty but this did not stop Hindu fundamentalists from encouraging communal unrest. The processionists, mainly youths, wore saffron head bands and waved saffron flags. They shouted slogans such as "Be proud to be a Hindu," "The Ram temple will be built," and "Mathura and Kashi, here we come," as they passed before the Big Mosque and St. George's Cathedral. They carried casurina sticks, toy guns, and swords. Idols carried weapons in their hands. The procession passed seven mosques
and fire crackers were set off all along the way, especially in front of the Big Mosque. The procession was deliberately slowed down in front of the Big Mosque at 4:00 p.m. blocking Muslims from entering. Later, Hindus beat drums, played loud music and shouted slogans to drown out prayers.

There was no report of police intervention in the breach of the conditions stipulated by the chief minister despite the number of police that were on hand. Rules were broken but the police made no arrests. Some accused Jayalalitha of disregarding the City Police Act after she had already won the "Muslim vote" in district elections (India Today, September 15, 1993, p. 42).

Prior to this Hindu procession in Madras, the R.S.S. building was bombed, killing eleven people. The Central Bureau of Investigation linked the cause to Muslim fundamentalist organized criminal gangs. The three Muslims arrested were reported to be members of the Jihad Committee. The leader of this Committee was reported to have made inflammatory speeches in a Madras suburb denouncing Hinduism and Hindu gods. It was alleged that he also threatened to bomb the R.S.S. office and Sankara Math (monastery) in Kanchipuram and that he had connections with the Islamic Sevak Sangh in Kerala which was also banned after the incident at Ayodhya (Frontline, October 8, p. 127).

Other cities in India felt the impact of Vinayaka Chathurthi processions in September of 1993. In the Muslim majority town of Muthupettai, T. N., marchers returning from procession claimed that they were attacked in a Muslim dominated area and they retaliated. Local government leaders blamed the growing violence on
organizations such as the R.S.S. and Jihad. Support from abroad for funds and weapons sent to Jihad and similar Muslim groups was condemned. Jihad was singled out for shouting anti-India slogans. In Muthupettai, the police were not able to control the violence and leaders of the panchayat raj (town government) were now forming peace committees consisting of two representatives from each mosque and village in the area. These local officials drew up a list of do's and don’ts to be followed during religious processions and made a rule that permission had to be obtained fifteen days in advance before a march could take place (Frontline, October 22, 1993, p. 120).

Other states affected by Ganesh processions in September of 1993 were Gujarat, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. In Karnataka a prominent leader in the community reported that "violence is the result of 'poison' being injected by the R.S.S." It is further complicated by poor handling by the state government, the police and politicians. He claimed that when the violence was at its height many police were transferred. Muslims and Hindus claimed that the police were inept at keeping law and order. However, the President of the district B.J.P. unit in Bhatkal, Karnataka claimed that the violence was due to anti-national and terrorist elements who were shouting anti-B.J.P. and anti-R.S.S. slogans. He claimed that the actions of the "other side" were planned and premeditated while the reactions of Hindus were spontaneous (Frontline, October 8, 1993, p. 126). In Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, 7,000 police and elite City Guards were employed during the procession of 5,000 idols, but the procession led to massive communal rioting in which hundreds were
Hindutva's Influence on the Indian Media

The V.H.P. and R.S.S. have made organized efforts to promote the Hindutva world view through the Indian media. They claim to have roots in the country's natural heritage and use religious slogans, myths, rituals, and symbols to promote Lord Ram's life and character as the national ideal. When Rajiv Gandhi controlled the Congress government, he promoted the Ramayana epic on national television. In this pro-Aryan version of the story the enemy, Ravana, was portrayed as a Muslim, the source of Hindu oppression, as mentioned earlier in this thesis. In this version of the epic, Ram's just Aryan society does not need to be changed, only protected. The serialized Ramayana gave "the new aggressive social class spawned in the 1980s a packaged, collective self-image, which with the mobilizing by Hindutva, became the motivating force for changing by force and violence, the image of the country itself" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 109).

Doordarshan, the national television channel, also initiated a serial "Chanakya" which was based on the life of the author of Arthashastra, which recommends a police state under a single despotic head. This is another example of cooperation between the government and the Hindu right. High consumerism and advanced media technology have brought Indians together as a "congregation" centered around the television or in theaters en masse to bring them a sense of common culture.
The Hindutva ideology draws a great deal of its power from the use of stereotypes and symbols. It presents the problems of power and powerlessness to its constituents as a relationship between communities. By doing so it avoids "the problem of examining and confronting the ways in which the unequal distribution of power and resources pervades the larger society and everyday relationships" (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 116).

Furthermore, newspapers such as Samnaa, published by the Shiv Sena are supported by investments from large business corporations such as Larsen and Bisleri in Bombay. These large companies have supported Shiv Sena labour unions and kept leftist unions out. Their investments in Samnaa, have linked these companies indirectly with the Shiv Sena, a militant Hindu organization which sanctions and engages in communal riots (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 106).

The V.H.P and the R.S.S. were both involved in reporting on the events at the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya in December of 1992. According to the Press Council reports on the news coverage of events at Ayodhya, many editors behaved as if they were part of the Hindutva movement. Some editors were seen directing kar sevaks while others were involved in V.H.P. demonstrations. The obvious networking between the Hindutva movement and the media, according to Bhattacharya, explains in retrospect the deliberate false reporting in Hindi and English language newspapers in the aftermath of events at Ayodhya in 1993 (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 104).

In support of Bhattacharya’s account of the V.H.P. and B.J.P.’s extensive use of technology, Peter Manuel’s book, Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Techno-
logy in North India, speaks of the "cassette revolution" in India as one of many mass media devices which have become "contested territory where hegemonic and oppositional values symbolically or explicitly engage each other" (Manuel, p. 10). He considers audiences to be active users and interpreters of media content, not simply passive consumers. Recognizing the Bombay film industry as a dominant force in Indian public culture prior to the advent of cassettes, Manuel considers the potential for corporate elite producers to have an ideological impact on lower middle-class consumers.

Manuel notes the impact of cassette technology worldwide but suggests that its impact is more pronounced in developing nations. India provides an extreme case where piracy and other factors have played a role in making it the world’s second largest producer of cassettes. Manuel examines the potential for cassette technology to serve as a vehicle for influencing, mobilizing and empowering the lower classes at the grassroots level beyond what was ever possible in the past. Cassette technology is also viewed as a vehicle for fragmenting the nation into opposing and conflictual interest groups. He observed that anti-Muslim speeches and songs, circulated nationwide by the B.J.P. and the V.H.P. during the Babri Masjid/ Ram Janmabhumi controversy, contributed to the spread of a populist movement bent on agitating the Hindu community. Manuel warns of the darker side of technological decentralization through new media that "resist censorship and control." The media is now accessible to leaders of the revolutionary masses who advocate radical messages and activities which can create positive as well as negative results.
The V.H.P. promotes its own Hindutva popular media culture through audio-visual recordings and cassettes. Through its own productions the V.H.P. has created an alternative to the Congress monopoly over Doordarshan. In many instances the messages involve terrorism, anti-Muslim, anti-secular and anti-government rhetoric. The V.H.P. uses amplified film music to draw the attention of crowds. Bhattacharya mentions the use of cassettes playing the sounds of riots from cars that vanish without a trace, leaving in their wake an actual riot (Bhattacharya, 1993, p. 99). The persuasiveness of media technology, particularly among audiences with a limited education, is both powerful and frightening. The use of cassette technology in this manner only contributes to a state of anarchy and presents overwhelming problems for India’s internal security.

The Press Council of India, which considers and decides complaints against the press and by the press, received complaints of attacks and assaults on editors, reporters and photographers who were trying to report on the incident at Ayodhya on December 6th and 7th in 1992. The Press Council set up a special committee to examine these incidents during 1992-93 and a report was to be made public the following January. The Press Council is a quasi-judicial body chaired by a Supreme Court Judge with a membership consisting of 20 representatives of the newspaper world, 5 members of Parliament and others nominated by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Although the Council has moral authority to reprimand, warn or censure newspapers considered to be guilty of committing an offence against journalistic ethics, it has no real punitive power to administer justice.
Recently pressures have been applied to the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, L. K. Advani (leader of the B.J.P.) to amend the constitution making freedom of the press a distinct fundamental right. Justice, R. Ayyanger, also stressed the need for reviving the Press Council with more teeth (Bhattacharya, K., 1979, p. 240).

In October of 1994 Bangalore, Karnataka, was the site of Hindu-Muslim conflicts over the use of Urdu in the media. Clashes resulted in the death of several hundred Muslims and Hindus. This incident provides another example of the B.J.P.’s strategy to unify Hindus by using a language issue to promote the Hindu cause. In its efforts to extinguish the use of Urdu in the media, the B.J.P. naturally got the results intended. Muslims reacted vehemently and demonstrated in the streets to protect their constitutional rights to use Urdu, a language affiliated with Islam. The B.J.P. had used a similar strategy when it was in control of the state government in Uttar Pradesh in 1991.

It appears that the B.J.P. is now focusing on Urdu as an "alien" language in Karnataka in order to unify Hindus there. The disturbance is significant because Bangalore is one of India’s most prosperous trading centers which has received a large amount of foreign investment. Rioting in this city could mean major financial losses, especially if foreign investors disengage themselves due to a lack of security. Similarly, new businesses are unlikely to take the risk of sending employees to areas of civil unrest and prospects of healthy markets are questionable. The fact that this incident involved Hindus and Muslims fighting against the police and government
troops is also significant. Not only is their anger and frustration vented toward one another but against civil authority as well.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Could India's response to minorities provide a constructive model for other pluralist democracies confronted with right wing extremists? This problem is not unique to India but is one which presents itself throughout the world today. The United Kingdom is coming to terms with the need to open communications with Irish extremists. In the aftermath of Germany's reunification, which has caused economic strains, neo-Nazi movements have emerged. The Republican Party in the United States is pressured by religious radicals in organizations such as "Operation Rescue" which has allied itself with the Christian Coalition. The task of any nation trying to cope with diversity and pluralism is not easy for a variety of reasons.

Mary Maxwell's *Morality Among Nations: An Evolutionary View* (1990), contains research studies which are helpful in understanding ethnic protest movements and violence in today's world. They also apply to the quest for solutions to India's ethnic and religious tensions. She speaks of the need for "moral restraint" in intergroup relationships in order to control the human propensity to favor one's own kin. Pierre van den Berghe comments that the phenomenon of ethnocentrism and intergroup rivalries cross-culturally today is a manifestation of kin altruism, whereby humans resort to a genetically programmed tendency to favor and help their own kind
to the exclusion of those unlike themselves (Maxwell, 1990, pp. 94-95). Van Berghe’s evolution based theory of ethnocentrism explains why humans use markers and other visual signs to identify group members. Costumes, scarification, and language dialects all help in locating one’s kin. Preferences toward one’s own kin is viewed as an extended form of nepotism.

Group morality, which is often equated with national interest, tends to promote the righteousness of the group’s cause and view the behavior of those outside the group with suspicion. According to Arthur Keith, the code of justice practiced in groups is expressed as a universal justice. Group morality leads individuals to absolve themselves of moral accountability when participating in group activities. Group morality strengthens the cohesion of the in-group in order to defend it against the out-group. Patriotism, nationalism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and racism are all expressions of group morality.

The human pre-disposition toward group morality is based on emotions and perceptions that help identify enemies, rally support for group members, and promote group pride. Group morality manifests itself as altruism, which involves loyalty, self-sacrifice, and moral superiority. The latter necessitates lowering the status of the other party in order to boost one’s own. This helps to explain the violence and unrestrained emotions that arise in wars of nationalism or liberation.

Intergroup behavior such as cooperation and competition were found to have evolutionary origins in studies conducted by A. Keith, R. Alexander and Bigelow. Their theory states that competition for scarce resources and shelter led to the
formation of group alliances to balance the power of large groups. Cooperation evolved along with competition for group defense and the protection of offspring. When intergroup conflicts occurred the most intelligent, communicative, cooperative, aggressive, and best armed were the survivors (winners). Intergroup competition was a driving force in the invention of technology and weapons.

According to M. R. Davie the principal cause of war was found to be competition over scarce resources. Conditions such as immigration, urbanization, unemployment and dense populations were mentioned in this thesis as contributing to inter-group rivalries in India.

Erik Erikson observed that groups who feel morally superior to others indoctrinate members to believe that they have a special divine role to play. As a chosen people they are justified in using violence to bring about "God's will." Collective violence is promoted by such utopian ideologies which stimulate the emotions with words and ideas. However, collective responses do not leave participants with feelings of remorse or guilt for their behavior. The lack of moral accountability for participation in group actions leave the conscience free of responsibility.

The human predisposition to believe in myths also strengthens group identification. Myths and beliefs are not based on reason or truth but are selected because they provide information that makes life comfortable and safe (Maxwell, 1990, pp. 104-105). Myths are created which help to explain why some habits are encouraged and others forbidden, making it easier to motivate people to cooperate.
As noted earlier in this thesis, religious fundamentalist groups such as the R.S.S. and V.H.P. are skilled at revising and creating myths to motivate Hindus. They sanction their actions using religious symbols, rituals, and deities. The tendency to scapegoat internal and external aliens as the cause of social problems and conform to group demands ("group think") was also evident in the Fundamentalist Project Studies.

Right wing extremists and fundamentalists alike exhibit a predisposition for obedience, conformity, and sympathy (Maxwell, 1990, p. 87). They tend to seek regularity and discipline and are not usually tolerant of deviance or eccentricity. Maxwell contends that these are innate human behaviors driven by instincts of power and morality. The impulse to moralize, to be concerned about right and wrong, stems from the genetics of altruism. Altruism evolved into moral emotions and rule-making. Rules enable humans to live peacefully in close proximity to one another and laws provide the basis for claiming civil rights.

In The Politics of Unreason, Seymour Lipset and Earl Raabe provide insights into India's current fundamentalist vs. secularist impass. They mention social strains which provide the soil for the growth of political extremism. Immigration and displacements of large populations of people were noted as contributing to the rise of right wing extremism in the United States. Three elements mentioned as being identified with right wing extremism are low democratic restraint, economic conservatism, and status preservatism. The lack of democratic restraint was associated with prejudice, intolerance of cultural diversity and ignorance of democratic norms. The lack of education correlated with all three but the kind of
education also matters because "the most dangerous and persistent monists are those who are highly educated and have an integrated system of belief that deliberately rejects pluralism" (Lipset & Raabe, 1970, p. 507).

Economic conservatism among upper class and working class voters favors restrictive immigration policies, and protective measures to support domestic products where there is a threat of competition from foreign markets. These voters oppose the welfare state, socialism, communism, taxation, and other government regulations. Status conservatism resulting from a sense of status loss, absence of power, prestige, and way of life were also identified with right wing extremism. Members of the radical right expressed the feeling that moral and fundamental values were declining and they tended to have a stronger investment in the past than in the future. William Kornhauser noted that many lacked an attachment to any group and this left them "available for mass behavior . . . and free to unite in new ways, to seek new and remote sources of attachment and allegiance" (Lipset & Raabe, 1970, p. 461). Anomie was also associated with the rising popularity of religious fundamentalist organizations in urban areas in Marty's studies. Loss of power, status, and prestige are often experienced when the political and social structure of society becomes more open and tolerant of diverse groups.

Lipset and Raabe note the resistance to modernization and change among regionals, religious and racial groups who wish to preserve their cultural identity. Combined with "preservatist" forces among elites, who aim to preserve the status quo, a climate of intolerance for social egalitarianism and political liberty prevails.
Right wing extremists justify preservatism by forming a coalition between the upper and lower classes in opposition to some minority group which they use as a scapegoat in order to preserve the status quo. Doctrines espoused by right wing extremists favor the interests of the privileged rather than the poor. Recent immigrants are often the target of their hostilities. In India's case it has been Bangladeshi immigrants and refugees.

India's survival depends upon the ability of its leaders to maintain a secular government and enforce constitutional arrangements. The Congress leadership has not been willing to make constitutional rules legally binding and this has resulted in an "unwritten agreement" that it is permissible for political parties to overlook the law. When candidates running for the Congress Party bribe The Press Club, the message conveyed is that such activities will be permissible for opposition parties as well (Awasthi, 1989, p. 49).

India's diverse population requires that its government be secular if democracy is to continue. Ambiguities which exist between provisions in the constitution and traditional cultural practices present problems for the realization of India's democratic intentions. At the village level, people continue to live a traditional and ritualistic lifestyle, practiced for centuries by their ancestors. Despite the fact that Hindu customs and practices such as dowry, early arranged marriages, and untouchability are unconstitutional, they will continue to be practiced so long as the government lacks the will and means to enforce the laws.

Noting that secularism is valued primarily by a small elite minority, it is
difficult to predict if it will survive in India. The future lies in the hands of a newly-educated, upward mobile electorate which is skeptical of secularism. Authors, such as Rudolph, Rudolph, and Price argue that India's rural based political culture has had some experience in democratic practices through panchayat rajs at the village level. But, India's urban lower middle classes appear to be more experienced in western consumer values than in democracy. The mode they have used to gain participation in politics has been through demonstrations, strikes, and rallies which often escalate into riots.

Civil disobedience, which has been an important part of Indian political history and culture, continues to be a powerful means of political expression. It was used by Ambedkar in his movement to uplift untouchables and during the independence movement by Mahatma Gandhi. Today, as evidenced events like Ayodhya, the Hindutva movement also uses civil disobedience to accomplish its goals as it thrives among disaffected elements of any kind within the Indian political system. The inefficiency of the judicial system, combined with the lack of respect for law and order, which emerged during the colonial period, lead one to conclude along with M. N. Srinivas, that "civil disobedience" is valued as an acceptable mode of expression in the Indian political system and that it is likely to continue. Srinivas observed that government officials tend to respond only when group leaders resort to street politics. It seems that

a grievance has to mature into a street riot in order to attract the attention of those in power. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all classes of Indians everywhere have come to realize that the
only way they can convince the rulers of the strength of their feeling is by resorting to the politics of street violence (Baxter et al., 1987, p. 131).

Indian political elites utilize a politics of accommodation to diffuse tensions generated by the extremist forces in society. While this approach prevents them from taking a firm stand against communalism, it may also reduce the need for the opposition to work outside government channels for social and political change.

At the same time sections of the Indian elite have moved toward the use of military solutions to solve problems. Fearing a revolution of untouchables against higher caste Hindus, leaders of the B.J.P. and Congress Party have benefitted by focusing on Muslims as the cause of economic discrepancies rather than caste differences. While some Hindu communalists claim to favor abolishing untouchability, none have actually pursued this course. Neither have Congress leaders shown a resolve to end untouchability even though it is unconstitutional.

M. N. Srinivas predicts that India's villages will become a battleground between the rich and poor. He contends that although free speech and press, which have come with democracy, provide feedback for those at the top, this does not enable the urban middle class to empathize with villagers. Srinivas blames the secular, liberal Indian elite for failing to understand militant Hinduism. He asserts that it is elite leaders who are alienated from the people rather than the people being alienated. According to Srinivas, the mixture of nationalism and religion in militant Hinduism are "extremely potent" and generate "volatile 'runaway ethnicity'" (Lynch, 1995, p. 615).
Strong leadership, President's Rule, and Emergency Rule are all measures which have been used to tackle the above mentioned problems as well as curtail the influences of the Hindu right. While the use of the Indian Army, state police, and Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (T.A.D.A.) troops to deter communal violence have restored law and order for short periods of time in certain regions, the effects are questionable. Arguing against the imposition of Emergency Rule in Kashmir, Mumtaz Ahmad stated, "It is repressive politics of government and the total absence of freedom to pursue normal activities that tend to drive religious and other political groups to radicalism" (Marty & Appleby, Vol. I, 1991, p. 500).

In some situations, government troops and police have become participants in communal violence, rape and pillage themselves. The question becomes, by what other means can a democracy such as India maintain law and order when it comes to the brink of anarchy? How can ethnic and religious tensions be reduced among diverse peoples? The problem for a democracy such as India is how to maintain democratic modes of functioning, and still allow free speech and assembly for opposition groups. When democratic institutions are threatened the government has no other recourse than to use temporary restrictive measures to check the opposition, especially when a minority is victimized by the actions of the majority.

Among Hindus, some believe that the most powerful force against militant Hinduism in India today comes from within Hinduism itself. Philosophical Hinduism, which advocates non-violence, pacifism, and tolerance, is a tradition which has sustained pluralist India for centuries. Commenting on the war within
Hinduism today, R. Bakshi quotes from Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Swami Vivekananda who urge Hindus to practice "not mere tolerance but an inclusive acceptance." . . . and a belief that "variations need not necessarily be wrong, but are perhaps different expressions of what is right" (The Sunday Times of India, March 28, 1993, p. 1).

Hindus will have to decide between orthodox, Brahminical as opposed to liberal, philosophical Hinduism, between exclusiveness and tolerance. Caught between traditional and modern values, India's citizens are faced with many choices. They will need to decide which values to preserve and which to discard from their vast and rich cultural heritage as they enter the twenty-first century.

Tolerance is also supported by secularists and rationalists who support democratic principles as stated in the constitution. At the local, state and national levels citizens are encouraged to participate in the democratic experiment. The expression of opposition and dissent may be heard in state legislatures as well as in the national assemblies, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Interest groups have gathered momentum among teachers, farmers, truckers, postal workers, and tradesmen.

India is the largest democracy in the world today and its citizens have shown an enthusiastic response to opportunities for universal suffrage. During national elections in the 1980s nearly 60 percent of the electorate exercised the right to vote. Compared to Pakistan and Bangladesh, Indians enjoy more fundamental rights, including freedom of speech and religion. However, as government policies continue
to extend opportunities for status, power and economic success to more citizens.

extremists will continue to press for limitations. Political liberty will require the use
of democratic restraints as long as opposition parties choose to resort to civil
disobedience and violence rather than compromise and dialogue.

As the present government has shown itself to be capable of maintaining
economic and political stability, Indians may gradually build confidence in a
leadership which is neither despotic nor charismatic. The era of royal dynasties to
fill the prime minister's role may be over, at least temporarily, but the democratic
institutions established by Indian leaders at the time of independence remain in place
supported by free and relatively fair elections. The fact that there has never been a
military coup d'etat points to the allegiance of the armed forces to the Indian
democratic experiment as well.

Recent state elections indicate an increasing dissatisfaction with the Congress
government as it is represented by the Congress party at the state level in the south
and in some northern states. Rao's home state of Andhra Pradesh did not support the
Congress or the B.J.P. but turned to regional parties which appealed to the poor.
Although the B.J.P. did win in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Delhi its
support represents less than 20 percent of the electorate. Congress won in the
northern states of Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh but lost to a
coalition of scheduled castes and Muslims in Uttar Pradesh.

However, factionalism within opposition parties and the lack of national
stature of most regional parties works to the advantage of the Congress Party.
Congress has also benefited from the support of parties to the right and left of its relatively central position on the political spectrum in most elections. Although regional politics may not favor the Congress government in state legislative elections, it is likely that national elections in 1996 will reaffirm Congress rule.

Since India has already demonstrated a capacity for synthesis and accommodation in its adaptation to new cultures over many centuries, it may provide a model for inclusiveness, acceptance, and tolerance for other multicultural societies. India has exported spiritual guidance for truth seekers the world over. For some whose lives cannot be fulfilled by the promises of capitalism and material comforts, Hinduism, in its various forms, promises a deeper meaning for life. India's traditions, which have emerged from cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious blending, hold within them the possibilities for communal harmony and religious tolerance, important and wise lessons to be learned in a world where survival will not be possible without mutual cooperation.

As community oriented people, Indians are already accustomed to sharing resources within kin and caste groups. However, their ability to become truly global in orientation as they enter the 21st century will depend on whether or not they are willing to trust others outside of their own community and shed isolationist tendencies. India's domestic policies in regard to minorities, especially Muslims, will have a direct bearing upon its ability to influence its South Asian regional partners. Until India enforces a common civil code law for all people regardless of religion, gender, language, ethnic, or caste status, equality before the law will not be possible.
The majority will continue to impose its will upon the minority in the public arena and this will inevitably postpone the movement toward a more conciliatory relationship between India and Pakistan. This may have serious repercussions for the whole South Asian region now that both possess nuclear capability. Such developments make it all the more imperative for India to clarify its institutional commitment to secularism.
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