

Dismantling Democracy

The 2019 Indian General Election and the Formation of the ‘BJP System’

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I. Democracy in Crisis

Democracy is being dismantled in countries around the world. After the Cold War, and against the backdrop of the wave of democratisation throughout the former Soviet bloc, the rise of illiberal democracy, which is different in form from that of liberal democracy, was being declared (Zakaria, 1997). However, at that time, the concept was treated as a typology of democracy rather than a crisis of liberal democracy. Similarly, in the context of the discussion of the theory of authoritarian regimes, a new type of authoritarian regime with a liberal democratic element called competitive authoritarianism was proposed (Levitsky and Way, 2001). These discussions concerning regime typologies sought to more accurately classify the various political systems that appeared as the democratisation process advanced globally.

However, in the 2010s, people began talking about the crisis of democracy. In Europe, the home of liberal democracy, the European Parliament election of May 2014 saw a rise in populist political parties that take issue with foreigners and migrants (Mizushima, 2016: i–ii). In June 2016, the world was shocked to see the UK vote to leave the European Union in a referendum, giving victory to the Brexit supporters. This was followed by an even greater shock—the victory of Donald Trump in the U.S. presidential election. Trump had loudly advocated for the exclusion of immigrants and is known for his controversial racist speeches and behaviours. The debate over the crisis of liberal democracy became active as a discussion over the rise of populism (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018; Muller, 2017; Mizushima, 2016); at the same time, it came to be talked about in more frank terms, such as in *How Democracies Die* (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018). We are in the age of dismantling democracy, where the demarcation between democracy and authoritarianism is becoming increasingly obscured.

India, which has maintained its democracy for almost 70 years since its independence, is no exception. In fact, India in several ways appears to be leading the crisis for democracy. When the National Democratic Alliance (hereinafter NDA) led by Narendra Modi, a Hindu supremacist, won the general election held between April and May 2014, the persecution of religious minorities in India, such as Muslims and Christians, increased. At the beginning of his administration, the ‘Love Jihad’ campaign was developed by the Sangh Parivar (family of organizations), which denounced inter-religious marriages between Hindus and Muslims as a Muslim conspiracy¹⁾; gradually, violence against Muslims by vigilante groups, such as cow protection groups, became more pronounced (Nakamizo, 2017). Such violence against religious minorities has not stopped, even after the Modi administration was re-elected in the April–May 2019 general election. Religious freedom is one of the core fundamental human rights protected by the Indian constitution, but in the current reality, it is publicly infringed upon.

How are we to understand the crisis of democracy in India? What effects did the oppression of Muslims and other religious minorities, which advanced under the first Modi administration,

have on Modi's re-election? What conditions are religious minorities being placed under by the 'BJP system' established after the re-election? In considering these questions, this article aims to explain an aspect of the crisis of Indian democracy and, in turn, the global crisis of democracy that is spreading across the globe.

II. The Oppression of Religious Minorities

One of the characteristic ways in which religious minorities are oppressed is the organized violence carried out by vigilante groups. Here, let us consider one such typical vigilante group known as the cow protection group (*Gau Rakshaks*). Cows are considered holy in several interpretations of Hinduism, and therefore treated as a religious taboo to slaughter cows. Article 48 of the Constitution of India states, 'The State shall endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter, of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle' (Majumdar and Kataria, 2004: 68). Based on this, each state has enacted laws that prevent the slaughter of cows and bulls, and as of December 2018, 23 out of 29 states and 6 out of 7 union territories have established laws prohibiting the slaughter of cows. In some states, the slaughter of not just cows but bulls and/or water buffalos is also banned (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 16). The slaughter of cows is not prohibited in West Bengal, Kerala, and the North-eastern states; thus, any cow slaughter can be carried out only in these states.

While slaughtering is forbidden in many states, the reality is that India is the world's largest exporter of beef (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 60). This appears obvious if one considers that the number of cattle being raised in India, including that of water-buffalo, is the highest in the world. Many of the farming households are comprised of Hindus, and the use of bulls in agriculture has waned due to the mechanisation of agriculture. Once bulls reach the age permitted by law, they are sold for slaughter as a source of income. Similarly, when cows aged and no longer produce milk, they are sold off to be slaughtered. As such, farmers and slaughterhouse operators have a long-standing symbiotic relationship, and it is this relationship that the cow protection groups have taken notice of.

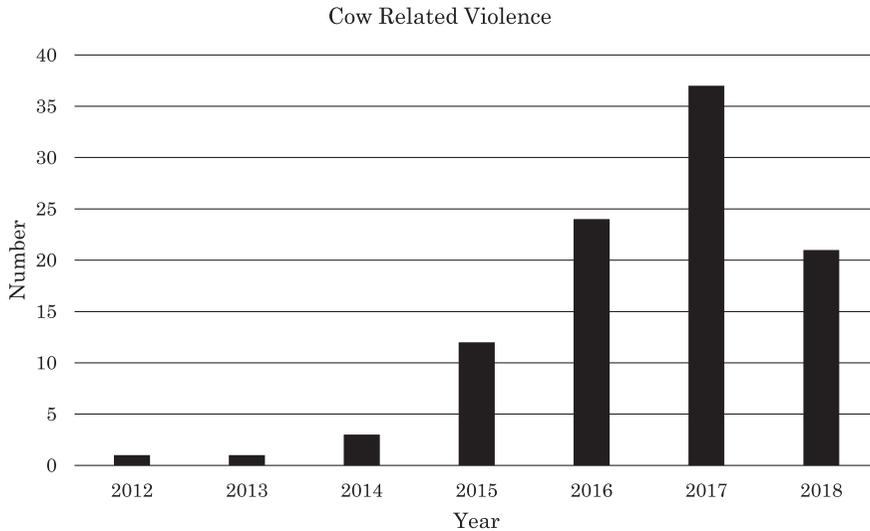
Figure 1 shows the number of cow-related violent incidences that occurred between 2012 and 2018. The number of incidences rose sharply after the establishment of the Modi administration. Before 2014, there was just one case per year. Compared to such low instances, in 2017 the violence reached its peak with 37 incidences. Out of the 29 deaths that occurred due to these events up to 2017, 25 (86%) were Muslims.²⁾ As will be explained later, there are many cow protection groups and organisations, and their main activities include raiding trucks that carry cows to slaughterhouses and handing over the cows and the drivers to the police. During these raids, the activists sometimes beat the drivers, who are most often Muslims, as punishment. In the more atrocious cases, there have been reports of the mere rumour of possessing beef being enough to trigger lynching and murdering and, in some cases, setting houses on fire.³⁾ Lynching incidents against Muslims have not shown any signs of abating, even after the re-election of the Modi administration.⁴⁾ Why are such incidents occurring so frequently?

III. The New Strategy of Hindu Supremacism

1. *The authoritarian element within a democratic system*

The fact that the lynching of Muslims by vigilante organisations is left unchecked is not only a

Figure 1 Cow-Related Hate Crime in India (2012–18)



Source: Compiled by author based on IndiaSpend database, quoted in Alison Saldanha, ‘Cow-Related Hate Crimes Peaked in 2017, 86% of Those Killed Muslim’, *The Wire*, December 8, 2017, <https://thewire.in/203103/cow-vigilantism-violence-2017-muslims-hate-crime/> (last accessed on December 8, 2017) for 2012–17 data and Varun B. Krishnan, ‘The Cow vigilante menace: U.P. records highest number of incidents’, *The Hindu*, December 05, 2018, <https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-point-the-cow-vigilante-menace/article25666768.ece> (last accessed on January 19, 2020) for 2018 data. Date for December 2018 is up to December 4th, 2018. Articles of *the Wire* and *the Hindu* are based on same data set which was published by IndiaSpend. Now this data set is deleted from IndiaSpend. See, ‘FactChecker pulls down hate crime database, IndiaSpend editor Samar Halarnkar resigns’, *Scroll.in*, September 12, 2019. <https://scroll.in/latest/937076/factchecker-pulls-down-hate-crime-watch-database-sister-websites-editor-resigns> (last accessed on January 19, 2020). FactChecker received Data Journalism Award in 2019 from this survey.

clear violation of human rights but has also become symptomatic of the crisis of democracy. Concerning this crisis in India, Chandra (2017b) argues that we should not be focusing on the theories of political regimes but rather on the authoritarian elements within the democratic regime. According to her, ‘The problem with these typologies, however, is that they come with blind spots. In typological thinking, countries belong to one and only one category. This prevents us from acknowledging the coexistence of democratic and authoritarian elements and their interaction in many countries’ (Chandra, 2017b). Thus, it is more productive to analyse the admixture of democratic elements and authoritarian elements, such as dynastic politics, the continuation of colonial-era sedition law, ‘emergency powers’, and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act.

Kim’s analysis of Modi’s politics follows this line of thought (Kim, 2017). She labels Modi’s politics as a ‘twin-track approach’ and points out that Modi is seeking to affect a cultural revolution while operating within the framework of the existing political system. In addition, she highlights historical path dependence while focusing on continuities from the time when the Indian National Congress (hereinafter Congress or INC) led the government (Kim, 2017: 365–370). Concerning the cow protection movement discussed in this paper, Kim argues that the existence of article 48 of the constitution (previously noted) and the cow slaughter prevention laws in each state give grounds for their movement.

In analysing the crisis of democracy in India, it seems that focusing on the authoritarian element within the democratic system, as argued by Chandra and Kim, would provide a more accurate picture of India’s reality than would focusing on the discussion concerning regime

classifications. However, in contrast to their emphasis on continuity with the past, this author considers the present change to be something new. To demonstrate this point, let us briefly review the history of Hindu supremacism.

2. The concept of Hindu Rashtra

We can trace the history of Hindu supremacism back to the activities of the Arya Samaj (Arya Society), which began its activities in the late 19th century. However, it is *Hindutva* ('Hinduness'), a book authored nearly a century ago by V. D. Savarkar (1923) that continues to hold a strong ideological influence until this day. V. D. Savarkar was a Hindu supremacist ideologue who campaigned against the British and the Muslims during British Rule. Initially, he led a terrorist group as an anti-British movement, but after being imprisoned and disciplined by the colonial government, he shifted his enemy focus to Muslims with the hope of uniting the Hindus. Subsequently, he became the president of the Hindu Mahasabha (Hindu Grand Assembly), which is one of the Hindu supremacist groups.

The goal of Hindu supremacists is to turn India into a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu nation).⁵⁾ The idea of 'Hindu Rashtra' is highly exclusive in nature. In *Hindutva*, Savarkar (1989: 115–116) describes Hindus as a people of a common nation (*rashtra*), common race (*jati*) and common culture (*sanskriti*) for whom India (*Sindhusthan*) is their fatherland (*pitribhu*) and holy land (*punyabhu*). For this reason, one who has converted to Islam or Christianity cannot be a Hindu, even though one shares the same fatherland and culture with the Hindus, because one's holy land is outside of India (Savarkar, 1989: 113).

Savarkar did his best to define 'Hindu' as broadly as possible to include the various sects of Hinduism as well as the Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs whose origins are in India; because of this, the exclusion of what he called 'foreign religions', including Islam and Christianity, was all the more accentuated. M. S. Golwalkar, the second president of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Corps, hereinafter RSS)—the most influential Hindu supremacist group—clearly stated the following in his key publication:

'From this standpoint, sanctioned by the experiences of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead—in one word they must 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 citizens' rights' (Golwalkar 1947: 55–56).

The current activities of the cow protection groups appear to embody this ideology.

3. The Dilemma of the Moderates and the Hardliners

For nearly a century, Hindu supremacists have been ideologically repeating the same claim, but the strategy to realise the Hindu Rashtra has been a repetition of trial and error. The RSS was banned after one of its former members assassinated M.K. Gandhi in 1948. Learning from this experience, they established Bharatiya Jana Sangh (Indian People's Party, hereinafter BJS) as a political arm in 1951 and contested elections; however, the party was unable to obtain enough votes because it was tabooed 'the party that assassinated Gandhi'. They were able to win only three seats in the first general election that took place between 1951 and 52. In 1966, they looked ahead to the following election year, rolled out a cow protection movement and succeeded in mobilising participants estimated between 125,000 and 700,000 in number

(Jaffrelot, 1996: 204–213). However, even amidst the decline of the Congress seen nationwide, they faced the limits of their strategy, winning 35 seats out of 520.

Roughly speaking, the BJS and its successor the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party, hereinafter BJP) have two lines of strategy (Hansen and Jaffrelot, 1998: 1, Jaffrelot, 1996). The first line could be considered a moderate line of strategy, which focusses on restraining its Hindu supremacism rhetoric while emphasising socio-economic policies and strengthening cooperation with other political parties to gain political power. The second strategy could be called a hardliner approach. Based on the fact that almost 80% of India's population is Hindu, the party prioritises Hindu votes by loudly vocalising Hindu supremacist rhetoric. The moderate line of approach led them to actively participate in the JP Movement, which was the anti-Congress movement in the mid-1970,⁶⁾ thus, strengthening the cooperation between the opposition parties. This cooperation led to victory in the general election in 1977 and the establishment of the Janata Party (People's Party) administration. The hardliner approach consists of a strategy of mobilising masses of people through the overuse of religious symbols and at times stimulating religious sentiments through religious riots to obtain support from the Hindus. In reality, beginning with the religious riots that occurred under the Janata Party administration, this path led to the Ayodhya mobilization and the religious riots that occurred after the mid-1980s.⁷⁾ In general, before Modi became a prime minister, the BJS and BJP had oscillated between a moderate and a hardliner (militant) line.

From the mid-1970s to 1984, the moderates held power in BJS and BJP. Even after religious riots instigated by the RSS toppled the Janata Party administration, Vajpayee, who represented the moderates, led the formation of the BJP as the successor of the BJS and tempered the rhetoric of Hindu supremacism in the early 1980s. However, with their severe loss in the general election of 1984, the BJP switched to taking the hardliner's approach (Nakamizo, 2012: 142–146). In the latter half of the 1980s, the hardliners actively pursued Ayodhya mobilisation in the attempt to build up the Hindu vote. The Ayodhya mobilisation that occurred during the 1989 general election caused many riots, including the largest riots—the Bhagalpur riots in the state of Bihar in which more than a thousand were killed (Nakamizo, 2012: 159–203), but it also led the BJP to win 85 seats; furthermore, in the general election of 1991, the BJP made further advances to win 120 seats.

Accordingly, in December 1992, the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished by the Sangh Parivar and, with nearly 2,000 casualties from the ensuing anti-Muslim riots, the BJP once more began its return to a moderate line of approach. In the general election of 1996, while it brought up the realisation of the Hindu Rashtra, the BJP did not touch upon the Ayodhya issue and kept the rhetoric of Hindu supremacism low key (Hansen and Jaffrelot, 1998: 1–7). As a result, they managed to win 161 out of 543 seats and secured the position of the single largest party.

While Vajpayee, who represented the moderates, became the prime minister, he was unable to survive the vote of confidence, and thus, the focus of his effort shifted towards establishing a political alliance. The result of this effort was the 1998 general election, which Vajpayee entered by forming the BJP coalition; he not only managed to win the largest bloc of seats at 182 but also survived the vote of confidence that led him to lead the administration. In the 1999 general election, the coalition was renamed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and managed to be re-elected.

The tide began turning during the third Vajpayee administration, following the 2002 Gujarat carnage. The Gujarat carnage in 2002, which was the year after Modi took office as the state's chief minister, resulted in a catastrophe that killed 1,180 people, mainly Muslims, according to government figures (Nakamizo, 2015b: 219–243). Rather than taking steps to stop the carnage, Modi defended it and won the Gujarat state assembly election which was held later in 2002. Vajpayee and other BJP executives overlooked his responsibilities and commended Modi for his work. However, the BJP lost the 2004 general election, gaining only 138 seats. Vajpayee retired,

saying, 'It is very difficult to say what are all the reasons for the [BJP's] defeat in the elections... but one impact of the violence was we lost the elections'.⁸⁾ The carnage was strongly criticised not only by Muslims but also by Hindus, and the BJP was unable to increase its party share in the 2009 general election, gaining only 116 seats. Modi's nomination for prime minister, as he had won three successive Gujarat state assembly elections, was aimed at resuscitation.⁹⁾

Let me summarise the BJP's dilemma. Hansen and Jaffrelot pointed out in a 1996 general election analysis that the BJP faced a range of new political compulsions, such as the emergence of regional parties, the rise of backward and scheduled castes, and the growing constituency for Hindu nationalist politics amongst the upper-caste Hindus, urban middle classes and upward-mobile groups in northern and western India (Hansen and Jaffrelot, 1998: 7–11). These compulsions can be described as a dilemma between gaining power and gaining support. In other words, in order to extend support base beyond the Hindu supremacist, the Hindu supremacist claim must be restrained. However, the restraint could cause the Hindu supremacists to break away, as was prominent in the 1984 general election in which BJP procured only two seats. On the other hand, the attempting to gain support from Hindu supremacists would trigger religious riots and the loss of their power at the central government, as seen in the Janata party's collapse in 1979 and their defeat in the 2004 general election. In short, while the realisation of the Hindu Rashtra necessitates maintaining control of the central government, this dilemma stands in the way. Overcoming this political dilemma is, in fact, as I argue, the aim of Modi's two-sword strategy.

4. Modi's two-sword strategy

Modi's two-sword strategy is a combination of economic growth, which the moderates emphasise, and Hindu supremacism, which is emphasised by the hardliners (Nakamizo, 2017; Chandras, 2017a). Modi shifted his policy focus to economic growth after his victory in the Gujarat state assembly election in 2002 based on a strong anti-Muslim/Pakistan campaign. Until the 2014 general election, Gujarat's economic growth rate was higher than the Indian average, and this achievement was announced in the 2014 election campaign as the 'Gujarat Model'. The Gujarat Model has truly become a trump card in solving the unemployment problem in India, which was struggling with stagflation at the end of the United Progressive Alliance (hereinafter UPA) administration led by the Congress. Expectations of solving economic problems supported Modi's victory in the 2014 general election (Nakamizo, 2015a).

Hindu supremacism has taken on a new form with Modi in power. For Hindu supremacist Modi, the fact that he cannot lose the support of the RSS is deeply ingrained. At the same time, mass murder, such as the 2002 Gujarat massacre, cannot be repeated if he wants to hold power at centre and introduce foreign investment which is essential for achieving economic growth. The long period of denial of entry into the United States for being held responsible for the 2002 carnage must be an unforgettable memory for him.¹⁰⁾ One way of overcoming this dilemma is to leave the vigilante groups to act freely.¹¹⁾

Although these vigilante groups have ties to the RSS and BJP, using them as the main actors of supremacist and hardliner activities allows the government to deny links to these activities. In addition, the number of casualties in individual assaults is almost always one, or at most several, making it harder to attract media attention compared to the large scale religious riots.¹²⁾ On the other hand, the lively and widespread activities of these groups can show the Hindu supremacists that the government are promoting the realisation of the Hindu Rashtra while simultaneously raising the vague fear of not knowing when, where and what will happen. This fear is directed towards Muslims to ensure their obedience. Vanaik rightly describes the Hindu supremacist's project as 'their longer-term goal of carrying out their wider transformative project of installing a Hindu *rashtra* (nation), entailing the permanent inferiorisation of religious minorities' (Vanaik, 2017: 24). Allowing the vigilante groups to act freely enables the government

to kill two birds with one stone: realising the Hindu Rashtra, while ensuring less criticism of the government.

5. Activities of vigilante groups

Two instances, in particular, help us understand the link between the cow vigilante groups and the Sangh Parivar.¹³⁾

Case 1: Cow protection group

This group formed in 2000 in Maharashtra, western India. Their main activity is the cow protection movement, which had cracked down on approximately 800 cases as of September 2017, when I conducted the interview. According to the organiser, the cow protection activities aim to protect Hindus from Muslim attacks. The core of his claim was that Muslims are slaughtering cows to show that Hindus are weak and that hurting Hindus is the sole purpose of the Muslims. When I asked about the criticism that the activities of the cow protection groups threatened the lives of Muslims, he argued that it was entirely false.¹⁴⁾

There are three characteristics of this organisation. First, it functions as the right arm of the state. The main activity of the cow protection movement, as previously mentioned, is to capture trucks that transport cattle to slaughterhouses and hand over drivers to the police. In Maharashtra, the Maharashtra Animal Protection Act (amended) was enacted in 1995, banning the slaughter of cows and bulls. The law, which was supposed to be enacted following the president's approval, was put into effect 20 years later, in 2015, after receiving the president's approval under the Modi administration. The cow protection groups started working long before the act received presidential approval, seizing trucks carrying cattle and handing them over to the police. They perceive themselves as part of a state organisation that complements police operations.¹⁵⁾

The second characteristic is the depth of the group's relationship with the RSS. The founder's father is a member of the RSS, and the founder himself also received RSS executive training. The founder eventually left the organisation due to differences in policy with the RSS, but his younger brother continues to be an activist in the RSS. Thus, although they are not officially affiliated with the RSS, we can see the close relationship.

Finally, we can observe the close relationship of cow protection groups with politics. In the 2014 Maharashtra state assembly election, which was held after the 2014 general election, the founder decided to run for the BJP but could not get a party ticket, so he ran for Shiv Sena (army of Shivaji), another Hindu supremacist party. The founder's cousin was a member of the municipal corporation from the BJP and had a BJP banner in his office. At least three police officers were on guard when I visited. Thus, the strong relationship with politics is evident.

Case 2: Hindu Yuva Vahini (Hindu Youth Army)

The Hindu Yuva Vahini is an organisation that was formed in 2002 by the Uttar Pradesh (hereinafter UP) chief minister Yogi Adityanath of the BJP. Yogi is the *mahant* (chief priest) of Gorakhnath *math* (Hindu temple), located in eastern UP, and is known for his anti-Muslim propaganda (Jha, 2017: 35–58). The official purpose of the Hindu Yuva Vahini is to protect Hindus from Muslim terrorists, Maoists, and the conversion to other religions,¹⁶⁾ but their real purpose is to deepen the conflict between religions and create support for the Yogi.¹⁷⁾ The general secretary has explained that the Hindu Yuva Vahini is working for Hinduism. According to him, 'We cannot be *Ram*, but we can follow the practices of *Ram*'.¹⁸⁾ Cow protection is one among their various activities. They believe 'the cow is a sacred animal, we cannot afford to abandon the cow'. Similar to Case 1 discussed earlier, this group also captures trucks that take cows to slaughterhouses and hands the drivers over to the police. When I asked if the activities of cow protection groups were threatening the lives of Muslims, the general secretary said,

‘They are trying to create a division between Hindus and Muslims. We have a law prohibiting the slaughter of cows, and Muslims should abide by this.’

There are three characteristics of this organisation. First, as with the organisation in Case 1, they regard themselves as part of a state organisation, especially with respect to the cow protection movement. The style of their activities is almost the same as Case 1.

Second, their relationship with the RSS is not clear. Originally, the Hindu Yuva Vahini was an organisation created by Yogi to build his own power base, and it had a certain distance from the RSS (Jha, 2017: 38–42). After Yogi assumed the post of chief minister in 2017, it appears that this organisation became more alienated. The RSS fears that the Hindu Yuva Vahini could grow into political power with its own foundation, similar to the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. It is alleged that the BJP did not give tickets to Hindu Yuva Vahini cadres in the 2017 state assembly election. However, it is certain that the Hindu Yuva Vahini is ideologically close to the RSS.

Finally, the relationship between the Hindu Yuva Vahini and politics is very strong. In fact, this group is a political group (Jha, 2017: 43). As mentioned earlier, the group members are also politically ambitious because of their aim to secure political support for Yogi. The cadres who could not be certified by the BJP in the 2017 state legislative election left the Hindu Yuva Vahini and ran on their own.

In short, the Hindu Yuva Vahini have a strong connection with politics and act as a part of the state regarding the cow protection movement.

6. Impact of cow protection groups on society

In light of the above survey, how do the activities of these cow protection groups affect society? As an example, I want to take the case of the north Indian state of Bihar, which I have studied for many years. In the village of M, located in the Madhepura district in east Bihar, there has long been no religious conflict. The Muslim population here is a minority, at only 4%, while the Yadav caste accounts for more than 60% of the population (Nakamizo, 2012: 61). Since the establishment of the Modi administration, anti-Muslim propaganda has spread, but Hindu-Muslim relations have not changed. However, according to a Hindu farmer, the atmosphere has begun to change gradually since February 2017, when Yogi became the UP chief minister. First, the price of cattle started to fall gradually.¹⁹⁾

In this situation, an incident occurred in September 2017. It happened just after the BJP returned to power by switching the chief minister Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (united) [People’s Party (United), hereinafter JD (U)] to the NDA, breaking the tie with Rashtriya Janata Dal (National People’s Party, hereinafter RJD). The incident began when the carcasses of slaughtered cattle were found in a canal in the Murliganj block, approximately 20 km from the village of M. According to a report, Sri Ram Sena (Army of Ram), one of the Hindu supremacist groups who heard about the incident, demanded to take decisive action against the Muslims and hurled stones at the police, hitting the Madhepura sub-divisional magistrates’ car.²⁰⁾ Subsequently, they demanded the closure of the nearby Murliganj market, which was shut for several days. However, the district magistrate of Madhepura took immediate stern measures, including shutting down internet connections in eight neighbouring districts, to successfully prevent religious riots.²¹⁾

News of the dead cattle found in the canal immediately spread to M village. According to the villagers, the incident did not exacerbate Hindu-Muslim relationships, but the price of cattle dropped sharply as Muslim traders refrained from purchasing cattle. The usual selling price dropped from Rs. 20,000 per head to Rs. 5,000. Farmers were losing money regardless of their religion; farmers’ suffering was also reported in the neighbouring state of UP.²²⁾

From this case, it can be confirmed that psychological fear is spreading among Muslims, even in a remote area far from the state capital of Patna. Religious riots themselves were prevented by the prompt response of the district magistrate, but the action of cow protection groups

created an atmosphere of religious tension. As Vanaik pointed out earlier, it can be said that arbitrary violence has resulted in making Muslims into the position of permanent inferiority. How has this situation affected the 2019 general election?

IV. 2019 General Election

1. BJP victory

Modi overturned most expectations of BJP disadvantages. In November 2016, the sudden declaration of demonetisation that caused economic disruption and the enactment of the Goods and Services Tax reform, which was introduced in 2017 as a pillar of economic reform, confused the traditional support base of merchants due to frequent rule changes. Given that the unemployment rate, which was the government's largest agenda, was reported to be the worst ever since 1972,²³⁾ the expectation of the BJP's disadvantage was real. In addition, in the state assembly elections held in December 2018, just before the general election, the fact that the BJP lost in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which had long been a solid foundation for support, and also lost in Rajasthan, was further bad news.

However, BJP extended their seats further, going from 282 seats to 303, and the NDA as a whole maintained its 352 seats as before. The Congress, against the expectations of a change of government, could increase its seats from 44 to only 52, the UPA only increasing from 62 seats to 90 seats. The results were far from a change of government. Who supported the BJP?

According to an election survey, which was conducted by the national newspaper *The Hindu* and the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (hereinafter the CSDS survey), the BJP gathered more support from Hindu electorates than the 2014 general election. Overall, Hindu support increased from 36% to 44%, that of the upper castes increased from 47% to 52%, that of the backward castes increased from 34% to 44%, and that of the Dalits increased from 24% to 34% (Sardesai and Attri, 2019). Given that the BJP won the 2014 general election backed by the backward castes and Dalits, from whom the BJP had not been able to gain enough support before, this victory seems to be based on these lower classes who have decided to support the BJP even more.

2. Bihar State Survey

How did the new Hindu supremacism we have examined so far influence the election? I want to analyse the results of our Bihar survey, which was conducted in collaboration with Dr. Taberez Ahmed Neyazi of the National University of Singapore.²⁴⁾ In Bihar, the NDA won 31 out of 40 seats in the last general election in 2014, making a significant contribution to the BJP's victory alongside UP. This time, the number of seats was further extended to 39, an almost complete victory. This outcome almost compensated for the seats that the BJP lost in UP.

First, Table 1 shows the relationship between religious identities and party support. The NDA

Table 1 Religion and Party Support

	BJP	JD (U)	INC	RJD
Hindu	45.1%	20.2%	2.6%	7.7%
Muslim	12.2%	4.4%	29.2%	25.9%
Total number	864	383	148	229

(Source) 2019 Bihar survey

(Abbreviations) BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, JD (U): Janata Dal (United), INC: Indian National Congress, RJD: Rashtriya Janata Dal

Table 2 Party Support and Religious Issues

	BJP	JDU	INC	RJD
(1) Indo-Pak Relation	3.17	3.36	3.29	3.44
(2) Religious minorities	2.49	2.24	2.94	2.76
(3) Gau Raksha	3.24	3.31	4.06	3.77
(4) Ram temple	4.68	4.7	2.59	3.46
Total Number	864	383	147	229

(Source) 2019 Bihar Survey

(Note) Figure shows the mean of 5 scales as below.

(1) Indo-Pakistan relationship: We asked the importance of Indo-Pakistan relationship by using the scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

(2) Religious minorities: We asked the interviewees to respond to the thesis 'Oppression of religious minorities has increased over the past five years of this central government' by using 5 scales as follows. 1: Strongly disagree, 2: disagree somewhat, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: agree somewhat, 5: strongly agree, DK: Don't know.

(3) Gau Raksha: We asked the interviewees to respond to the thesis 'Government should take action against vigilante groups like Gau Rakshaks' by using 5 scales as same as (2).

(4) Ram temple: We asked the interviewees to respond to the thesis 'Ram temple should be built on the site of Babri Mosque' by using 5 scales as (2).

(Abbreviations) BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, JD (U): Janata Dal (United), INC: Indian National Congress, RJD: Rashtriya Janata Dal

[BJP and JD (U)] obtained 65.3% of the Hindu votes, while the UPA (INC and RJD) obtained 55.1% of the Muslim votes.

Table 2 shows the impact of religious issues on voting behaviours. Here, I highlight four important religious issues, as discussed below.

(1) Indo-Pakistan relations

The first issue is the Indo-Pakistan relationships. This issue could be classified as an international issue, but in the current context of India, religious factors are deeply ingrained in this relationship. Therefore, I include this relationship in the category of religious issues in the 2019 election.

On February 14th 2019, two months before the election, the terrorist attacked on security forces at Pulwama in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (now a union territory).²⁵⁾ Not only was the subsequent retaliatory Balacot air strikes by the Indian Air Force on Pakistani-administered Kashmir on February 26 turned into a major element in the general election campaign, but the strike itself as Hall argue proved crucial to shifting the focus from economic issues to national security (Hall, 2019: 511). In part, this resulted from the fact that the BJP's election manifesto laid out a zero-tolerance measure against terrorism as the top priority (Bharatiya Janata Party, 2019: 11), euphemistically citing the air strikes on Pakistan as evidence of this measure.

What was the responses of Bihar voters? In Bihar, this issue seemed not to have had much impact on voting behaviour, as seen in Table 2 row (1). The means range from 3.17 to 3.44. We thus did not find a significant difference between the four major parties. The results of the Bihar survey reveal that the effect of the tensions between India and Pakistan was not so clear.

(2) Oppression of religious minorities

Next, let us consider the oppression of religious minorities. The answers to the survey question regarding whether the 'oppression of religious minorities has increased over the past five years of this government' are shown in Table 2 row (2).

Comparing the Indo-Pakistan relationship, we can observe the difference between the NDA [BJP and JD (U)] and the UPA (INC and RJD). The mean for the NDA [BJP: 2.49, JD (U): 2.24] was lower than that for the UPA (INC: 2.94, RJD: 2.76). In disaggregated format, BJP support-

ers' responses of 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree somewhat' accounted for 59.3%, while those of 'agree somewhat' and 'strongly agree' enumerated only 31%. The gap between the two groups is 28.3 points. Among JD (U) supporters, 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree somewhat' counted for 63.8%, while 'agree somewhat' and 'strongly agree' accounted for only 22.7%. The gap between the two groups is 41.1 points. In contrast, the Congress supporters' answers of 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree somewhat' accounted for 39.5%, while those of 'agree somewhat' and 'strongly agree' counted for 45.6%. The gap between these two groups is 6.1 points. Among RJD supporters, 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree somewhat' accounted for 42.4%, while 'agree somewhat' and 'strongly agree' counted for 37.6%. The gap between these two groups is only 4.8 points.

Based on the disaggregated figures, we can confirm the tendency of NDA supporters to not recognise the presence of oppression, while UPA supporters are more likely to recognise the presence of oppression.

(3) Activities of cow protection groups

How do the activities of the cow protection groups, as an arm of the new Hindu supremacism, affect society? Table 2 row (3) shows the answers to the survey question regarding whether the 'government should take action against vigilante groups such as Gau Rakshaks'. We can observe the difference between NDA supporters and UPA supporters. The means of the NDA [BJP: 3.24, JD (U): 3.31] are lower than those of the UPA (INC: 4.06, RJD: 3.77). Disaggregated, the percentages of 'agree somewhat' and 'strongly agree', the BJP and JD (U) accounted for 35.1% and 39.4%, respectively, while the Congress Party and RJD accounted for 68.9% and 63%, respectively. The gap between the NDA and the UPA is quite large from a minimum 23.6 points [JD (U) and RJD] to maximum 33.8 points (BJP and INC). This large gap shows that UPA supporters are more critical about the government's action than are NDA supporters.

(4) Ayodhya issue

Finally, I want to examine the impact of the Ayodhya issue, which consists of one of BJP's three main agendas. In its election manifesto, the BJP clearly promises the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya as follows: 'We reiterate our stand on Ram Mandir. We will explore all possibilities within the framework of the Constitution and all necessary efforts to facilitate the expeditious construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya' (Bharatiya Janata Party, 2019: 36). As mentioned above, the Ayodhya issue was an essential symbol of mobilisation for the BJP to expand its support. In this regard, Table 2 row (4) shows the answers to the question regarding whether the 'Ram temple should be built on the site of the Babri Mosque'.

We can observe remarkable differences between the NDA and the UPA about this issue. The means of the NDA [BJP: 4.68, JD (U): 4.7] are significantly larger than those of the UPA (INC: 2.59, RJD: 3.46). In disaggregated format, the voters who 'strongly agree' consist of 79.7% of the BJP supporters and 75.9% of the JD (U) supporters, with 19.6% being among the Congress supporters and 39.1% being among the RJD supporters. Most NDA supporters have a clear mandate for the construction of the Ram temple. Given that the Ayodhya issue has a symbolic meaning in Hindu supremacist ideology, one can see that Hindu supremacist ideology is widespread among NDA supporters. From this result, it can be assumed that the effect of Hindu supremacism played an important role in the victory of NDA in Bihar.

V. The formation of the 'BJP system' and the future of democracy

Rajni Kothari named the stable one-party dominance of the Congress after the independence as

the ‘Congress system’ (Kothari, 1964). The BJP secured a majority in parliament for the first time in the 2014 general election and increased its seats in the 2019 election. It was the first time in 35 years that a party gained more than 300 seats, since after the Congress exceeded 400 seats in the 1984 general election. The opposition parties, led by the Congress, won only 90 seats in the UPA in 2019. Given that the NDA dominates more than half of the states, the party system has changed to a one-party/party alliance dominance system, meaning that the ‘BJP system’ has been established.²⁶⁾

There are three axes of the ‘BJP system’. The first axis is economic growth typified by the ‘Gujarat model’. For the large youth population in India, economic growth that solves unemployment issues is a key factor in support for the BJP. It has been found that younger people favoured BJP in this election (Mishra and Negi, 2019).

The second is the institutionalisation of Hindu Rashtra. The most prominent examples are the National Register of Citizens (hereinafter the NRC) and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019 (hereinafter the CAA), which are currently being introduced by the Modi administration. In the state of Assam, which borders Bangladesh, an NRC procedure has been carried out to expel Muslim ‘illegal immigrants’, and a report released at the end of August 2019 showed that almost 1.9 million people could not prove their citizenship.²⁷⁾ Contrary to the intentions of the Modi administration, approximately 1.2 million of these individuals were Hindus. However, the CAA provides citizenship for Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian communities who fled from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh before December 31, 2014. Thus, through this act, only Muslims are excluded; while the rest, including Hindus, are rescued.²⁸⁾ In addition, the Home Minister, Amit Shah has declared that the NRC process will be extended to all of India.²⁹⁾ Satya Prakash Agarwal, a member of the state assembly in Uttar Pradesh—the largest state in India and where BJP has taken control—has said that his constituency, Meerut, has a large number of immigrants from Bangladesh. ‘They should not be allowed to stay in the country’, he has claimed.³⁰⁾ Thus, the NRC and the CAA are playing their part in the institutionalisation of Muslim expulsion from all over India. Attempts to institutionalise the persecution against Muslims are evidenced by the sudden deprivation of the constitutional autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir announced on August 5, 2019, and by the simultaneous arrests of important Muslim opposition leaders.³¹⁾ A similar attempt is the taking over of state institutions by assigning RSS members to key posts; the control of higher education institutions such as universities by RSS-influenced scholars is a striking example (D’Souza, 2018: 18–24; Sundar, 2018: 53–54).

The third axis of the ‘BJP system’ is the suppression of religious minorities by leaving violence unchecked, as is evident in the remarkable growth of vigilante organisations that we have considered. As evidenced by the incidents that have taken place in a remote rural area in Bihar, the situation of not knowing when, where and what will happen creates a state of ‘permanent inferiorisation of religious minorities’, as pointed out by Vanaik. This is a harsh reality for religious minorities such as Muslims and Christians.

This is a world that is completely different from the ‘Congress system’. Kothari noted the existence of ‘politics of consensus’ as an important function of the ‘Congress system’ (Kothari, 1964). In other words, the Congress party, which is a ‘central party’, allowed free competition between the factions, and the competition accepted various demands from society. The coordination of interests among the factions was based on consensus, thus serving to unite Indian society across differences in religion, caste, language, etc.

The ‘BJP system’ has the opposite feature. The aim of this system is to integrate India as a Hindu Rashtra, and the fruits of economic growth serve as the glue that binds the system. On the other hand, religious minorities, especially Muslims, are first harassed by violence and then isolated by institutional measures, finally leading to the loss of their place in India. This is the realisation of majority tyranny, in which there is no space for ‘politics of consensus’. We are

currently witnessing the ‘politics of obedience’, in which religious minorities have to obey to majority Hindus as Golwarkar indicated.

However, the possibilities for regaining the ‘politics of consensus’ cannot be entirely written off. The ‘BJP system’ is also riddled with several kinds of political fault lines and vulnerabilities. At present, thus, though Indian democracy is facing a crisis, there remains a vibrant civil society and a range of democratic resistance movements that have begun to effectively counter the suppression of religious minorities. Following the enactment of the aforementioned CAA, opposition movements are in fact mushrooming throughout India at the time of the writing of this article.³²⁾ This is the first major opposition movement since the inauguration of the Modi government in 2014. There are other threats, such as the assassination of journalists who are critical of Hindu supremacism, but citizens will not stop their protests.³³⁾ Despite losing this time, some parliamentary parties and politicians, such as RJD’s Laloo Prasad Yadav, have strongly advocated for the protection of secularism. It is not impossible to survive the current crisis as long as there are people who continue to speak out against various intimidations with powerful words and as long as the international community gives both concrete and psychological support. This need can be pointed out in the context of the global crisis of democracy. The future of democracy rests on these efforts and initiatives.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr. Tabereh Ahmed Neyazi (National University of Singapore) for 2019 Bihar election survey and data analysis, Former Prof. Achin Vanaik (Delhi University), Ms. Pamela Philipose (Public Editor of *The Wire. in*), Emeritus Professors Imtiaz Ahmad (Jawaharlal Nehru University) and Kamal Mitra Chenoy (Jawaharlal Nehru University) for their precious comments and generous supports. My colleague, Associate Professor Rohan D’Souza (Kyoto University) helps me a lot as usual. Needless to say, all errors are mine and mine alone. This article is a product of the JSPS Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research (A) (18H03624, Representative: Prof. Kazuya Nakamizo, Kyoto University).

Notes

- 1) See, (Nakamizo, 2015a). Sangh Parivar (family of organisations) is an umbrella organisation for Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (national volunteer corps) and other affiliated groups, and the Bharatiya Janata Party forms its political arm. Their main purpose is to turn India into ‘Hindu Rashtra’ (Hindu nation) which I will explain soon.
- 2) Alison Saldanha, ‘Cow-Related Hate Crimes Peaked in 2017, 86% of Those Killed Muslim’, *The Wire*, December 8, 2017, <https://thewire.in/203103/cow-vigilantism-violence-2017-muslims-hate-crime/> (last accessed on December 8, 2017).
- 3) Puniyani (2017) and Barkha Dutt, ‘Rise of Gau Rakshaks: Don’t Hide behind Euphemisms, This is Murder, Writes Barkha Dutt’, *Hindustan Times*, July 16, 2017. For reference. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/columns/gau-rakshak-vigilantism-this-is-the-new-normal/story-Se6IiRfZ64r7IHxByD7SQK.html> (last accessed on November 28, 2017).
- 4) Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, ‘Rising Hate Crimes in Uttar Pradesh: Striking Fear’, *Frontline*, September 27, 2019, <https://frontline.thehindu.com/social-issues/article29382677.ece> (last accessed on October 1, 2019).
- 5) See Vanaik (2017: 368). Vanaik points out that the Sangh Parivar upholds a highly exclusive form of Hindu nationalism, which asserts that India must recognise itself as a Hindu nation and that it needs an effective Hindu state in order to gain national and international strength and prestige.
- 6) The JP Movement is derived from the name of Jaya Prakash Narayan, who led the movement.
- 7) Ayodhya is an ancient city in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh and said to be the birthplace of Lord Ram, a Hindu deity. Hindu supremacists claim that when the Mughal Empire conquered India, Muslims destroyed the Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Ram and constructed the Babri Masjid (mosque) on the site in the name of the first Mughal emperor, Babur. To this day, Hindu supremacists continues to argue that it is the duty of Hindus to destroy the Babri Masjid and rebuild a new Ram temple on the same site. This is referred to as the ‘Ayodhya issue’.

- 8) See, 'Gujarat riots a cause of defeat: Vajpayee', *Rediff.com*, Jun 12, 2004. For reference, <https://www.rediff.com/news/2004/jun/12abv.htm> (last accessed on February 2, 2020). See also, 'Not Removing Modi was a Mistake, Says Vajpayee', *The Hindu*, Jun 14, 2004. For reference, <http://www.thehindu.com/2004/06/14/stories/2004061411630100.htm> (last accessed on November 27, 2017). Former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, also stated, 'This [Godhra incident] provoked widespread riots in many cities of Gujarat. Possibly the biggest blot on Vajpayee's government, it may have been Godhra that cost BJP the next elections [2004 general election]', See, 'Gujarat Riots 'Biggest Blot' on Vajpayee Government, Says Pranab Mukherjee,' *India Today*, October 15, 2017. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/gujarat-riots-2002-vajpayee-governments-pranab-mukherjee/1/1069181.html> (last accessed on February 11, 2020).
- 9) According to a BJP cadre, before Modi was nominated as a prime minister candidate, the prediction of won seats in the 2014 election was as low as 161 seats. However, the BJP actually got 282 seats in 2014 election, which was an increase of 121 seats from their prediction. He praised the popularity of Modi. Interview at BJP office in Mumbai on May 16, 2018.
- 10) Vanaik analysed the converted strategy as being friendly to capitalist profit (Vanaik, 2017: 394). He further pointed out that Modi's official visits to more than 60 countries in three years since becoming prime minister may have been to dispel *pariah* (untouchable) status in the international community (Vanaik, 2017: 369).
- 11) Modi, even after lynching incidents of Muslims by cow protection groups were reported in 2015, remained silent. The statement that finally criticised the cow protection groups was made in July 2016 just after the Una incident which had happened in his home state of Gujarat. In Una, *dalits* (former untouchables) who were engaged in the leather industry were captured and whipped by a cow protection group; videos of them being tied to a car and whipped were spread across social networking services and became a major problem. Modi's reaction is thought to be because the Dalits votes are important for the BJP, unlike that of the Muslims. Despite of this statement, actions by the cow protection groups continued, and a year later the statement was issued again. It can be said that cow protection groups are effectively free to operate. For the above, see Jaffrelot (2017: 56–57) and 'Punjab: Crackdown on "Cow Vigilantes", Gau Raksha Dal Chief Booked', *Indian Express*, August 8, 2016. For reference, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/crackdown-on-cow-vigilantes-gau-raksha-dal-chief-booked-2961138/> (last accessed on December 5, 2017); 'Narendra Modi Warns Cow Vigilantes: Killing in the Name of Gau Bhakti is Unacceptable', *Indian Express*, June 29, 2017. For reference, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/narendra-modi-warns-cow-vigilantes-killing-in-the-name-of-cow-is-unacceptable-4727361/> (last accessed on November 26, 2017).
- 12) Hasan also pointed out that low-intensity violence hardly attracts attention compared to major riots. See, Hasan (2017: 31).
- 13) Sources are anonymised due to the sensitivity of this issue.
- 14) Interview with the organizer (September 5, 2017, at his office).
- 15) A. G. Noorani, "The Ban on Cow Slaughter," *Frontline*, June 24, 2016, for reference <https://www.frontline.in/social-issues/the-ban-on-cow-slaughter/article8700526.ece> (last accessed on July 14, 2018). Maharashtra expanded its slaughter ban from cows to bulls for the first time in 2015. Vanaik (2017: 209) for reference. The state government has also created a new post called 'Honorary Animal Welfare Officer' and posted one in each district. Applicants for this post were all activists from cow protection groups as far as their names could be identified. See, Jaffrelot (2017: 56), and also Sumita Nair, 'Refrain in Sangh Turf: Cards will Give Us Power', *Indian Express*, January 27, 2017. For reference, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/maharashtra-government-beef-ban-gau-rakshak-id-cards-animal-husbandry-modi-sangh-turf-2991489/><http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/maharashtra-government-beef-ban-gau-rakshak-id-cards-animal-husbandry-modi-sangh-turf-2991489/> (last accessed on December 6, 2017).
- 16) Interview with renowned local journalist Mr. Manoji Singh (March 15, 2018).
- 17) See, Jha (2017: 35–38) for reference. The general secretary denied this charge by saying that the purpose of the Hindu Yuva Vahini is to overcome the social division and create unity in society (Interview at his office on March 15, 2018).
- 18) Interview with the general secretary of Hindu Yuva Vahini (March 15, 2018).
- 19) An interview with Hindu farmers (May 5, 2018).
- 20) Anand ST Das, 'Sight of Cattle Carcasses in Canal Sparks Communal Tension in Bihar Town, Internet Services Suspended in Eight Districts', *The New Indian Express*, September 6, 2017. For reference, <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2017/sep/06/sight-of-cattle-carcasses-in-canal-sparks-communal-tension-in-bihar-town-internet-services-suspende-1653025--1.html> (last accessed on July 14, 2018). For Shri Ram Sena, see Jha (2017: 85–108).
- 21) Interview with a local journalist (Hindu) on May 3, 2018. According to him, carcasses of cattle were abandoned in

- a canal by Muslims fearing police arrest. In this area, cattle have traditionally been offered as sacrifices during Bakri Id, and local Hindus have not opposed it. However, in 2017, in the neighbouring Araria district, a case was made accusing Muslims of offering cattle for sacrifice, and several Muslims were arrested by police. According to him, the news spread to the Madhepura district, and Muslims fearing arrest threw carcasses of cattle into the canal. I heard the same story from a Hindu farmer in village M. Meanwhile, Muslim residents did not admit that the Muslims slaughtered the cattle. Interview at M Village (May 2018).
- 22) Krishna Kant, 'Gau Raksha Has Turned Cattle into Enemies of Farmers', *The Wire*, August 17, 2017. For reference, <https://thewire.in/politics/gau-raksha-turned-cattle-enemies-farmers> (last accessed on July 14, 2018).
 - 23) 'India Job Data Spells Trouble for Narendra Modi', *BBC News*, January 31, 2019. It has also been reported that the Modi administration has refused to publish the findings. For reference, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47068223> (last accessed on October 14, 2019).
 - 24) The 2019 Bihar survey was conducted by the author and Dr. Tabereh Ahmed Neyazi (National University of Singapore) as a two-wave pre- and post-poll panel survey, using the fund of JSPS Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research (A) (18H03624, Representative: Prof. Kazuya Nakamizo, Kyoto University). The respondents were selected by multistage sampling among 52 state assembly constituencies. The face-to-face interviews were conducted by trained interviewers from a Delhi-based research firm, who worked closely with the main researchers on all aspects of sampling and data collection. The pre-poll survey was conducted from March 25 to April 22, 2019 and received responses from 3,025 voters, with a response rate of 69.3% WAPOR RR1. The post-poll survey was conducted from April 24 to May 22 among the same respondents from wave 1, obtaining responses from 2,558 voters for a response rate of 83.8%. In this analysis, I used the result of the post-poll survey. The social composition of the respondents is as follows: Hindus: 2,257 persons (88.2% of total), Muslims: 280 persons (10.9%), Christian: 13 persons (0.5%), and Sikh: 8 persons (0.3%). For correcting the data bias, we applied weights for gender and religion based on 2011 census figures, since women and Muslims were under-represented in the data. After applying the weights, the women and Muslims in our sample accounted for 46.6% and 17.1% respectively, representing the Bihar population. For questions about the vigilante groups (Gau Rakshaks), we conducted a telephone survey with our panel from May 23 to July 9, 2019 after the declaration of the election result. We were able to get a response from 2,203 respondents.
 - 25) See, 'Pulwama Attack 2019, everything about J&K terror attack on CRPF by terrorist Adil Ahmed Dar, Jaish-e-Mohammad', *India Today web desk*, February 16, 2019. For reference, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pulwama-attack-2019-everything-about-jammu-and-kashmir-terror-attack-on-crpf-by-terrorist-adil-ahmed-dar-jaish-e-mohammad-1457530-2019-02-16> (last accessed on October 16, 2019).
 - 26) See Nakamizo (2019). Palshikar (2017) pointed out the change in the political party system immediately after the February 2017 Uttar Pradesh state assembly election as the establishment of the 'second one-party dominance system', though he did not name this dominance as 'BJP system'. See also Palshikar (2019).
 - 27) Sushanta Talukdar, 'National Register of Citizens in Assam: Trauma of exclusion', *Frontline*, October 11, 2019, For reference, <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/article29498496.ece> (last accessed on October 1, 2019). However, in fact, 1.2 million of the 1.9 million were Hindus, which was not what BJP intended. See 'Why Hindus Excluded From Assam Citizens' List': Trinamool To BJP', *NDTV*, September 25, 2019. For reference, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/trinamool-to-bjp-on-nrc-why-hindus-excluded-from-assam-citizens-list-2106638> (last accessed on October 17, 2019).
 - 28) See for the original text of CAA as below site. <http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2019/214646.pdf> (last accessed on February 5, 2020) And also see, Damini Nath and Vijaita Singh, 'After a heated debate, Rajya Sabha clears Citizenship (Amendment) Bill', *The Hindu*, December 11, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/parliament-clears-citizenship-amendment-bill/article30279517.ece> (last accessed on January 19, 2020).
 - 29) Chetan Chauhan, 'Amit Shah reiterates call for pan-India National Register of Citizens: All you need to know', *The Hindustan Times*, December 11, 2019. For reference, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/amit-shah-reiterates-call-for-pan-india-national-register-of-citizens-all-you-need-to-know/story-XxQ9SqXwb1giP1A6zuiDRP.html> (last accessed on January 19, 2020).
 - 30) Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, 'NRC: A sinister political scheme', *Frontline*, October 11, 2019. For reference, <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/article29498517.ece> (last accessed on October 1, 2019).
 - 31) See, 'Massive uproar in Rajya Sabha over abolition of provisions of Article 370', *The Hindu*, August 5, 2019. For reference, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/massive-uproar-in-rajya-sabha-over-abolition-of-provisions-of-article-370/article28821618.ece> (last accessed on February 2, 2020).
 - 32) See, 'CAA protesters celebrate Republic Day all across India in their own unique way', *India Today*, January 27, 2020, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/caa-protests-republicday-india-shaheenbagh-kerala-1640391-2020-01-27>

(last accessed on February 2, 2020).

- 33) Protest demonstrations took place throughout India following the assassination of Gauri Lankesh, a journalist and social activist who had argued against Hindu supremacism. See, 'Activist in Mumbai protest scribe Gauri Lankesh's murder', *The Hindu*, September 7, 2017. For reference, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/activists-protest-scribes-murder/article19632713.ece> (last accessed on January 20, 2020). And also see Siddiqui (2017) for another cases.

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