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Hindu Nationalism in Indian Literatures

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Abstract

Nationalism is a sense of identification with the Nation. It is a belief, creed or political ideology that involves an individual identification with, or becoming attached to one's nation. It involves national identity, in contrast with the related construct of patriotism, which involves the social conditioning and personal behaviors that support a state's decisions and action. Nationalism is subjective, a way of living, feeling and thinking. British rule was the harbinger of Nationalist upsurges in India. Hindu Nationalism is the child of British Raj.

The Hindu nationalism has been collectively referred to as the expressions of social and political thought based on the native spiritual and cultural traditions of historical India. It is a political ideology that encompasses different groups. Some scholars have argued that the use of the term 'Hindu Nationalism' refers to Hindu Raastravaada, is a simplistic translation and is better described by the term "Hindu Polity".

*Swami Viveknanda was a patriot to the core. He has been rightly called "The father of Modern Hindu Nationalism". He roused national consciousness by his forceful call "**Arise awake and stop not till the goal is reached**". Hindu renaissance in the nineteenth century gave importance to Hindu nationalism and encouraged the growth of literatures. These literatures help the growth of Nationalism against British colonial rule.*

One of the most revered leaders of the Raashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha, Baba Saheb Apte's lifelong pet sentence was "Vivekananda is like Gita for the RSS". Indian historians have observed that through literary works during colonial and postcolonial period solidarity to Hindu Nationalism is provided. Today BJP, Janasangh, RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Sanga Parivar highlighting the Hindu Nationalism in its Propaganda, articles, texts, journals and its literary works.

Key Words: Patriotism, Nationalism, Hindu Polity, Renaissance, Inspiration, Religion.

Introduction: Benedict Anderson defines Nation as "A nation is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow- members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community". The term 'Nation' is derived from the Latin word 'Natio' this means 'birth or race or stock'. This term became popular during French Revolution and used to mean

‘Patriotism’. Nationalism is a sense of identity with the nation we belongs to. It is a belief, creed or political ideology that involves indentifying with or becoming attached to, one’s nation. Nationalism involves national identity in contrast with the related construct of patriotism, which involves the social conditioning and personal behaviors that support a state’s decisions and actions. Nationalism has its own peculiar historical development. It is subjective, a way of living, feeling and thinking. British rule was the harbinger of nationalist upsurges in India. Hindu nationalism is the child of the British Raj and blossomed in India during nineteenth century.

Hindu Nationalism has been collectively referred to as the expressions of social and political thought, based on the native spiritual and cultural traditions of historical India. Some scholars have argued that the use of the term ‘Hindu Nationalism’ refers to Hindu Raastravaada, is a simplistic translation and is better described by the term ‘Hindu Polity’. Hindu Nationalism is a political ideology encompasses different groups. Broadly, these groups are all defined Indian cultural society and politics in terms of Hindu religious values in Indian literatures.

Objectives:

1. To analyzes the genesis of Hindu nationalism in Indian literatures.
2. To study the growth of Hindu Nationalism.
3. The impact of Hindu nationalism in Indian literatures.
4. To highlight the alternative modes of understanding Hindu nationalism.
5. Further research areas of study in Indian literatures.

Origin: The first references on the word Hindu Nationalism we get during nineteenth century in Hindu Renaissance period. It encourages the growth of Hindu National consciousness. Brahmo Samaj which was established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first creative organization inspired the Indians by renaissance. Brahmo Samaj started a magazine called ‘Samwad Kaumudi’, under the guidance of Ram Mohan Roy. It took up the cause of Hindu religion and society, attempted to reform them, asserted equality for Hindu religion on the basis of Holy Scriptures of Hinduism, Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. The Brahmo Samaj also participated in building the national sentiment among the Indians. It glorified the ancient culture of India, helped in developing confidence among Indians in their own religion and participated directly in the resurgence of Hindu nationalism.

The Arya Samaj also contributed for the raising of Hindu national consciousness. Swami Dayananda Saraswati proclaimed the right of every Hindu to study Vedas which are the holy books of the Hindus. He wrote three books namely Satyarth prakasha, Veda Bhashya Bhumika and Veda Bhashya. One of the biographers of Swami Dayananda wrote, “Political independence was one of first objectives of Dayananda. Indeed, he was the first man to use the term swaraj. He was the first to insist on people to use only swadeshi articles manufactured in India and to discard foreign things. He was the first to recognize Hindi as the National language of India”. Many Indian National leaders like Tilak, Gokhale, Lajpat Rai were deeply influenced by the philosophy and principles of the Arya Samaj and helped

for the growth of Hindu nationalism in literatures. The Theosophical society influenced the educated Indians in large numbers. Mrs. Anni Besant started 'Home Rule Movement' and popularized the Indian Hindu culture and values and through her lectures on Hinduism and Indian culture, interpreted Hindu nationalism in the right perspective.

Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission: The credit of propagating the ideals of Ramakrishna Paramhansa goes to his great disciple Swami Vivekananda. He represented the very soul of Hinduism and its spiritualism. His message of spiritualism contributed remarkably towards strengthening of Hindu nationalism, religion and society. He made the Hindus to realize the degraded position to which they had fallen and inspired them to regain their past glory. The Hindus follow the path of Vendantas and they would realize the soul of their religion and able to build a glorious society and nation once more. Vivekananda participated in building up of the Indian nationalism the way he established the superiority of Hindu religion and spiritualism, certainly generated a feeling of confidence, self-glorification and patriotism among the Hindus, and helped in national building activity. A kind of spiritual Hinduism carried over by Swami Viveknanda in India and in the Western World. Vivekananda participated in the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 at Chicago and spread the message of universal brotherhood and religious toleration. It was carried forward by Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. It also became the main inspiration for the current brand of Hindu Nationalism today.

Swami Vivekananda was a patriot to the core. The Modern Indian Historians have rightly remarked Swami Vivekananda the "Father of Modern Hindu Nationalism". He largely created it and also embodied in his own life its highest and noblest elements. He roused National Conscious by his forceful call "**Arise Awake and stop not till the goal is reached**". Thus Swami Vivekananda and his Ramakrishna Mission made a solid contribution to Hindu nationalism.

Rabindranath Tagore: Tagore's idea of nation and Hindu nationalism found in his novels Gitanjali, Gora, Nakul Kundra and Amritsar. Gora is the largest novel interpreted the various themes like friendship, motherhood, love, caste discrimination, women emancipation, nation and nationalism, religion, and Hindu nationalism. Gora is more than a mere novel; it is an epic of India in transition at a crucial period of Modern history, when the social conscience and intellectual awareness of the new intelligentsia were in the throes of a great churning. No other book gives so masterly an analysis of the complex of Indian social life with its teeming contradictions, or of the character of Indian nationalism which draws its roots from renascent Hinduism and stretches out its arms towards universal humanism. In Gora, the idea of nation and nationalism swings between the two poles-Hinduism and the Brahmo Samaj in the colonial setting. Interestingly Gora converts to Hinduism only when he feels bad about the humiliation of his land and its people by the British. This shift is noticeable for its motive – it is not religion itself but the idea of a united nation motivates him to go for Hinduism. Thus he finds traditional customs and rituals as a means of national unity. Tagore's another popular novel Gitanjali got noble prize in literature in 1913 and our National Anthem found in Gitanjali highlights about Hindustan.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak: Tilak was a figure of multifaceted personality. As a journalist, he started two newspapers called *Kesari* in Marathi and *Maratha* in English. He exposed the real intentions of the British through his articles. He tried to arouse the spirit of Hindu Nationalism through his writings. He in 1893 started Ganapati Festival and in 1895 organized Shivaji Jayanthi festival aroused patriotic sentiments in the hearts of the people and revival Hindu national sentiments. The political ideals swadeshi, swaraj and swadharma were the concepts well developed by Tilak. “**Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it**” were the fiery words of Tilak which roused a sleeping nation to action, making Indian people aware of their political plight under foreign rule. Tilak advocated self-sacrifice to attain complete Independence and demand for Hindu Nationalism.

Aurobindo Ghosh: The idea of swadeshi was the basic idea of revolutionary programme of Aurobindo. His writings in weekly newspaper *Yugantar* prepared the ground for swadeshi movement in Bengal. Aurobindo was highly influenced by ‘*Bhagavad Geeta*’. Hence his political philosophy is based upon the principles of knowledge, devotion and karma of Gita. The main features of political ideas of Aurobindo are spiritual freedom, nationalism, Hindu nationalism, internationalism and moral spiritual values. He also became the editor of ‘*Bande Mataram*’ the daily newspaper made him the prophet of Hindu nationalism and patriotism. According to him, Nationalism is not merely a political programme, it is a religion that has come from God. Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live. If you are going to be nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit and thus he greatly contributed to spiritualism and Nationalism.

Bankim Chandra Chatterji: B.C.Chatterjee’s *Anandamath* a foundational text for the understanding of Indian Nationalism, is analyzed as a representative text that can help the students of postcolonial literatures to understand the material condition under which texts are produced and distributed. Bankim has been variously described as the father of the Indian novel and as one of the most important Indian political novelist of the anti-colonial era. The hymn *Bande Mataram* in *Anandamath* became the unofficial anthem during the partition of Bengal in 1905 and during the ensuing struggle for Independence from British rule. This song and Bankim’s construction of the nation as mother again gained prominence as Indian politics took a strong rightward swing from the 1980’s. Hindutva ideologies recurrently invoke and interpret his *Anandamath* in dangerous ways of self-represent themselves as bearing the mantle of true Indian Hindu Nationalism. Bankim’s imagined constructions of National community in *Anandamath* have in contemporary times reified into structures of epistemological orthodoxy. The Hindu right invokes to unify historical memory and to secure consent in the present, urging Indians to forget that they were inventions of a historical moment. They also construct a hegemonic Hindu Nationalist identity, consciously erasing other narratives that undercut the construct synchronic origins of the Nation in the late nineteenth century. Today *Anandamath* text figure on the post-colonial literature syllabuses both for its unparalleled impact on Indian Nationalist

movements and for its pertinence today as an important source for understanding and interrogating contemporary militant, masculine, Hindu Nationalism in India.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar: Veer Savarkar was an extraordinary revolutionary of twentieth century. He wrote many literary works and his most famous literary work “**1857-The Indian War of Independence**”, published in 1906 but The British Government immediately banned the book for writing against British. Later the British by arresting him, for his revolutionary activities sent to the Andaman jail. In 1921 he was brought back to India and put into the Ratnagiri jail. Here he wrote his ideological treatise ‘Hindutva’: Who is a Hindu? in 1923. In his work, Savarkar promotes a radical new vision of Hindu social and political consciousness. Savarkar began describing a ‘Hindu’ as a patriotic inhabitant of Bharatavarsha, venturing beyond a religious identity. While emphasizing the need for patriotic and social unity of all Hindu communities, he described Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism as one and the same. He outlined his vision of a ‘Hindu Rashtra’ as ‘Akhand Bharat’, purportedly stretching across the entire Indian subcontinent. Savarkar regards being Hindu as a cultural and political identity. He also served as the president of Hindu Mahasabha for several times. He wrote an inspirational historical work, ‘Saha Soneri Pane’ (Six Golden Pages) recounting some of the golden periods of Indian History. The Hindu Mahasabha is the National representative body of Hinduism. It aims at all round regeneration of the Hindu people. Hindu Mahasabha is a Hindu Rashtra - Sabha and is a Pan – Hindu organization shaping the destinies of the Hindu Nation in all its social, political and cultural aspects. So Veer Savarkar rightly known as the ‘Father of Hindu Nationalism’

Mahatma Gandhiji: Gandhiji was a great prolific writer. One of Gandhi’s earliest publications ‘Hind Swaraj’, published in Gujarati in 1909. For decades he edited several newspapers including Harijan, Young India and Navajeevan. Gandhiji wrote his autobiography “The Story of My Experiments with Truth” is the practical experience of his life. He launched many constructive programmes to make Indians self-sufficient. He also advocated the concept of ‘Ramarajya’ under the doctrine of ‘Hindu Nationalism’. His articles on Hindu Dharma inspired to Hindu’s to Ramarajya concept. Gandhiji’s literary works highlights the views of nationalism and they are relevant even today in India and also in the western world.

Alur Venkatarao: Alur Venkatarao one of the foremost leader, contributed much for the promotion of Kannada language, history and culture. He wrote ‘Karnataka Gata Vaibhava’ in 1916 describing the glorious past of Karnataka and the sprite of National feeling among the Kannadigas. His unique contribution to literature and unification movement earned him the title ‘Karnataka Kula Purohita’. Due to his great efforts Mysore state was unified on 1st November 1956.

Rajarao: Rajarao wrote Kanthapura an English novel in 1938. In the novel Rajarao tries to highlights the small village in Mysore district named Kanthapura to expose the village to the limelight of nationalism. Rajarao wanted to create a public awareness in the village through the charter Murthi. Murthi introduces Gandhiji to the village people in the novel and through his views he wishes to build a real Nation. He participated in all the Gandhiji’s

movements and introduced it in the village. Kanthapura is one the famous English novels describes the Indian topical villages and the people's participation in all the activities of the village and the growth of Hindu nationalism.

Hindu Nationalism- A book review: Christophe Jaffrelot wrote a book known Hindu Nationalism in 2007. In India and abroad, Hindu Nationalism came in headlines in the 1990's when the Ayodhya movement, to build a temple in place of a mosque gained momentum. This was when the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party came to power. This stream of Indian politics is, however, considerably older, than the left, the congress or any other.

The first part of this reader, comprising the writings of both famous and unknown ideologues, shows that some in the 19th century Hindu socio-religious reformers, such as Swami Dayananda Saraswati founder of Arya Samaj prepared the ground for Hindu Nationalism by positing a Vedic golden age. In the foundation, the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS elaborated their vision of Hindu India in the twentieth century. Now V. D. Savarkar viewed the Muslim as the perfect other, a figure to be stigmatized and emulated with fascinating ambivalence. A full- fledged ethno- religious concept, Hindutva, came into being, a notion that mentors of the Janasanga and the BJP, such as Deendayal Upadhyaya and Balraj Madhok- refined subsequently by adding Gandhian nuances as well as more exclusivist overtones.

In the second part, the reader outlines every major political issue on which the Hindu Nationalist Movement has taken a distinct position. These include: how to participate in party politics without diluting the core cultural doctrine; how to cope with conversions by catering more to class needs, how to promote Hindi without alienating South India, how to fight reservation without losing the other backward caste votes, how to criticize secularism without seeming communal, how to reform education and economy, how to recuperate Kashmir, and how to make the Hindu Diaspora replicate the original ideology beyond India's boundaries. In brief, this reader is indispensable for anyone who wishes to understand contemporary Indian politics, society, culture and history.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: One of the most revered leaders of the Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh Baba Saheb Apte's lifelong pet sentence was "Vivekananda is like Gita for the RSS". Historians have observed that this helped the nascent Independence movement with a distinct National identity and kept it from being the simple derivative function of European Nationalisms. Today Hindu nationalism was designed by Bharathiya Janatha Party, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Shivasena, Sangh Parivar, high lighting in its Propaganda, texts, articles, journals and literary works.

Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in a Central Indian tribal community: The rise of Hindu Nationalism in a central Indian tribal (adivasi) community. It is a response to the lack of ethnographic attention with in wider Nationalist discourse to the kinds of social conditions and processes that have contributed to the manifestation of Nationalism at the grass roots level. It is argued that the successful spread of Hindu Nationalism in specifically

tribal areas is due to the instrumentalist involvement of Rashtriya SwayamSevak Sangh a militant Hindu Nationalist organization, in local affairs. The outcome of such involvement is the promotion of the threatening others and the attachment of ethnic group of loyalties to a wider Nationalist agenda.

Violent gods: Hindu Nationalism in India's Present: This book is written by Angana P. Chatterji is an erudite and elegiac exploration of Hindu Nationalism in Indian today. It offers a revealing account of Hindu militant mobilizations as an authoritarian manifest throughout culture, polity, and economy, religion and law, class and caste, on gender, body land and memory. Tracing the continuities between Hindutva and Hindu cultural dominance, this book maps the architectures of civic and despotic govern mentalities contouring Hindu Nationalism in public, domestic and everyday life. At the intersections of anthropology, post-colonial, subaltern and South Asia Studies author asks a critical questions of Nation making, cultural Nationalism and subaltern disenfranchisement. As a foucauldian history of the present this book asserts the role of ethical knowledge production as counter- memory.

Other Literatures: Chetan Bhagata's Hindu Nationalism, Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths, Peggy Froerer's The emergence of Hindu Nationalism in Central Indian Tribal community, Chris Ogden's Portents of power, Hindu Nationalism and the evolution of contemporary Indian Security, Sitanshu Das's Review of Indian nationalism: A study in Evolution, John Harriss's Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy, John Zavos's The emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India, Chandrim Chakraborty's Reading Anandamath, understanding Hindutva: Post-colonial Literatures and the politics of canonization and many other literary works analyses Hindu Nationalism in Indian literature.

John Zavos: The emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India: This book examines a key stage in the development of Hindu Nationalism as a political ideology. It focuses on various movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which sought to mobilize Hindus by advocating specific ideas of what it meant to be Hindu. It situates the ideology in the broad contest of colonial rule, particularly with respect to the roots of Indian Nationalism and the impact of colonialism on religion and caste. Much of the current literature on Hindu Nationalism begins with the 1920's and this book provides essential back ground material.

Conclusion: Hindu Nationalism in Indian literatures is concerned with the strength and unity of Hindus as a religious, social, political community. It is also a doctrine has been concerned primarily with promoting unity and a sense of Nationhood among the Hindu. This paper also analyzes the genesis of Hindu Nationalism in Indian literatures and implications of constructed Hinduism. Hindu Nationalism argues that Hinduism is the engine of Indian history and asserts the equivalence at the level of culture if not always of religion, of the term Indian and Hindu. So in the Indian literature Hindu Nationalism has been collectively referred to the expressions of social and political thought, based native spiritual and cultural traditions of historical India. The discourse of Hindu Nationalism thus

well entrenched during colonial period and post Independent period solidified in literatures produced in India. The creative writings tried to contribute in their own way to this construction rarely rethinking a possibility of a land/region without a religion. This paper is the elaborate archives of constructed Hindu Nationalism in literatures of India and possibly to find out alternative of understanding of the societal traditions.

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