CHAPTER 4

FROM SECULAR NATIONALISM TO CULTURAL NATIONALISM:
SHIFTING PRIORITIES IN EDUCATION

This chapter deals with the paradigm shift in the ideology of nationalism put forward by the Indian state in the course of the change of regime. The change in the political sphere, as we have emphasised earlier, also effected a change in the ideological discourses in the school education. The disenchantment with secularist values emphasised by the Nehruvian agenda of nationalism paved the way for the rise of cultural nationalism, enabling the political organisations with communal inclinations take advantage.

Secularism has often been juxtaposed with the term communalism by most scholars. We, therefore, begin this chapter by discussing the conceptual framework of communalism and understand how much significance it assumes in the rise of cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism in India is used interchangeably with the terms such as 'Religious nationalism' and 'Hindu nationalism'. It is because of the fact that cultural nationalists place their stake based on the Hindu values. Hence, an attempt is made to trace the rise and emergence of the Hindu nationalist Movement initiated by the RSS, its ideological formation through the writings of Savarkar and Golwalkar, and finally the emergence of the BJP as a political force which attempted to inculcate the ideology of cultural nationalism through school education. The final section would deal with the ways/methods adopted by the BJP in doing so and the ideological debates it generated among the various sections of the Indian society.

Part A – Communalism

The term Communalism has to do with different communities fighting for their share of power, authority etc. within a nation state, of which both are of equal or full members. India, for example, being a secular country, faces this problem more often due to competing claims from different communities based on such criteria as caste, religion, regional or linguistic differences. Communalism is based on the following features:
1. A community feeling along both ethnic and linguistic lines.
2. A sense of common historical experience.
3. A continuity through biological descent; and
4. The sharing of common social and cultural conditions.

K. N. Panikkar adds a new factor to the definition of communalism, namely religion. He separates communitarian and communal identities from each other. Panikkar explains what he means by communal identity but the definition of communitarian identity remains unclear. A communal identity is firstly an identity of belonging to a community. Secondly, it can include a feeling of belonging to a religion.

Communitarian identity, according to him, is religious. A communal identity does not necessarily need to be against another religion or community. Panikkar continues that these religious or communitarian identities need not necessarily be communal. Yet it is important to recognise that such an identity could be transformed into a communal one by posing an antagonistic relationship. Therefore, religious and communitarian identities form necessary pre-requisites for communalism. Without these pre-requisites, the type of communalism existing in India today cannot take place at all. Communalism usually assumes that there is a dormant communitarian feeling which can be activated. Communal forces are today engaged in reinforcing and activating religious communitarian identities.¹

Surajen Das adds an important view to Panikkar’s definition. A communal identity, when regarded as religious, concerns personal allegiance to a set of practices and dogmas, which are often part of a search for a reward from the transcendental reality. Communitarian identity, on the other hand, entails individual commitment to special interests of a religious community for gaining worldly advantages at the expense of other communities. Religious violence is provoked by sectarian and doctrinaire differences;

communal animosities are primarily motivated by conflicts over political power and economic resources.²

When communalists strive for political power and autonomy, or independence for the territory one can speak of religious nationalism. When communalism has a political or an economic aspiration we can start speaking of ideology. T. N. Madan has defined three principles for ideology which are also applicable to communalism. First, every ideology is rooted in historical experience, but it is futuristic even when it calls for a return to historical fundamentals. It is, then, a link between identity and aspiration. The roots of communalism are in the ethnic identity and traditions of a person, which are then promoted to highlight the difference to other identities. Secondly, an ideology is a comprehensive, even totalising, blueprint for living and for action, which defines whether to preserve elements of the status quo, or to revive elements of a past that are considered weakened or lost, or to proceed towards a newly visualised future. Communalism is a way of life for the supporters of its ideas. Sikh communalists, for example, retreated to their sanctuary, the Golden Temple of Amritsar, to be able to practice their religion and plan their political activity. Thirdly, ideology is rhetorical in form: it seeks to convince and persuade people of the desirability of a particular world image, and mobilise them for action to achieve the stated objective. Hindu communalists seek to revive the historical Golden Age to promote their idea of a Hindu state and to gain more support for this.³ To sum up, communalism aims to improve the social, economic or political position of a community based on religion, language or common descent/ethnicity within a state.

Communalism as Political Ideology

The political parties of pre- and post-independent India fall into two categories. First, there are parties organised around communalist ideologies, like Hindu Maha Sabha and the Muslim League during the pre-independence period, and the BJP, the Akali Dal and the Muslim League in contemporary India. The parties in the second category are those

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which use communalism for political support and mobilisation without necessarily adopting communalism as their political ideology. K. N. Panikkar claims that the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Indira Gandhi falls into this category. Indira Gandhi tried to identify herself with Hinduism even though she represented a secular party. Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir are explicit instances where the Congress party had succumbed to communalist politics.  

However, Bipan Chandra brings a new aspect to Panikkar's definition. He argues that it would be wrong to brand the Congress Party as a communalist party, either earlier or now. According to Chandra, communalist parties and groups are those which are structured around the communalist ideology. If you take away communalist ideology or make the parties abandon communalist ideology, nothing is left of them. In other words, the communalist party only exists because of communalism.  

Chandra distinguishes communalism and opportunism and classifies the Congress party rather as an 'opportunistic party'. He asserts that there is a difference between communalist parties which are structured along communalist ideologies, and secular, even weakly secular, parties taking an opportunistic stand towards communalism. As an example of the opportunistic politics of the Congress Party, Chandra explains how the Congress party used to put up Muslim candidates in Muslim areas and Brahmins in Brahmin areas for gaining the votes of those areas. They would never have put up a Muslim candidate in an area where there are only three to four per cent Muslims. Opportunism is partially a response to the communalisation of society.  

Similarly, Christophe Jaffrelot echoes Chandra's view when he writes: 'The secularism displayed by the Congress government was not totally unbiased. Some expressions of communalism by the minorities were tolerated, especially when the party might benefit from them. In 1959 the Congress made an alliance with the Muslim League in Kerala in order to form a new government after dislodging the Communists from power. This bias

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5 Bipan Chandra: 1991, 134-35
6 Ibid., p.136.
was consistent with the idea, implicit since Partition, that the Hindus, because they formed a majority, had more obligations than the minorities. 7

In cultural nationalism the central idea is the belief that a community consists of one common culture. Cultural nationalism also emphasises constant strengthening of the community to prevent it from falling into pieces. It tries to create some sense to the world by building one homogenous culture and recognising one nation as the nucleus of the nation. 8 Blom Hansen sees Hindu nationalism both as an expression of the politicisation of Indian public culture, and a reaction against it. 9

The discussion on the role of culture in the formation of national consciousness in colonial countries falls under two main paradigms. Panikkar points out that the leaders of anti-colonial movements who recognized the possibility of resistance within the domain of culture were the progenitors of one of them. He states: 'Culture, in their perspective, was an area that colonialism was keen to conquer—either through appropriation or hegemonisation. The resistance and regeneration were responses to this colonial enterprise.' 10

He cites two such examples--Jose Rizal (1861-96) in the Philippines and Amilcar Cabral (1924-73) in Guinea Bissau, who invoked culture as a 'weapon' in the anti-colonial struggle assigned a prime place to it in the formation of national consciousness. As Panikkar puts it, 'To Rizal, who was himself engaged in interpreting the history and culture of his society through literary and scholarly works, cultural regeneration was an essential component of nationalism. Cabral, on the other hand, tried to relate culture to the making of anti-colonial consciousness. He wrote:

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Study of the history of liberation struggles shows that they have generally been preceded by an upsurge of cultural manifestations, which progressively harden into an attempt, successful or not, to assert the cultural personality of the dominated people by an act of denial of the culture of the oppressor. Whatever the conditions of subjection of a people to foreign domination and the influence of economic, political and social factors in the exercise of this domination, it is generally within the cultural factor that we find the germ of challenge which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation movement.\textsuperscript{11}

Panikkar further notes that 'both Rizal and Cabral conceived colonialism as an overarching phenomenon, which impinged upon the cultural rights of the colonised as much as it undermined their political rights. The impact of colonialism, in the absence of democracy in pre-colonial states, was more easily and more intensely felt in the cultural field than in the political, as the former was related to the everyday life of the people.' Therefore, anti-colonial consciousness, Cabral argued, initially developed in the cultural rather than in the political field.\textsuperscript{12}

Ananda Coomaraswamy and Radhakumud Mookerji, who had sharp differences on the character of Indian culture, agreed on the importance of culture in the evolution of nationalism. As Panikkar argues, the former almost took a 'culturalist view' by suggesting that nations are "made by artists and poets, not by traders and politicians." Political and economic victories, according to him, 'are but half the battle', as the real victory was achieved only with the attainment of spiritual and mental freedom. National unity, he argued, 'needs a deeper foundation than the perception of political wrongs', and that foundation he located in the great ideals of Indian culture, expressed in its plural tradition. Despite his scholarly engagement with Hindu art and culture, he did not establish an identity between India and Hindu. Instead he underlined cultural diversity as the strength of the Indian tradition.\textsuperscript{13} Coomaraswamy writes:

The diverse people of India are like the parts of some magic puzzle, seemingly impossible to fit together, but falling easily into place when once the key is known; and

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p.534.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.534.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p.542.
the key is that parts do fit together which we call national self-consciousness. ... It would hardly be possible to think of an India in which no great Mughal had ruled, no Taj been built, or to which Persian art and literature were wholly foreign.  

The plural and composite character of Indian culture and its relationship with nationalism, which Coomaraswamy had advanced, was shared by many, both among the intelligentsia and political activists. As Panikkar observes, 'Jawaharlal Nehru, who was very sensitive to this relationship, described Indian culture as a palimpsest, suggesting thereby the multicultural foundations of Indian nationalism. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: 'India was like some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie has been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer has completely hidden or erased what had been hidden previously.' All of them thus took a territorial and secular view of the nation.

Interestingly, a parallel tendency sought to establish an identity between religion and culture and to conceptualize nationalism in religious terms. Its organisational and conceptual prominence was felt in the intellectual and political discourse in the 1920s and had an extended life thereafter.

Bruce McCully points out that Radhakumud Mookerjee's conception of India is 'a political unity since earliest times'. Arguing that the unity movement in India today is part of a process which began long before Britain was heard of (sic), he speaks of the political unity which, achieved in 325 B.C. under the Gupta dynasty, persisted in the face of the "Tartar" invasions, and reappeared under the Mahrattas in the form of a great Hindu revival. Referring to the "national idea which underlay the Mahratta Empire," he asserts: "Even the most biased and superficial student of the Mahratta achievement can

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16 quoting K.M. Panikkar.
carcely fail to recognize that the unity of India was its very soul, - its light and innermost strength.\footnote{K. M. Panikkar, \textit{Indian nationalism: its origin, history, and ideals} (London, 1920, pp. 11-12. cited in Bruce T. McCully: 'The Origins of Indian Nationalism According to Native Writers', in \textit{The Journal of Modern History}, Vol. 7, No. 3. (Sep., 1935), p.296.}

In a series of lectures delivered in 1921 and published as \textit{Nationalism in Hindu Culture}, Radhakumud Mookerji explored the connection between Indian nationalism and Hindu cultural and religious practices. According to him, the idea of India as a nation — the 'underlying principles of nationalism' — was present in the hymns of the \textit{Rig veda}, which was 'the very first utterance of humanity'.\footnote{Radhakumud Mookerjee, \textit{Nationalism in Hindu Culture} (London, 1921), p. 52, cited in Panikkar, 2001, p.542.}

Its historical evolution and eventual expression in modern times were made possible by the contribution of religious institutions and practices. Mookerjee particularly emphasized the role of pilgrimage, which fulfilled multiple functions: furthered the knowledge of geography, strengthened and sustained love of the country, and developed the universal sentiment of patriotism. He wrote, "Thus it helped to awaken the unlettered masses to the potentialities and possibilities of the nation. Dissemination of patriotic and nationalist ideas was also aided by several other intellectual and cultural practices. Sanskrit literature, which contained within it 'all the elements that are needed to develop the different interests of national life, mental or moral, spiritual and practical' fulfilled such a role."\footnote{Ibid P.11, cited in Panikkar, 2001, P.543.}

Mookerjee argues that the foundations of Indian nationality were laid in the earliest period of its history when the people came into possession of a fixed territory which they gradually came to look upon as their common motherland. According to him, secular and religious literature deified the country as something higher than heaven, as something
identified with the cultural environment: *Brahma varta*, the holy land, which expanded to include all the territory between the Himalayas and the Southern Sea.\(^ {20} \)

In another place he tells how this feeling of a common fundamental unity which the Aryans developed was sustained and inculcated with the passage of the centuries by the Rig-Veda hymns, by Sanskrit literature, by the shrines to which pilgrimages were made, by the monuments of Buddhism and Jainism, by the gradual development of geographical knowledge, and by the idea of universal kingship from the time when Chandragupta established his suzerainty over the whole of India to the time of Akbar.\(^ {21} \)

And he concludes that "India's gift to the world has been the fair fabric of an Empire, a Nationality, founded on the basis of Universal Peace [*Ahinsa*], peace between man and man, and between man and every sentient creature; a fabric that was alas! ruthlessly shattered by the shock and collision of historic forces."\(^ {22} \)

The cultural nationalists tried to locate India's glories by interpreting its past. Eminent Nobel Laureate Economist, Prof. Amartya Sen, in a lengthy essay titled 'On Interpreting India's Past', examines nationalist interpretations of India's past, the intellectual critiques of these interpretations and the contemporary political preoccupations that have given these scholarly debates their topical salience. According to him, 'The interpretation of the past has alliance both because of its contribution to our self-understanding and because of its relevance in addressing contemporary problems of practical importance.'\(^ {23} \) Sen points out that the limits of national identity can be compared with the identities associated respectively with:

1. The more restricted boundaries of communities and groups within a nation; and

\(^ {20} \)Radhakumud Mookerjee, 1921, pp.96-104.


\(^ {22} \)Cited in McCully: 1935, p.297.

2. The more inclusive coverage of broader categories such as the identity of being an Asian and even that of belonging to the human race.\textsuperscript{24}

The classical conception of Indian national identity, as Sen points out, has come from the former identity i.e. restricted boundaries of communities/groups.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Part B – Ideological Roots of Cultural Nationalism}

The ideological underpinnings of Hindu religious nationalism were constructed by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Christophe Jaffrelot points out that Savarkar discovered nationalism in his study of the 'threatening Others' and especially in his study of nationalist movements in Europe. When he was a young revolutionary in Maharashtra he was inclined to model himself on Mazzini, while the secret society, Abhinav Bharat (Modern India), which he founded in 1904, was probably intended to resemble Mazzini's Young Italy organisation. While he was in England in 1906 he read Mazzini's political writings and his autobiography, which he translated into Marathi and sent to India for publication. In his introduction to this study, he likened Garibaldi to Shivaji and Mazzini to Shivaji's guru, Ramdas. 'These comparisons are significant in two respects', as Jaffrelot notes, 'they are intended not only to assert the heroic stature of Shivaji and Ramdas but also to imply that the virtues which they exemplified are also the virtues of the leading Italian nationalists.'\textsuperscript{26}

This technique of matching European models of action can also be seen in \textit{Hindutva} where Savarkar declares: "I read the life of Mazzini and I exclaim "How patriotic they are!" I read the life of a Madhvacharya [founder of a Vaishnavite sect] and exclaim, "How patriotic we are!"\textsuperscript{27} Such sentiments suggest that Savarkar learnt what nationalism was from western experiments and then tried to apply this imported concept to his own country, a process that relied on a new construction of tradition.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p.11
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid..
Savarkar's main argument in *Hindutva* is that the Aryans who settled in India at the dawn of history already formed a nation now embodied in the Hindus. Their *Hindutva*, according to him, rests on three pillars: geographical unity, racial features and a common culture. It is to be noted that Savarkar minimises the importance of religious criteria in the definition of a Hindu by claiming that Hinduism was only one of the attributes of 'Hinduness'. "The Hindutva of Savarkar was conceived primarily as an ethnic community possessing a territory and sharing the same racial and cultural characteristics, three attributes which stemmed from the mythical reconstruction of the Vedic Golden Age."  

It is clear that the notion of territory was at the heart of Savarkar's ideological construct but not in the same way as in the universalist conceptions of nationalism; for Savarkar, the territory of India remains the part and parcel of the Hindu culture and the Hindu people. He strongly believed that the Hindus are pre-eminently the descendants of the 'intrepid Aryans [who] made it [the subcontinent] their home and lighted their first sacrificial fire on the bank of the Indus,' a river which he considers to be the western border of the Hindu nation. However, many scholars argue that the fact that Aryans first settled on the banks of the Indus is of course yet to be proved, but Savarkar finds the accumulation of such a tradition most useful. His view that the Indus was the frontier of the Hindu nation is part of a broader reinterpretation of the word 'Hindu' or 'Sindhu', the letters 'h' and 's' being interchangeable in Sanskrit:

Sindhu in Sanskrit does not only mean the Indus but also the sea- which girdles the southern peninsula-so that this one word Sindhu points out almost all frontiers of the land at a single stroke and so the epithet Sindhustan calls up the image of our whole Motherland: the land that is between Sindhu and Sindhu - from the Indus to the Sea.  

For Savarkar a Hindu was therefore an inhabitant of the zone between the rivers, the seas and the Himalayas, 'so strongly entrenched that no other country in the world is so

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29 Savarkar: 1969, pp.4-5.
30 Jaffrelot: 1993, p.27.
31 Savarkar, 1969, p.32.
perfectly designed by the fingers of nature as a geographical unit.'

This was why, in the Vedic era, the first Aryans developed there 'the sense of unity of a people' and even a 'sense of nationality'.

Savarkar argues that 'the Hindus are not merely the citizens of the Indian state because they are united not only by the bonds of the love they bear to a common motherland but also by the bonds of a common blood.' He refers to "the law of evolution that lays down the iron command" in Hindutva when he argues that 'They are not only a nation but race - jati.' The word jati, derived from the root Jan, to produce, means a brotherhood, a race determined by a common origin, possessing a common blood." All Hindus claim to have in their veins the blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the Vedic fathers.

In other words, Savarkar rejects any form of nation state based on an abstract social contract and thereby comprising individualised citizens dwelling within the country's administrative frontiers. In contrast with this universalist and territorial pattern of nationalism he emphasises the ethnic and racial substance of the Hindu nation. He argues that caste has not barred 'the common flow of blood into our race' because of the anuloma and pratiloma marriages. Jaffrelot believes that this racial argument of Savarkar's reflects the influence of the European writers from whom he derived his intellectual nourishment. Savarkar was well acquainted with the works of Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel and Thomas H. Huxley whose writings had helped to foster the idea of ethnicity in the scientific and political fields.

Jaffrelot points out that Savarkar's emphasis on the racial criterion minimises the importance of internal divisions in Hindu society by assuming the existence of an invisible but potent binding factor, that of blood. However, this reasoning does not lead

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32 Ibid., p.82.
33 Ibid., p.5, quoted in Jaffrelot: 1993, p.27
to an absolute rejection of the 'Other'. In fact the notion of racial purity is absent from Savarkar's ideology. His historical account of the formation of the 'Hindu people' rests on the assumption that Aryans and indigenous populations intermingled when the former entered India, and he calls on foreigners who aspire to become Hindus to marry Hindus and have Hindu children:

"... any convert of non-Hindu parentage to Hindutva can be a Hindu, *bonafide*, he or she adopts our land as his or her country and marries a Hindu, thus coming to love our country as a real Fatherland, and adopts our culture and thus adores our land as the Punyabhumi [sacred land]. The children of such a union as that would, other things being equal, be most emphatically Hindus."  

Savarkar's contribution in this regard is not limited to the invention and elaboration of the concept of Hindutva. As Panikkar argues that the 'Hindu nationalism' he had advanced was both intrinsic and relative, the former rooted in cultural identity, and the latter in political struggles. Hindutva explored the former while the latter forms the theme of a less known but important historical work entitled *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History*. The antiquity of the Hindu nation and its religious-cultural foundations are the themes explored in the first. *Six Glorious Epochs*, on the other hand, gives an account of how the Hindus developed national consciousness through a series of struggles against foreigners. The two streams of nationalism, cultural and political, thus coalesced to make India a Hindu nation.

In the making of the nation, Panikkar very strongly emphasises that Savarkar attributed centrality to culture, with all other aspects given only secondary importance. "A common fatherland and common blood", which even the Muslims and Christians might claim in India, cannot according to him exhaust all the requisites of Hindutva: what makes the Hindus a nation is a common cultural identity:

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36 Savarkar, 1969, p.11
37 Ibid., p.130, also quoted in Jaffrelot: 1993, p.28.
"We Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of the love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our civilisation—our Hindu culture, which could not be better rendered than by the word sanskriti, suggestive as it is of that language, Sanskrit, which has been the chosen means of expression and preservation of that culture, of all that was best and worth-preserving in the history of our race. We are one because we are a nation, a race and own a common sanskriti."  

The Hindu nation thus constituted by cultural identity developed the consciousness of being a nation through a historical experience essentially religious in character and encoded in what Savarkar terms as six glorious epochs in Indian history. He distinguishes these epochs from others which 'stand the test of poetic exuberance, music, prowess, affluence, the height of philosophy and depth of theology' as those encapsulated in the 'history of that war-like generation and the brave leaders and successful warriors who inspire and lead it on to a war of liberation in order to free their nation from the shackles of foreign domination.'

Savarkar identifies six such epochs in the entire period of Indian history when the Hindus successfully struggled against foreign aggressors - the Yavanas, the Shakas, the Kushans, the Huns, the Muslims, and the British. These struggles aroused the national consciousness of the Hindus and bound them together as a nation.

It is interesting to note that Savarkar had an entirely different view of Indian history during his pre-Hindutva phase. 'In his celebrated work on the Revolt of 1857', observes Panikkar, 'he had narrated the story of the heroic attempt of the people, both Hindus and Muslims, to throw out the British.' Unlike his later Hindu-centric view, he saw the Revolt as a common endeavour of the people, regardless of their religious affiliations. He has described the early days of the Revolt as follows:


"The five days during which the Hindus and Mohammedans proclaimed that India was their country and they were all brethren, the days when the Hindus and Mohammedans unanimously raised the flag of national freedom at Delhi. Be these grand days ever memorable in the history of Hindustan."  

However, it is interesting for us to understand how Savarkar had undergone a change of mind which transformed him into the ideologue of the Hindu nationalists. 'The change from a secular to a sectarian view of the past in Savarkar', as Panikkar argues, 'is symptomatic of an ideological shift among a section of the intelligentsia.' He further states, 'If the nation is to be constructed in religious terms, the past has to be necessarily cast in a religious mould. It was in this context that Savarkar emerged as the ideologue of Hindu religious nationalism, ironically renouncing his revolutionary and secular past.'  

Panikkar wonders as to how Savarkar underwent this intriguing transformation. He believes that most probably the change took place during his detention in the Andamans between 1911 and 1921, when he seems to have read the works of Bluntschli who was an exponent of German ethnic nationalism. In the book he wrote about his period of detention in the Andamans between 1911 and 1921, Savarkar refers to Bluntschli's *The Theory of the State* as a study which he had not only read but also used when teaching his fellow prisoners. Bluntschli was an exponent of German ethnic nationalism, and his writings influenced many Hindu nationalists, including Golwalkar.  

According to Savarkar, Christians and Muslims of India were not part of the nation because of their differences in cultural terms. He writes: 'Mohammedan or Christian communities possess all the essential qualifications of Hindutva but do not look upon India as their holy land.'  

In the same context Savarkar explains this criterion in cultural and religious terms: Their holy land is far off in Arabia and Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and  

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42 Ibid., p.545)  
heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently their names and their outlook smack of foreign origin. Their love is divided.\textsuperscript{45}

This characterisation of Christianity and Islam leads Savarkar to write that, 'when the Muslims penetrated in India, 'the conflict of life and death began.'\textsuperscript{46} However, this conflict had a positive effect since 'Nothing makes conscious of itself so much as a conflict with non-self.'\textsuperscript{47}

In sum, Savarkar's notion of Hindutva rests on cultural criteria rather than on a racial theory and is accordingly in tune with the traditional Brahminical world view; but at the same time it represents an ethnic nationalism which borrows much from western theories.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{M.S. Golwalkar and Hindu Nationalism}

Like Savarkar, Golwalkar also was very much interested in cultural unity than racial homogeneity. In 1939, Golwalkar's book \textit{We, or our nationhood defined} gave the RSS the charter it had previously lacked. In fact, more than Savarkar's Hindutva, Golwalkar's work reveals the strategy of stigmatisation and 'emulation of 'threatening Others' at work. On the one hand Golwalkar stigmatises the 'semi-barbaric life' of 'the chief nations of the world', which contrasts with the situation in India ('It seems as if we never were uncivilised', he writes) and on the other he expresses an inferiority complex \textit{vis-a-vis} western countries:

The European society, we maintain, is exceptionally defective and consequently in a constant state of unrest. And yet, Europeans, as nations, are free and strong and progressive. In spite of their ugly social order, they are so, for the simple reason that they have cherished and do still foster correct national consciousness, while we in Hindustan ignore this causa causans of our troubles and grope about in the dark.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.113
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p.42.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p.43, also Jaffrelot: 1993, p.31.
\textsuperscript{48} Jaffrelot: 1993, pp.31-2.
\textsuperscript{49} M.S. Golwalkar: \textit{We, or Our Nationhood Defined}. Nagpur: Bharat Prakashan, p.62, also quoted in Jaffrelot: 1993, p.52.
Golwalkar draws from this comparison the necessity of emulating the 'true' western conception of nationalism.

During the course of the twentieth century the religious-cultural nationalism formulated by Savarkar further crystallized as a coherent ideology of Hindu communalism. In this process, culture treated as synonymous with religion, as M.S. Golwalkar did, was accorded primacy over politics. Elaborating this idea Golwalkar claimed that 'in Hindustan, religion is an all-absorbing entity . . . and forms its very soul. With us every action in life, individual, social or political is a command of religion. We are what our religion has made us... and so with us culture is but a product of our all-comprehensive religion, a part of its body and not distinguishable from it.\(^{50}\)

Golwalkar strongly believed that India's mainstream political culture, typified by Congress, wrongly interpreted the concept of nation in the framework of 'territorial nationalism'. He vehemently accuses Congress for 'the theory that 'the nation is composed of all those who, for one reason or the other happen to live at the time in the country'.\(^{51}\)

Golwalkar drew most of his inspirations from the German writers. As we have mentioned earlier in this section, like Savarkar and other Hindu Mahasabha ideologues, Golwalkar was inspired by Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, a famous German writer. Golwalkar quotes at length the definition of the nation proposed by Bluntschli:

"It is a union of masses of men of different occupations and social states, in a hereditary society of common spirit, feeling and race bound together especially by a language and customs in a common civilization which gives them a sense of unity and distinction from all foreigners, quite apart from the bond of the state.\(^{52}\)

In the book cited by Golwalkar, Bluntschli differentiates the German view of the nation from that of the English and the French. Golwalkar emphasised that the most fundamental characteristic of a nation is cultural unity. Most of the books mentioned by him are illustrative of the German ethnic definition of nationalism. He paid little attention

\(^{51}\) Golwalkar: 1939, p.59.  
\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. p.19.
to the English authors from whom the Congress leaders drew their idea of the nation in universalistic terms, such as the role of individual will and the social contract. As Jaffrelot argues, 'Bluntschli and the other political scientists led Golwalkar to look at the case of India in the light of five criteria for the concept of the nation, namely: geographical unity, race, religion, culture and language.' 53

Jaffrelot further states:

'Golwalkar did not make religion a priority; he regarded it merely as a cultural manifestation which could be used to 'cement' national unity, (in this context the national religion of Russia was socialism, with Karl Marx as its 'prophet'; it was irrelevant that this was 'a religion which does not believe in God'). He probably devalued the religious content of Hindu identity because the heterogeneity of Hinduism militated against the project for national unity. But the latter could be promoted by emphasising race. 54 Thus the essential criterion for Golwalkar remained race. 55 Golwalkar does not pay as much attention to territory as Savarkar, even though he points out Hindustan's 'definite geographical unity, delimited naturally by the sublime Himalayas on the North and the limitless ocean on the other three sides.' 56

Golwalkar contrasts with Savarkar as far as the origin of the Hindus is concerned. He believes that the Hindus did not come from anywhere else and they were the indigenous children of this land from time immemorial. This racial factor, in his eyes, 'is by far the important ingredient of a nation.' 57 Here Golwalkar claims inspiration from Hitler's ideology: "To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races – the Jews." 58

Golwalkar applied this nationalist ethnic reasoning to the Muslim minority, which posed a threat not only because it enjoyed the backing of a whole series of Islamic states but also because it was a 'foreign body' lodged into Hindu society, which it thus undermined. He criticises the decision of a Muslim leader, Maulana Mohammad Ali, who had died abroad, to direct 'his remains to be taken not to the land which had fostered him and his

54 Ibid., pp.54-55.
56 Ibid., p.40.
57 Ibid., p.8.
58 Cited in Jaffrelot, 1993,
forefathers before him, but to the foreign land of Mecca.\footnote{59} He argues that Muslims 'take themselves to be the conquering invaders and grasp for power' and therefore Hindus are 'at war at once with the Moslems on the one hand and the British on the other'.\footnote{60}

His conviction that the Muslims were the 'outsiders' can be understood very well in the following quotation:

Ever since that evil day when Moslems first landed in Hindusthan, right up to the present moment the Hindu nation has been gallantly fighting on to shake off the despoilers.\footnote{61}

However, Jaffrelot argues that Golwalkar's references to race are very vague and contradictory because of the fact, that Golwalkar applies this notion to Indian Muslims, who, in most cases, are only converts of the same blood. Jaffrelot observes that in Golwalkar's work, 'Race is often defined as an amalgam of predispositions which seem to lie not so much in the genes but are instead passed down by cultural tradition, so that its influence takes effect at the earliest age and hence makes a free choice in the matter of national identity impossible.'\footnote{62}

This is very clear while Golwalkar writes:

The aspiration of the individual, as also of the Race are conditioned by its mental frame. As is the mould into which the Racial mind is thrown - of course by its age long traditions - so are its desires, its aspirations.\footnote{63}

More importantly, Golwalkar mentions only once 'the purity of the Race' in reference to Germany, and dealing with race in general terms he writes, 'Even if there be people of a foreign origin, they must have been assimilated into the body of the mother race and inextricably fused into it.'\footnote{64} However, if this integration does not materialise, Golwalkar radically rejects the idea of a multi-ethnic nation, as suggested in the following paragraph:

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{59} Golwalkar: 1939, p.53.
\item \footnote{60} Ibid., p.16.
\item \footnote{61} Ibid., p.12.
\item \footnote{62} Jaffrelot: 1993, p.56.
\item \footnote{63} Golwalkar: 1939, p. 32.
\item \footnote{64} Ibid., p.23.
\end{itemize}}
'The foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture [...] 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 rights.'

Based upon these citations, one could understand that Golwalkar combined two sorts of references. As Jaffrelot puts it:

On the one hand his concern with the integration of all the Indian communities into a common race does not echo the Nazis' obsession with the purity of the race but rather reflects the influence of the hierarchical principles of 'Indian traditional xenology'. Moreover, Golwalkar considered as 'mlechchas' "those who do not subscribe to the social laws dictated by the Hindu Religion and Culture". On the other hand, Golwalkar's concern with the promotion of a homogenous nation whose culture would be dominated by the Hindu Great Tradition harks back to his reading of Bluntschli and similar authors and to his admiration for their ethnic nationalism which, in Germany, prepared the ground for Nazism.

Thus Golwalkar considers cultural elements as inherent to the group, collectively inherited from its forefathers. For instance he regards a national language such as Sanskrit, the source language of the Indo-Aryan languages as 'an expression of the Race spirit', obviously an equivalent of the German Volksgeist. Thus, it is to be noted that Golwalkar pays little attention to the means of integrating the minorities.

Cultural nationalism is therefore identified as Hindu nationalism and all attributes of national life privileged as Hindu. As Panikkar argues, 'The exclusion of non-Hindus from the nation, which Golwalkar advocated, became integral to communal politics thereafter.' Addressing the Hindu Youth Conference at Lucknow, B.S. Moonje, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, said: "Hindus constitute the national community and create and formulate the nationalism of the nation... . In this land there is only one nation, that is the Hindu nation and there is only one nationalism, that is only Hindu nationalism."

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Panikkar also points out that the Muslim separatist movement which gained ascendency in the twentieth century, also shared a notion of cultural nationalism based on religious identity. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who invoked the two-nation theory in his pursuit of political power, claimed that the "Muslims are a nation according to any definition ... and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state." 69

Although the politics of both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha were anchored on religious nationalism, argues Panikkar, with considerable success in the case of the former, its historical and pragmatic weaknesses were underlined by many. He cites Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who, while addressing the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress, said:

"Eleven hundred years of common history has enriched India with our common achievements. Our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the immediate happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. ... These thousand years of our joint life has moulded into a common nationality." 70

The critique of the two-nation theory that Azad articulated had several other supporters both among Muslims and Hindus. As Panikkar states, 'Apart from individuals, several Muslim organizations, particularly in south India, opposed the division of the people on the basis of religion.' Among the Congress leaders Gandhiji was the most emphatic. He said, "My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. ... I must rebel against the idea that millions of Indians who were Hindus the other day changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion." 71

In spite of all such criticisms about the idea of 'two-nation' theory, the partition of India became inevitable in 1947. The Indian National Congress could not do much to prevent the Partition. However, the violence that erupted in the wake of partition, and the trauma

69 Ibid., p.545.
71 Harijan, 13 April 1940, cited in Panikkar: 2001 p.546
it caused had deeper socio-political implications. As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, despite a conducive atmosphere for the emergence of Hindu nationalism, the post-independence Indian political leadership under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru decided to commit itself to the secular values in its endeavour of nation-building. Yet, the aspirations for a cultural nationalism based on the Hindu values were planted and nurtured by the RSS and its political organisations.

The RSS and its Political Agenda

The RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) was founded in Maharashtra in 1925-26, by Dr. K.B. Hedgewar. It emerged as a major sectarian entity in the 1930s advocating for a 'Hindu Rashtra' as against the demands of the Muslims who were fighting for a separate Muslim Nation. Under the leadership of Savarkar and Golwalkar it attained a decisive ideology, which we have discussed earlier in this chapter.

Although they claimed to be apolitical, the RSS's leaders were driven to an interest in power by their advocacy of a Hindu Rashtra. As Jaffrelot argues, 'Golwalkar may have thought that the government should accept an advisory and consultative role for the RSS on the model of the traditional relationship between temporal power and spiritual authority; he may also have regarded participation in party politics as the antithesis of the organisation's basic mission.' But some swayamsevaks thought the RSS should be directly involved in party politics, and they therefore became associated with the Jan Sangh, a party initiated by S.P. Mookerjee.72

The participation of some swayamsevaks in the work of the Jan Sangh and their subsequent takeover of the party was part of an elaborate division of labour within the total membership of the RSS. After Independence the RSS decided to build up a whole range of affiliated organisations within different sectors and institutions of Indian society as a means of infusing Hindu nationalist values into public life. To this end it formed a students' union and a trade union. The association of swayamsevaks with the Jan Sangh belonged to this context, and was therefore seen as an application in the sphere of party

politics of the principle that the social and psychological reform of Hindu society was needed to provide the cultural basis for a Hindu Rashtra in every sector of national life. With this in mind, RSS workers within the Jan Sangh felt that the new party should avoid the practice of winning elections by co-opting local notables. Their technique of party-building was essentially long term and relied on a network of disciplined and dedicated activists. However, in the 1980s, it took a completely new stand as it began to operate at the political level primarily through BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party).

BJP as a Hindu Nationalist Party
The BJP was founded in 1980 and it was known as the Jan Sangh before its merger with the Janata Party in 1977. The BJP has been described by some as a 'communal party', 'a reactionary and backward-looking Hindu organization' promoting religious fundamentalism. Others describe it as a 'nationalist party' that aims to impose a theocratic Hindu state on the multicultural and multi-religious society of India. As Malik and Singh argue, 'Because of the party's strong identification with Hindus, efforts have been made to ostracize the BJP by leaders of both the Marxist and the centrist parties such as the Congress (I) and the Janata Dal.'

Roots of the BJP's Ideology
For a more realistic assessment of the nature of the party we need to look at the various dimensions of the nationalist movement in India, as the ideological premises of the BJP could be traced to the origin of that movement. In fact, the Hindu cultural revival of the nineteenth century and the nationalist movement were intertwined. To the Indian elite of the time, the concept of Indian national identity was indistinguishable from Hindu identity. As Malik and Singh argue, 'For most of the first twenty years of independent India, such a value system guided the political leadership. Starting with the 1970s, however, an amoral pursuit of politics in India not only rendered the Congress Party an organization "held together largely by opportunism - by the power, patronage, and money

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that public office can command, but the national leadership of the party also gave birth to a distinctive political culture called the Congress culture.\textsuperscript{74}

As previously noted, the BJP represents an important aspect of Indian nationalism, which originated in the nineteenth century and which became peripheral in the heyday of Nehruvian socialism. Broadly stated, its premise is that India's national identity is rooted in Hindu culture for the obvious reason that the Hindus are the dominant majority in the country and nations are built on the basis of common culture and ideology. To put in the words of Malik and Singh:

To the BJP, a genuine concept of Indian nationhood should incorporate the Hindu heritage along with the traditions, practices, and beliefs that flow through the ancient history of the country. It holds that the groups who make up a nation come together for a purpose. They represent a community of projects, desires, and big undertakings. Such essentials for nation-making are provided by the culture based upon the people's shared experience.\textsuperscript{75}

In other words, it believed that in order to forge a strong sense of Indian national identity, "it must be culturally rooted in Hinduism and Hindu civilization." According to this view, minorities must reconcile themselves to the political dominance of Hindus and the centrality of Hinduism in the national identity. It should be noted, however, as Malik and Singh observe that, 'in contrast to nineteenth century Hindu nationalism, which was reform oriented and non-ritualistic, contemporary Hindu nationalism is much more fundamentalist and ritualistic, and the BJP leadership has not hesitated to use the religious symbols to mobilize Hindu votes.'\textsuperscript{76}

Malik and Singh recognised that even when accepting these broad premises of the BJP's Hindu nationalist ideology, the party leaders differ not only in their methods of achieving these goals but also in their interpretations of the various aspects of the ideology. According to them, ideology is instrumental in the achievement of this goal and it is not surprising that, despite its public display of considerable internal cohesion and discipline, the BJP leadership can be divided into ideological factions. They are as follows:

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. p.320.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.321
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p.321.
1. Moderate Hindu nationalists with libertarian emphasis;
2. Hindu nationalists;
3. Hindu militants; and

1. Moderate Hindu Nationalists with Libertarian Emphasis

This group's basic strategy was to modify the chauvinistic and militant aspects of Hindu nationalism in order to widen the electoral appeal of the party. This group was led by Atal Behari Vajpayee, who later on became the Prime Minister of India, during the BJP-led coalition government from 1998 to 2004. It is this group that was responsible for changing the name from the Bharatiya Jan Sangh to the Bharatiya Janata Party. It sought to identify itself with the political legacy of Jay Prakash Narayan with emphasis on 

Malik and Singh write: 'The Jan Sangh's participation in the 1967 coalition governments; its involvement in the 1974 Navnirman (new order) movement, launched by students in Gujarat; Jay Prakash Narayan's subsequent Sampoorn kranti (total revolution) movement against the widespread political corruption in Bihar; and the wholesale arrest of Jan Sangh leaders and workers during the 1975 Emergency gave the leadership opportunities to rethink its political strategy. It made deliberate efforts to win the support of minorities by adopting Gandhian socialism as one of its ideological goals.'

Malik and Singh also note that in the pre-1977 Jan Sangh there always existed a tension between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the militant Hindu paramilitary organization, and the non-RSS elements. The latter were never in agreement with the RSS brand of Hindu militancy. 'Even though Vajpayee came from the ranks of the RSS', as Malik and Singh argue, 'his working with the old guard of the Congress Party, who were opposed to the authoritarianism of Indira Gandhi, seemed to have changed his political outlook. Vajpayee and his associates - Sikandar Bakht, Ram Jethmalani, Shanti Bhushan, Jaswant Singh, and Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, currently the Vice President of India - found that in their pro-Hindu orientation, many old-guard Congressmen and

77 Ibid., pp.322-23.
politicians such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, P. D. Tandon, and later on Morarji Desai and even Charan Singh of the Lok Dal, were not much different from the Jan Sangh leaders despite their public posture of secularism. As a result, the BJP adopted a new constitution and a new electoral symbol, and gave up the name of the Jan Sangh and the party flag.\(^{78}\)

2. Hindu Nationalists

Although there are no deep ideological divisions between the moderate and the Hindu nationalist factions of the BJP, they differ on both electoral strategy and the symbols and slogans to be used to mobilize the party faithful. Although Gandhian socialism represented the indigenous brand of Indian nationalism and incorporated many elements of Hinduism, it did not have much appeal for the Hindu nationalists. For them, Gandhi and Gandhism represented the policy of 'appeasement of minorities', particularly the Muslims. This group was led by Lal Krishna Advani, (who became the Home Minister and in the later part, the Deputy Prime Minister, in the Vajpayee government), and his chief supporters in the party were Sundar Singh Bhandari, a party senior vice-president and an ideologue with excellent organizational abilities; Murlimanohar Joshi of U.P., who became the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, during the BJP-led Government, Khusabahu Thakre, a Maharashtrian Brahman; Govindacharya, a Tamil Brahmin who specializes in electoral politics; and K. L. Sharma, who reinstated Deendayal Upadhyaya's philosophy of integral humanism in place of Gandhian Socialism.\(^{79}\)

Advani and his associates reject both the Nehruvian concept of an Indian state and Nehru's ideology of Indian nationalism. They hold that his concept of a secular state is shallow and lacks roots in the Indian soil. They argued that "Indians are deeply religious people, and in a cultural as well as in a practical sense, religion provides the ethical and moral basis for the organization of political life. They believed that Nehru's concept of a

\(^{78}\) Ibid., p.323.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., p.323.
'secular society' misunderstands both the nature of Hinduism and the nature of Indian national identity." As a result, in practical politics his concept of secularism, according to this group, has become primarily anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim.80

Malik and Singh argue that the group led by Advani seems to take a broad view of Hinduism. Emphasizing primarily its philosophical nature, they argue that "Hinduism has a basically tolerant and secular approach to political and social life. Institutionally, Hinduism may be rigid but intellectually, it allows individuals a large variety of life styles." Thus, Advani believes that it is possible to build a genuine secular polity without dissociating the state from Hinduism, the mainstream of Indian culture. To quote Malik and Singh, 'Advani's strategy became one of trying to win elections even if it meant isolation from the mainstream of India's national politics and he did not hesitate to use a Hindu fundamentalist public posture to mobilize Hindu voters.'81

3. Hindu Militants

This faction constituted a third group, led by Vijaya Raje Scindia, the former Maharani of Gwalior and a formidable political force in Madhya Pradesh. An unabashed Hindu militant, Vijaya Raje vehemently opposed adoption of the Vajpayee line as alien to both Indian culture and the party's ideological heritage. According to this group, socialism is not only Marxist in origin — in whatever disguise it is presented — but it is also oriented toward creating conflict within Hindu society. "The adoption of such an ideology", Scindia argued, "would make the BJP look like a 'photocopy' of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Congress party." Scindia actively associated herself with the Hindu revivalist movement and was a prominent patron of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). In fact, the central office of the VHP in New Delhi functioned from Scindia Villa, the house of the Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia. As the VHP patron, she had actively supported the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign (construction of a Hindu temple at the purported birthplace of

81 Ibid., p.324.
Lord Rama, where a Muslim mosque built by Babur, the Mughal emperor, stood in Ayodhya, which was demolished on 6, December, 1992).\textsuperscript{82}

This faction of the BJP used Hindu revivalism and fundamentalism to promote the causes of both the party and religion. Other prominent members were S. C. Dixit, a former director general of police in U.P., and Ashok Singhal, vice-president and general secretary of the VHP, respectively; Mahant Avaidya Nath; and Vinay Katiyar, a convener of Bajrang Dal (a paramilitary Hindu religious organization). All of them were members of either the Lok Sabha or the state legislative bodies elected on the BJP ticket.\textsuperscript{83}

4. Hindu Chauvinists
This group came primarily from the ranks of the RSS. The BJP was used as the political arm of the RSS and its cadre constituted the most militant faction of the party. Malik and Singh point out that "Whether the BJP has become the political arm of the \textit{Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh} or not, the RSS and its cadre constitute the most militant faction of the party. Moreover, its influence has been steadily growing since 1988.... according to one estimate, "every second office-bearer of the party at both central and state levels was either a full time RSS pracharak [instructor] or member. The RSS, despite being an autonomous organization with an extensive institutional network, functionaries, cadre, and a host of front organizations, constitutes a powerful force within the BJP."	extsuperscript{84}

Among its front organizations, several are well known and perform a wide variety of functions. The \textit{Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad} (Indian students association founded in 1949) functions on college and university campuses, while the \textit{Vishwa Hindu Parishad} (World Hindu organization, 1966) is used to mobilize the Hindu masses for both religious and political purposes; the \textit{Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh} (Indian workers

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p.325.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p.326.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., pp.326-27.
association, 1955) and *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* (Tribal welfare association, 1952) function among the workers and the tribes. In the early 1990s, the RSS also set up a wing to work among the Scheduled Castes.  

At this juncture, it is to be noted that singling out BJP alone as a Hindu Nationalist Party in the post-independence India would be a misnomer. Time and again, a number of scholars have pointed out the constant tensions that occurred within the members of Congress party due to ideological differences. For example, M.J. Akbar points out that 'Swaraj, swadharma, dharmaatattwa (National rule, national religion, national identity)---This version of patriotism found its first powerful proponents in the group which came to be known as the extremist wing in the Congress. The northern line of the Extremist triangle was held by the Arya Samaj – Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab and Madan Mohan Malviya in United Provinces; the western by Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Poona; and in the heart of British India, Bengal, it was led by the revivalist combination of Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Behari Pal. Aurobindo Ghosh was the most articulate of the leaders and, as he put it in his famous Uttarpara speech, "I say it is the Sanatan Dharma [Hinduism] which for us is nationalism. The Hindu nation was born with the Sanatan Dharma; with it it moves, and with it grows.' Their religion was their politics. Hinduism was patriotism. Freedom could be achieved, they believed, only through the reawakening of a national identity; this could, in turn, be built only on the mother religion of India, Hinduism."  

M.V. Kamath argues that it is difficult to pinpoint when Hindu self-assertion began to show up. He cites two authors, who had tried to trace the origins and emergence of cultural nationalism. In his book on Hindutva, Jyothirmaya Sharma mentions Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar as the four main thinkers who sought to marshall a Hindu identity in the service of Indian nationalism. In her book *Indian Cultural Nationalism*, Purnima Singh names Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Rajpat Rai on one hand and Sri  

85 Ibid., p.327.  
Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee on the other as the harbingers of cultural nationalism. Kamath observes that 'these are revered names but no one associates them with extremism. And yet all of them stood up for the Hindu resurgence with marked determination.'

Among the leaders cited above, Tilak (1856-1920) played a major role in initiating the idea of cultural nationalism. He used the sentiments of Hindu identity to build the unity among the people and urged them to come together and fight for the common cause. Eminent historian Sumit Sarkar points out that:

the man who really blazed the trail for Extremism was Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra. Tilak was a pioneer in many ways—in the use of religious orthodoxy as a method of mass contact (through his alignment against reformers on the Age of Consent issue, followed by the organization of the Ganapati festival from 1894), in the development of a patriotic-cum-historical cult as a central symbol of nationalism (the Shivaji festival, which he organized from 1896 onwards), as well as in experimenting with a kind of no-revenue campaign in 1896-97. The countervailing cotton excise of 1896 produced intense reactions in western India on which Tilak tried to base something like a boycott movement—the first trial use of a method which was to become the central nationalist technique from 1905 onwards.

Similarly, Pathak points out that 'Even Tilak who was by no means an obscurantist relied heavily on religious symbols. 'He reinterpreted the Bhagavad Gita, drew inspiration from its celebrated notion of action. He revived the memory of Shivaji's struggle against the Mughal empire for the liberation of Maratha land. And he revived and utilized the Ganapati festival for political propaganda.'

However, once Gandhi and Nehru took over the mantle of the Indian freedom struggle movement, the urge for the secular values increased. Both Gandhi and Nehru appealed to the Indian people to shun communal feelings and unite together to make a great nation. As Panikkar writes:

'The choice of secular-territorial nationalism by the people of India in 1950, despite the experience of the Partition, was a strong repudiation of religious nationalism. In a country inhabited by members of almost all religious denominations, the nation cannot be co-terminus with any particular religion.\textsuperscript{91}

Bipan Chandra cites a letter written by Jawaharlal Nehru which is profound in many ways and goes something like this:

\begin{quote}
I agree that there is Muslim communalism in India and I would also probably agree that Muslim communalism is much worse and stronger than Hindu communalism. But Muslim communalism cannot dominate Indian society and introduce fascism. That only Hindu communalism can. Therefore, we have got to be very chary and very aware and to struggle against Hindu communalism above all.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

Nehru firmly believed that 'Once we take this type of position of attacking and exposing all types of communalisms simultaneously, it is not difficult to go to the people and point out to them that communal assumptions and therefore communal answers are wrong.'\textsuperscript{93}

Even after Nehru, this insistence upon the ideology of secular nationalism continued in the education system until the defeat of Congress party in the general election held after the emergency. In 1977, the Janata Party-led coalition, headed by Morarji Desai came to the power. The history textbook controversy created a major political debate during this period.

**Part C – Cultural Nationalism in School Education**

At the beginning of the Janata coalition government's brief tenure, a controversy arose over the representation of the historical record in prescribed history textbooks. As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, since the 1960s, historians commissioned by the National Council of Educational Research and Training had written textbooks which were subsequently distributed from the Centre to the states. The new coalition government, however, in the process of contesting the policies of the Congress Party, questioned the content of the government-sponsored history curriculum. Susanne and

\textsuperscript{91} Panikkar: 2001, pp.546-47.


\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p.180
Lloyd Rudolph offer an in-depth analysis of the ensuing public debate in their article, 'The Textbook Controversy in India, 1977-79'. They question the *adhoc* process by which public policy is determined in India, claiming 'It is more of a loose aggregate of spontaneous decisions than a body of coherent doctrine expressing intent and subject to policy choice and guidance.' The most interesting point raised by the Rudolph's questions the very reasoning through which 'both Congress and the Janata governments assumed they could and should intervene in a tutelary and patrimonial manner on behalf of their very different world-views and priorities.'

The Janata government, led by Morarji Desai, objected to the interpretation of medieval Indian history, often referred to as the 'Muslim period'. They felt that the "pseudo-secularist" representation of history denigrated Indic civilization and whitewashed the Muslim record of a "thousand years of conquest." Among the critics was R.C. Majumdar, a historian who held that religion was an essential element in the composition of India's past and that Hindus and Muslims had always constituted separate communities. In his book entitled *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, Majumdar emphasizes the sharp divide that characterized inter-religious relationships:

> A fundamental and basic difference between the two communities was apparent even to the casual observer. Religious and social ideas and institutions counted for more in men's lives in those days than anything else; and in these two respects the two differed as poles asunder... It is a strange phenomenon that although the Muslims and Hindus had lived together in Bengal for nearly six hundred years, the average people of each community knew so little of the other's traditions.

Majumdar, among others, was critical both of the widely distributed textbooks, written with what they considered to be a secular Marxist slant, and of the appropriation of the historical narrative to promote a particular agenda for national integration. They felt that these historical accounts of the Islamic interface with the indigenous Hindu population downplayed the religious motivations and created the impression that "idol breakers" such as Mahmud of Ghazni and Aurangzeb were driven primarily by plunder and not

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religious fervor. They claimed that by glossing over the motivations of these historical figures, students were denied access to facts central to the medieval period.  

Five history textbooks were called into question, several were eventually recalled, and a lively public debate ensued. The memorandum critical of the books sent from the Prime Minister's Office to the Education Minister was leaked to Romila Thapar, the author of the disputed textbook, and she went public with the information by sending a rebuttal to the press. In her published statement, Thapar accused the Janata government of meddling with the methods of historical scholarship. Thapar stated, "My position at the time was who is the Prime Minister to ban these books; he's not a historian, they would never do that with a book on chemistry or physics but they think history is their birthright." In the same interview, Thapar claims that "All history is contemporary history; you can't get away from the politics around you." Thapar's critics would argue that she is also subject to the political orientation enshrined by the heritage of the Nehruvian social agenda.

The textbook debate raged for months and was discussed in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the parliament. Liberal intellectuals such as V.P. Dutt testified that medieval Indian history could be used by "communal forces to divide the country" and pleaded for "history that promoted integration." Nurul Hasan agreed, arguing that "medieval Indian societies, like all medieval societies, were exploitative. The religious beliefs of rulers and ruled were irrelevant." He concluded that textbooks should "provide school children with a wholesome history." Ironically, the method used to achieve this idealistic goal was the very source of the controversy: it centered around expunging the historical record of conflict and denying the religiosity of the medieval period in order to create a more harmonious retelling of the past. Ultimately, the Janata coalition government fell, and Indira Gandhi returned to office. The textbooks brought under fire remain in circulation, as does the furor among political factions concerning the representation of history.

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96 Ibid.

97 In an interview written by Maneesha Lal and published in the Spring 1995, South Asian Newsletter at the University of Pennsylvania
However, after almost two decades later, the right wing political parties headed by the BJP and its alliances used their authority to impose their political agenda through school education. Although the BJP came to power at the centre as late as 1998, it had captured power in some states in the late 1980s. It began its mission of rewriting the textbooks in those states. An attempt was made to replace the earlier versions of history with the communal-oriented versions. Once it came to power at the centre, the concerned educational bodies were immediately reshuffled so as to enable the state to bring in its socio-politico-ideological views in the school syllabus.

Given the current circumstances, it is imperative to identify the core interests involved in the promotion of a particular ideological outlook as far as educational system is concerned. The essentialist approach with regard to the alteration of the syllabus in general, needs to be taken into account and the history syllabus in particular deserves a special consideration for a thorough analysis as it is directly linked with material and power relations. Any political party with an ideological inclination intends to create a specific social fixity. Hence the rewriting of the history texts was carried out by the state in order to sow the seeds of a new cultural design in the minds of young students who would form the core of the future society.

**Cultural Nationalism in School Education in Post-Independence India**

The RSS/BJP, like any other conservative political organisation elsewhere, considered social science, especially history to have intimate connection with inculcating national identity and patriotism. School textbooks have been rewritten in the states ruled by the BJP, to suit their long-term design of undermining the secular state and the pluralistic traditions of our country. These books define the nation as all right wing political tendencies do, i.e., in exclusivist terms. The Bharatiya Itihasa Sankalan Samiti was founded to rewrite the history of India from the perspective of Hindutva.

What has happened since and why a section of the academia worried about the development of what some academicians called the 'communal interpretation', is that not only there was a change in the kind of interpretation which was not historically justified,
but the informational aspect was also tampered with. As Professor Romila Thapar observes:

Some facts are dropped, some are not mentioned – wherever it is inconvenient to their ideology. Let me give you an example: I wrote a text book for middle school – class VI and VII – 30, 35 years ago for the NCERT. It had a small paragraph on Mahmud of Ghazni. I mentioned that Mahmud of Ghazni was an iconoclast and raided the temple towns of India for loot. He took the loot back to Ghazni and with this wealth and with the wealth collected from other campaigns, he built a Central Asian empire including a very renowned library at Samarkhand. 98

This passage was criticised by communal historians. Thapar further states:

ey say that the statements that he was an iconoclast and he raided the temples should be retained-- but mention must not be made that he used that money to build a large empire, a great army and a library. Aurangzeb is an other one. All his bad qualities should be mentioned, but never mention that he also gave grants to Brahmans and temples. So it's a highly selective history. 99

It is true that up to a point history is selective because one does not have information about everything that happened every minute of the day. But, adds Thapar, ‘if it is ideologically selective, history gets distorted. The problem with communal history writing is that not only is it being extremely selective about facts but the interpretation is also from a deliberately partisan point of view.’ The debates on that book and various other books written by some of the well-known historians have been on those kinds of issues. However, the concerned historians have not removed those portions because they have contested the communal interpretations.

In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, the BJP government try to introduce these changes. They did publish some books with changes not only with regard to Babar’s policy, but also Aryan theory, claiming that everything was indigenous, and that it harks back to the Indus civilisation. They did introduce these changes and there was an objection from teachers of history in UP. Several historians protested against the distortions. So they had to withdraw those distortions. 100

99 Ibid
100 Ibid
In October 1998, the Education Ministers' Conference was convened by then Minister for Human Resources Development, Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi, who publicly announced the agenda of "Indianisation, Nationalisation, Spiritualisation", of education. This was widely considered as the BJP's relentless and continuous attempt of pushing through the RSS agenda. As we have stated in the previous section, the BJP is one of the most important fronts formed by RSS to enable its members participate in national politics through the formal electoral channel and parliamentary system.

Nalini Taneja points out that 'The RSS agenda on education and culture is not new. Communal historiography is older than the Indian state, and the Vidya Bharti schools have been around throughout the Nehruvian era of politics, growing even while the RSS was banned.'

The BJP-led government brought out its educational policies first in 2000, through a discussion document. The NCF has reaffirmed the nationalist ideals. One could note the expression of some kind of fear: the fear of losing indigenous knowledge. It speaks of the necessity of an 'indigenous curriculum' that would celebrate the ideas of 'native thinkers such as Aurobindo, Gandhi, Tagore and Krishnamurthy.' To quote from this text:

"Paradoxical as it may sound, while our children know about Newton they do not know about our own Aryabhata, they do know about a computer but do not know about the concept of zero. Mention may also have to be made, for instance, of Yoga and Yogic practices as well as Indian systems of medicines like Ayurvedic and Unani forms which are being recognised and practiced all over the world. The curriculum shall have to correct such imbalances."

In other words, it is feared that the existing education policy, because of its modernist orientation, is not always sensitive to our cultural heritage. As a remedial measure, the document imagines 'a fine synthesis between change-oriented technologies and the

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103 Ibid: pp.10-11
country's continuity of cultural tradition'. The most important requirement is that the Indian students have to be taught to see the world through an 'Indian perspective'.

On October 23, 2001, the CBSE wrote to schools asking them to delete sections from several history textbooks written by eminent historians such as Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and Satish Chandra, that had been prescribed for over two decades. In Thapar’s book, the CBSE wants 50 words which suggest that Vedic Aryans ate beef to be deleted. A similar deletion is required in another book by Ram Sharan Sharma. Other deletions relate to the difficulties in locating the historical Ram and Krishna, the existence of the 23 Jain Tirthankaras who preceded Mahavir and the exploitation of the lower castes under the caste system.

According to the edict of October 25, 2001, certain passages from well-known prescribed textbooks need to be deleted. Students were warned that examiners "will not evaluate their understanding of the (excised) portions". The NCERT obliged by deleting those passages not to the liking of the Sangh Parivar. As Dhavan points out, 'On November 24, the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, said he was prepared for a debate on this. History has been re-written at the bidding of the Government. Students who deviate from knowledge of such history have been threatened with failure.'

Sanghvi argues that the RSS/BJP attempted to put forward its political agenda by countering the earlier versions of history. BJP-led government tried to use history to perpetuate an image of Hinduism in which Ram and Krishna existed in a golden age, in which Vedic Aryans followed 21st century dietary laws and the caste system was a wonderful thing.
It is true that any government would tend to have its own patronage system and persons who are inclined to its ideologies in every field of the state machinery including that of the education and culture. After taking over the charges, the BJP-led government made several changes in the structure of various educational and cultural bodies. It also adapted certain ways and means in order to put forth and perpetuate its political agenda.

They are as follows:

1. Undermining of Educational and Cultural Institutions and Committees

The BJP-led government transformed the complexion of major important research and educational planning and cultural institutions and committees by filling them with people associated with the Hindutva agenda and linked with the Sangh Parivar. They are:

- The Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)
- The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
- Indira Gandhi National Council for Arts (IGNCA)
- The Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (Shimla) (IIAS)
- The University Grants Commission (UGC)
- The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) etc.

Similarly,

- The Committees for Review of Elementary and Primary Education
- Committee for review of the prescribed NCERT syllabi for CBSE
- Selection Committees for appointments in NCERT and NIEPA
- The Advisory Committee on Education in Haryana
- The specially constituted National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM)
- The Councils in ICHR and ICSSR; and
- Grants-in-aid committees for adult education have been constituted according to the RSS' interests.

As we are directly concerned about the school education in this work, what happened in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) assumes more significance for us. Dr. J.S. Rajput, who was appointed as its director, had been openly advocating the RSS's emphasis on 'Indianization, Spiritualization, Nationalization' of school syllabuses and 'Value' education.
2. Government Funds for Hindutva and Changed Priorities

Government funds for the Hindutva agenda in education have been managed in many ways. Priorities of research have changed with the takeover of research bodies and academic institutions.

(A) In the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) the Towards Freedom volumes have been effectively shelved along with The Economic History of India, on Railway Construction, and Inscriptions of India. Instead, some new projects were proposed. They are:

three projects on 'Indus Saraswati Civilization' and one on 'Archaeology and Tradition'. A meeting was held on 29-30 October, 2000 to sanction grants for the new projects. Projects and grants were awarded with the aim of establishing the Hindutva view of history. ¹⁰⁸

(B) The Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Documentation Centre, established in honour of the founder of Jana Sangh within the ICSSR has been given generous funding. Even the entire campus of JNU City Centre was changed to 'Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Gateway of Social Sciences'. The ICSSR has also established a new Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Centre for Social Welfare.

(C) Archaeological Survey of India was similarly preoccupied with funding excavations and publications to prove that the Aryans were the original inhabitants of India and that Indian civilisation is essentially 'Aryan' civilisation. ¹⁰⁹

(D) The Open School texts which were written even before the BJP-led government came to power, and already been approved and paid for, were not published because of the association of secular historians in framing the syllabi for them.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.10-11
(E) Government funds have also been made available to thousands of RSS schools and the VHP run Ekat schools under the government scheme of one teacher schools and to non formal centres and Continuing Education Programmes being run by sympathisers. RSS type of books were pushed into the literacy centres and rural libraries established in the 1990s under the National Literacy Mission directed adult education programme. All the old publications have been shut down and the old grants-in-aid committees were dismantled summarily without notice, the decisions taken by them were not implemented. Moreover, through a directive that made all schools running for ten years automatically entitled for affiliation and recognition, the BJP has ensured large transfers of funds to RSS schools in the BJP ruled states.\(^\text{110}\)

(F) Since the BJP's takeover, value education, moral science, patriotism, and nationalism have become synonymous with Hindutva in the government vocabulary. The NCERT has seriously taken up the task of introducing a course on value education in schools on the model of the 'moral science' taught in RSS linked Vidya Bharti and Shishu Mandir schools. Enormous funds have been given for a resource library at the NCERT to 'help towards devising the course', and although there will be token representation of other religions, the Hindutva line will be inculcated through giving voice to every festival, fast, yatra, writings of so-called sants and sadhus, and so on.\(^\text{111}\)

(G) Cultural festivals were funded by the Department of Culture and ministers were openly associated with promoting the identity of Indian culture with brahmanical myths. Apart from these measures, there had been a planned propaganda against the secular historians and intellectuals. Secular historians have been vilified not merely by the RSS, but also by Mr. Murali Manohar Joshi, who has branded them as 'politicians' rather than intellectuals. Almost no secular historian remained part of the Council ICHR. The RSS mouthpieces *Organiser* and *Paanchjanya* regularly carry pieces with scurrilous campaigns against secular historians. Mr. Arun Shourie, who served as the Law Minister in the BJP-led government, has dedicated a whole book to them, which became a Bible

\(^{110}\) Ibid., p.11
\(^{111}\) Ibid., p.11
for the RSS, and was used by the BJP government to justify its takeover of the institutions connected with history. Moreover, the withdrawal from press of the two volumes edited by K.N. Panikkar and Sumit Sarkar proved their standpoint clearly.\footnote{112 Taneja: 2001, pp.22-23}

It is to be noted, in a prophetic manner, Bipan Chandra rightly wrote: "While spreading communal ideology through various instruments," they (the communalists) may not attack trade unions; they may not attack \textit{kisan sabhas}; they may not even attack the Communist parties. But they will certainly attack the secular intellectuals."\footnote{113 Bipan Chandra: 1977, p. 177}

Therefore, he firmly argues that they should not be allowed to come anyway near the state power. By state power, he means, "above all, control of education, control of media, control of ideological state abuse in general."\footnote{114 Ibid.,}

It is feared that the communalists may try to change the mode of thought and expression among the middle classes and even among the working classes at various places of the country. In this respect, Chandra makes one reference of the memoirs of a German anti-fascist. "He was asked the question as to what horrified him most, what made him most miserable in the 1930s in Germany – was it the pogroms or the attack upon Jews or. the killing of the communists and socialists or the concentration camps? He said: The worst thing that happened to me was when my son came back from school spouting fascist ideology and I could not even correct him because I knew that if I corrected him, he would go back to the teacher and tell him that my father said that what was being taught him was wrong and then you can imagine what would have happened to me and my family." In other words, it is the ideological aspect that the State under communal influence or control is likely to promote and this is a major reason why they must not be permitted anywhere near state power.\footnote{115 Ibid., p.178}
The New NCERT Textbooks

The NCERT introduced a new National Curriculum Framework which virtually wanted to take history out of school textbooks until class X in the name of reducing the weight of the current heavy schoolbag. Only certain 'themes' from history were to be integrated with civics and geography and taught as one subject. Unlike 1977, this time there was no attempt to ban those books but to do away with them altogether in the name of bringing in new books with the changed syllabus. For class XI and XII the existing history books were doctored with until new books were produced. This attempt was criticised by a number of scholars on the account that it would create a narrow mindset among the students. Eminent historians Mridula Mukherjee and Aditya Mukherjee draw our attention to a similar attempt made by the Pakistan government. They write:

Paradoxically the present regime is imitating Pakistan which made a similar move in the 1970s of keeping history out up to a particular level and then prescribing a distorted, one sided version at the senior level. Regimes uncomfortable with history or those with an agenda which is narrow, sectarian and undemocratic often seek to suppress or distort history.  

They also point out that the NCERT brought in such major changes in the curriculum without attempting any wide consultation by seeking to arrive at a consensus. Since education is a concurrent subject in India, involving partnership between the centre and the states becomes mandatory. As they argue that 'since Independence the tradition had been to put any major initiative in education through discussion in Parliament and the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), a body which includes among its members the education ministers of all states and Union Territories. The NCERT has arrived at the new curriculum without any reference to the CABE thus violating both tradition and procedural requirements.'

Apart from these violation of procedural requirements, the NCERT director, J.S. Rajput, the head of the education wing of the RSS, Dinanath Batra, and columnist for the RSS

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117 Ibid., p.2
mouthpiece, Organiser, Atul Rawat very strongly emphasised that the existing textbooks were outdated. Mukherjee and Mukherjee raised the following questions:

How this conclusion is arrived at without involving any committee of historians? Even accepting that they are outdated, why are the authors not asked to revise them, as they had done in many instances earlier? If the present authors are unwilling or unable, the task of revision or even of writing new text-books could be assigned, through a proper process of selection by a committee of historians, to another group of recognised, possibly younger historians. But that would assume that the purpose is indeed to update the books, which it is not.118

Mukherjee and Mukherjee also bring to our notice that the NCERT was not in a position to name a single nationally or internationally recognized historian who is associated with the changes sought to be made in the syllabus. There was an element of secrecy and the Director of NCERT publicly refused to give the names of the historians involved in the revision or the writing of the proposed new books which were to be prescribed by March 2002, on the flimsy ground that if those names were disclosed the authors would be "disturbed." The following paragraph makes it clear about the NCERT's dilemmas and helplessness:

It is indeed worrying that while on the one hand we are told that new books will be introduced by March 2002, till Mid-December 2001 there is not a single historian whose name has been given as the author of these books, and many newspaper reports in recent days have suggested that the NCERT seems to be having trouble finding willing authors from among historians. This either means that the entire job of getting new books ready is being undertaken in a cavalier fashion, or that the books are really being prepared by people whose names will not pass scholarly and popular scrutiny. Either scenario is a recipe for disaster as far as school children, in whose name and for whose welfare this entire exercise is being carried out, are concerned. Instead of books by internationally recognised historians, they would possibly be dished out thinly-veiled communal propaganda literature.119

Thus, in the absence of professional historians to write the textbooks according to the expectations of the RSS, the responsibility was entrusted upon its ideologues.

118 Ibid., p.4
119 Ibid., p.5
A PIL pleading that the NCERT had not followed the correct procedures for consultation with the states before preparing the curriculum and that it sought to introduce religious teaching was, however, rejected by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court interpreted Article 28 of the Constitution stating that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds was interpreted by the judge to allow for teaching about religions. In addition, Justice Shah expounded on the necessity of religion “for controlling wild animal instinct in human beings and for having civilised cultural society”. The NCERT then released its history and social science textbooks.

Historians have been troubled not just by the content of the new textbooks but also by the manner in which these changes have been made. As Romila Thapar argues, “The school curriculum was changed by government fiat, without consulting the educational bodies that had earlier routinely been consulted, such as, the Central Advisory Board of Education. Such a consultation would have prevented the implementation of what many now regard as a sub-standard curriculum for schools, quite apart from the rather drastic re-orientation of history.”

In the same lecture, Thapar also observes that the middle school students are to be taught the following subjects:

- a package entitled “Social Studies” consisting of potted versions of history, economics, civics and geography; Vedic Mathematics; Simple Sanskrit; and Yoga and Consciousness. On the completion of Middle School they will be tested to ascertain whether they go into the academic stream or the vocational stream and the tests will draw on the Intelligence Quotient, Emotional Quotient and Spirituality Quotient - whatever these may be.

Nandini Sundar’s article, ‘Teaching to Hate’, looks at schooling as part of the RSS agenda to create certain notions of citizenship and identity, first examining the textbook debate.

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120 Judgment by Justice M B Shah, D M Dharmadhikari, and H K Sema in Writ Petition (Civil) No 98 of 2002, Aruna Roy and others vs Union of India and others. The copies of the text of the judgement are in the possession of the writer.

121 Sic p.31


123 Ibid., p.1.
and then through ethnographic fieldwork in RSS schools in Chhattisgarh. It explores some of the RSS/BJP's educational interventions and their implications for the future production of 'citizens'.

Nandini Sundar argues that

The new NCERT social science/history textbooks are not only shockingly low on both grammar and fact, but also reflect many of the RSS's pet themes e.g, the urge to prove that Indian civilisation is synonymous with Hinduism, which in turn is synonymous with the "Vedic civilisation'. This Vedic civilisation is portrayed as the fount of all things great in the world, while all the evils that beset India are traced to foreigners – Muslim invaders and Christian missionaries. 124

In the textbook on medieval India, the exactions of the Sultanate Rulers or the Mughals are exaggerated and portrayed in anti-Hindu terms, and their contributions to society, culture and polity are ignored. The idea that the Babri masjid was built on an earlier temple is given textual sanctity: "the sites (for Babur’s mosques) were carefully selected...Ayodhya was revered as the birthplace of Rama." 125

In the new NCERT textbook for class IX, however, there is even less attempt to understand ideals and processes – instead, the blame is clearly assigned. Contemporary India spends considerable time on the role of the Muslim league in causing partition, and the perfidy of the communists for supporting the Allies in the second world war, while omitting any mention of the RSS or the Hindu Mahasabha's contribution to communalism and partition. There is no word on Gandhi's assassination by RSS sympathiser, Nathuram Godse. As Sundar observes, 'With such remarkable passages as "The task of the framers of the Constitution was very difficult. Their foremost job was to ensure the integrity of the country taking into account the presence of Pakistan within India herself", children are easily led to see Muslims as fifth columnists and not fully Indian.'

124 Nandini Sundar: 'Teaching to Hate: RSS Pedagogical Programme', in EPW Special Articles April 17, 2004
Saraswati Shishu Mandir and its Role in Education

The first Saraswati Shishu Mandir was set up in 1952 in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, although a Gita school had been established by Golwalkar in 1946 at Kurukshetra, Haryana. As the number of schools grew in different states, an all-India co-ordinating body, called Vidya Bharati, was set up in 1977 with its headquarters in Delhi. The Vidya Bharati educational mission is founded on the objective of training children to see themselves as protectors of a Hindu nation. The following passage reveals its objectives:

The child is the centre of all our aspirations. He is the protector of our country, Dharma (religion) and culture..... To relate the child with his land and his ancestors is the direct, clear and unambiguous mandate for education. We have achieve the all round development of the child through education and sanskar, i.e., inculcation of time honoured values and traditions.\(^\text{126}\)

Sundar points out that 'the RSS has long recognised the centrality of education to any project of gaining power and reorienting the political arena.' Its educational front, Vidya Bharati, runs one of the largest private networks of schools across the country, catering mainly to lower middle class students. As of March 2002, Vidya Bharati had 17,396 schools (both rural and urban), 2.2 million students, over 93,000 teachers, 15 teacher training colleges, 12 degree colleges and 7 vocational and training institutions.\(^\text{127}\) Other RSS fronts providing education, as Sundar observes, include the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), which specialises in hostels for adivasi children among other activities; Sewa Bharati (for dalits), and the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation which runs single teacher pre-school centres where children are taught basic reading, writing, Sanskrit and 'sanskars' or good behaviour.\(^\text{128}\)

\(^{126}\) Vidya Bharati’s Website: www.vidyabharati.org

\(^{127}\) Sundar cites from www.vidyabharati.org

\(^{128}\) Sundar: 2004
It is to be noted that RSS used the tactic of social welfare very effectively in order to expand its educational services so as to reach more students in the backward areas of certain states. For instance, Jaffrelot comes out with an elaborate analysis:

'The tactic of social welfare is a feature of the Sanghathanist method of implantation and has been developed by most affiliates of the RSS - e.g. the BMS and the BJP. However the main agency for social work in the RSS combination is Seva Bharti (Service of India), which was founded in 1979. This organisation provides free medical assistance (in Delhi it runs an ambulance service in slum areas) and very low-cost education for the poor. In Delhi 129 Bal and Balika Kendras (educational centres) provide an elementary education for 19,304 children. The social welfare tactic of the RSS obviously benefited from the weakness of the public sector in fields such as health and education, a situation exacerbated in the early 1990s as pressure to reduce India's budget deficit led to a squeeze on public expenditure. Moreover, the central government relies increasingly on voluntary associations to implement social welfare; in 1991 it awarded a 'certificate of merit' and Rs 50,000 to Seva Bharti, which the Delhi Development Authority also provided with office space.'

Jaffrelot points out that the Shishu Mandirs are increasingly running classes aimed at the poor. Citing from the village in Madhya Pradesh in which he conducted his study, he informs, 'the registration fees-300 rupees per child per year-enabled low-caste children to enrol. The teachers are volunteers deputed by the RSS who are prepared to work for low salaries. . . . The success of the school, which attracted about 50 pupils, was due largely to the anxiety of poor families to have their children educated in a village which, despite its 2,500 inhabitants, had no school.'

The Vidya Bharati schools are funded through fees and private donations from rich trading families or other wealthy sympathisers, including NRIs. The RSS claims to take no government aid in order to maintain the spirit of voluntarism and avoid government restrictions. However, periods of RSS expansion certainly seem to show an uncanny correlation with having a BJP government in power. Sundar informs that although Vidya Bharati work began in Chhattisgarh in 1968, they received a new impetus in the 1990s (coinciding with the BJP-led Sundarlal Patwa government). Reports of government

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129 Jaffrelot: 1993, p.530
130 Ibid., p.531
patronage—gifts of prime land in the capital to RSS organisations at very low rates have appeared in made newspaper headlines in late 2002.  

While religion evidently plays a role, the ultimate criterion for parents in selecting schools appears to be exam results and cost of schooling. As Sundar points out that in Chattisgarh, 'In the public perception, RSS schools fare well on results and are affordable for the lower middle class and thus manage to attract a range of children whose parents are not necessarily committed to the Sangh agenda. Children who graduate from these schools, however, seem to end up with a strong sympathy for the Sangh.'

Sundar describes the different aspects of the school's culture focusing particularly on, what she regards as 'the extra curricular markers and makers of identity'. According to her, what we consider as 'secular education' is, itself culturally marked to an extent. Therefore, she opines that RSS practice could be seen a perfectly legitimate reaction to the widespread internalisation of Christian missionary educational practices under the guise of 'modern' and 'secular education'.

She points out that RSS schools are trying to be different from elite private or government schools. She argues that the reason of success of the RSS schools lies behind the fact that they follow the practices such as touching the feet of elders, naming classrooms after sages, etc.

Although the students' uniforms are similar to those of children at other schools, in the Vidya Bharati schools, the teachers also wear uniforms. While the women teachers wear white sarees with red borders, the male teachers wear white dhotis and kurtas. Unlike their counterparts in other schools, here male teachers too flaunt their Indianness, using Sanskrit terms such as "acharya" to address teachers.

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131 Sundar, 2004
132 Ibid.,
In addition to the two national days (January 26 and August 15), the Vidya Bharati schools celebrate their own roster of special days, such as the birthdays of Shivaji and Jijabai, Vivekanand, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, and Savarkar. Significantly, Gandhi Jayanti is not celebrated, although in recent years, he too is being appropriated. Shikshak diwas or Teacher’s day (celebrated by the rest of India on September 5 on the birth anniversary of the former president and educationist Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan) is celebrated on the supposed birth anniversary of the Sage Vyasa, while Krishna Janmashtami stands in for children’s day, normally celebrated in India on Nehru’s birthday, November 14.

It is to be noted that Sundar points out that 'by celebrating Savarkar or Deen Dayal Upadhyya’s birthdays on the same plane as Vyas or Krishna, or by stringing Golwalkar and Hegdewar together with Hindu saints, poets, or kings in the Ekatmata Stotr, the RSS tries to legitimise its Hindutva heroes by using the reverence that many Indians feel for the others.' One could find a conflation of real and mythical events/people in the RSS agenda of teaching. For instance, it has turned the Babri masjid into an archaeologically ‘certified’ birthplace of Ram.

Sundar writes:

'Myth and history, the birth and death anniversaries of actual historical figures and those of mythical characters are thus seamlessly conflated and inscribed in the child’s consciousness through the regime of annual holidays, celebrations, morning prayers, as well as through the content of history and ‘cultural knowledge’ textbooks.'

The NCERT’s National Steering Committee on text-book evaluation found that the RSS-run Vidya Bharati schools are being clearly used for the dissemination of blatantly communal ideas.

'The Committee Shares the concern expressed in the report over the publication and use of blatantly communal writings in the series entitled, Sanskriti Gyan in the Vidya Bharati Schools which have been set up in different parts of the country. Their number is reported to be 6,000. The Committee agrees with the report that much of the material in the so-called Sanskrit Gyan series is "designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in
the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation". The Committee is of the view that the Vidya Bharati schools are being clearly used for the dissemination of blatantly communal ideas. In its earlier report (January 1993), the Committee had commented on publications which had been brought out with similar objectives by the Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan and Markazi Maktaba Islami and had recommended that they should not be allowed to be used in schools. The Sanskriti Gyan series are known to be in use in Vidya Bharati schools in Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere. The Committee recommends that the educational authorities of Madhya Pradesh and other states should disallow the use of this series in the schools. The state governments may also consider appropriate steps to stop the publication of these materials which foment communal hatred and disallow the examinations which are held by the Vidya Bharati Sansthan on the basis of these materials.\footnote{National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation, Recommendation and Report II, Publications of Vidya Bharati (Section VI of the report): New Delhi: NCERT}

The Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan is stated to have been set up in 1978. It has been producing materials which are used in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and other schools which have been set up by this Sanstha in different parts of the country. A large number of these schools have been set up in Madhya Pradesh. The Vidya Bharati schools in Madhya Pradesh had earlier been permitted to have their own examinations up to class VIII as well as to have their own teacher training programme. These schools are used for the propagation of blatantly communal ideas. Some of the textbooks used in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs in Uttar Pradesh had been evaluated in 1993.

A series of booklets which is being used in the Vidya Bharati schools has been published under the general title of Sanskriti-Gyan Pareeksha and Sanskriti-Gyan Pareeksha Prashn-ottari (Culture-Knowledge Examination and Culture-Knowledge Examination Questions-Answers). These books are in the form of questions and answers which are meant to be taught by teachers and memorized by students. They are also used for assessing children in an all-India examination which is conducted by the Sansthan.
The Vidya Bharati Sansthan claims to be engaged in providing to the young generation education in religion, culture and nationalism. The catechistic series is part of the Sansthan's effort in this direction.

Each booklet in the series comprises questions and answers on geography, politics, personalities, martyrs, morals, Hindu festivals, religious books, general knowledge, etc. Much of the material in these books is designed to promote blatantly communal and chauvinist ideas and popularize RSS and its policies and programmes.

Some examples of the kind of 'knowledge' of sanskriti these booklets are disseminating are given below:

1. The booklets include information and questions and answers on the 'geographical and political boundaries of India'. Besides Pakistan and Bangladesh, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and 'Brahmadesh or Myanmar' are all supposed to have been earlier parts of India. There is a question on Sri Lanka which reads, "What is the name of the island in the south which touches the feet of Bharat Mother, and which reminds us of Sri Ramachandra's victory over Ravana and which was a part of our country at one time?" Arab Sagar, according to these booklets, is supposed to be also known as Sindhu Sagar and Bay of Bengal as Gangasagar. These names are also used in the map of India which is printed as the back cover of many of the booklets under the caption Punyabhoomi Bharat. In this map, Indian Ocean is mentioned as Hindu Mahasagar.

2. India is presented in extreme chauvinist terms as the 'original home of world civilisation'. One of the booklets (No. IX), for example, says, "India is the most ancient country in the world. When civilisation had not developed in many countries of the world, when people in those countries lived in jungles naked or covering their bodies with the bark of trees or hides of animals, Bharat's Rishis-Munis brought the light of culture and civilisation to all those countries." Some of the examples of the "spread of the light of Aryatva by Bharatiya Manishis" given are the following:

   (I) "The credit for lighting the lamp of culture in China goes to the ancient Indians..."
"India is the mother country of ancient China. Their ancestors were Indian kshatriyas..."

"The first people who began to inhabit China were Indians."

"The first people to settle in Iran were Indians (Aryans)."

"The popularity of the great work of the Aryans -- Valmiki Ramayana -- influenced Yavana (Greece) where the great poet Homer composed a version of the Ramayana".

"The Languages of the indigenous people (Red Indians) of the northern part of America were derived from ancient Indian languages".

3. Many of these booklets have a section each on 'Sri Ramjanmabhumi'. They present RSS/VHP propaganda in the form of catechisms to be memorized by the faithful as absolute truths. Some of the questions-answers in these sections are as follows:

Q. Who got the first temple built on the birth place of Shri Ram in Ayodhya?
A. Shri Ram's son Maharaja Kush.

Q. Who was the first foreign invader who destroyed Sri Ram temple?
A. Menander of Greece (150 B.C.)

Q. Who got the present Rama Temple built?
A. Maharaja Chandragupta Vikramaditya (A.D. 380-413).

Q. Which Muslim plunderer invaded the temples in Ayodhya in A.D. 1033?
A. Mahmud Ghaznavi's nephew Salar Masud.

Q. Which Mughal invader destroyed the Rama Templ in A.D. 1528?
A. Babur.

Q. Why is Babri Masjid not a mosque?
A. Because Muslims have never till today offered Namaz there.

Q. How many devotees of Rama laid down their life to liberate Rama temple from A.D. 1528 to A.D. 1914?
A. Three lakh fifty thousand.

Q. How many times did the foreigners invade Shri Ramjanma-bhumi?
A. Seventy-seven times.

Q. "Which day was decided by Sri Ram Kar Sewa Samiti to start Kar Sewa?"

Q. Why will 2, November 1990 be inscribed in black letters in the history of India?
A. Because on that day, the then Chief Minister by ordering the Police to shoot
unarmed Kar Sewaks massacred hundreds of them.

Q. When was the Shilanyas of the temple laid in Sri Ram Janmabhumi?
A. 1 November 1989.

Q. What was the number of the struggle for the liberation of Ram Janmabhumi which was launched on 30 October 1990?
A. 78th struggle.

Some are:
other questions which have been included along with answers

"When did Ramabhakta Kar Sewaks unfurl the saffron flag on Shri Ramjanmabhumi?"

"Mention the names of the young boys who laid down their life while unfurling the saffron flag".

4. In one of the books in the series (No.12), there is a section on the saints of the world and the sects/faiths founded by them. The statements made in this section are designed to promote contempt and blind hatred against other religions. One statement on the followers of Christianity reads as follows:

"It is because of the conspiratorial policies of the followers of this religion that India was partitioned. Even today Christian missionaries are engaged in fostering anti-national tendencies in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Bihar, Kerala, and other regions of our country because of which there is a grave danger to the integrity of present day India".

About Islam, one of the statements is as follows:

"Thousands of opponents of idol worship, the followers of Islam, go to the pilgrimage centre of Islamic community at Kaaba to worship "Shivalinga". In Muslim society, the greatest wish is to have a darshan of that black stone (Shivalinga)".

In another question, children are asked to fill in the blanks 'rivers of blood' as the means by which Prophet Mohammad spread Islam.

5. There are special sections in some of the booklets on RSS, its founder and its other leaders. In one booklet (No. 11), RSS, which is mentioned along with Arya Samaj and Ramakrishna Mission etc. as a social reform organisation, is given the status of divine power. It says:
"Some divine power, whether it was Bhagwan Ram or Bhagwan Krishna, has always emerged for the preservation of the greatness of Indian culture. The Hindu organization Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh has arisen to end the present miserable condition and for the defence of the greatness of Bharatiya Sanskriti."

Much of this material is designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young which should be a matter of serious concern.

**Some Examples from School Texts**

Our land has always been seen with greedy eyes... This story of invasion and resistance is our 3000-year long Gaurav Gatha. When this proud tradition began is difficult to say because no books were written at that time... but we believe that the first man was born in this land. 134

To our ancestors these marauders were like mosquitoes and flies who were crushed. 135

Lakhs of foreigners came during these thousands of years but they all suffered humiliating defeat... Mughals, Pathans and Christians are today some of these people. 136

India is described as a Vedic nation on the basis of Vedic texts. 137

**Some Gems from the 'Sanskrit Gyan' Texts**

Sanskrit Gyan texts are taught in Vidya Bharati schools and Shishu Mandirs. The RSS sponsored agenda paper on education that the Central Government tried to present before the Conference of the State Education Ministers in October 1998 suggested that these and similar texts be made compulsory for all schools. 138

The students are tested on dubious "facts' such as:

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134 Gaurav Gatha:(Hereafter GG), p.8, for class 4, Shishu Mandirs
135 Ibid., p.9
136 Itihaas Gaa Raha Hai: I, for class 5, Shishu Mandir schools
137 Madhyamik Gadya Padya Sanchayan: ch. 4, for class 10
138 Sahmad: 'Sahmad Statement', in Sahmad: National Convention Against Communalisation of Education, New Delhi: Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust, 2001a, pp.13-18. We would note here that we have heavily relied upon this statement for our analysis in this section.)
Ram Janmabhoomi is the birthplace of Ram
Iran was first settled by Indians (Aryans).
Homer adapted Valmiki's Ramayana into an epic called Iliad.
Greek philosophers like Herodotus and Aristophanes were influenced by the Vedas.
The Egyptian faith was based on Indian traditions according to Plato and Pythagorus.
The language of the Native American Indians evolved from ancient Indian languages.
The cow is the mother of us all, in whose body Gods are believed to reside.
The Ayurveda is the finest medical system of the world, and it naturally evolved in India.
Jesus Christ roamed the Himalayas and drew his ideas from Hinduism.\(^{139}\)

The 'Sanskar Saurabh' series.

The lines of a poem meant for the children of class 4 reads as follows:

'O God Jagdeeshwar, father of this world, give me this quality, I may be born worthy to serve the Hindu, die in the cause of the Hindu. If I fail to give my life for the Hindu let me burn in hell.'\(^{140}\)

On witnessing Guru Teg Bahadur's staunch defense of his faith the Emperor (Aurangzeb) grew red with anger. This was the same Aurangzeb who had Matidas cut through with a saw, Bhai Dayaldas thrown into a vessel of boiling hot oil, and Satidas wrapped in cotton and burnt alive... Even in the last moments of his supreme sacrifice his pride in being a Hindu shone clearly on his face.\(^{141}\)

The stories Vir Balak Badal, Balidan Mein Jeet Kiski, Vir Balak Chatrasal promote hatred and strengthen all the prejudices against Muslims. They liberally contain sentences such as 'If you accept Islam your life may be spared' or 'The Muslim leader said we have come here to destroy temples'.\(^{142}\)

\(^{139}\) Ibid., p.14
\(^{140}\) In the context of the story of Guru Teg Bahadur's 'martyrdom' Sanskar Saurabh Series:[SS], Part 2, p. 48, for Class 4
\(^{141}\) SS Part 2: pp.49-50
\(^{142}\) Ibid., pp.57-61
On Guru Arjun Dev's refusal to accept Islam Jahangir had a furnace constructed next to the river Ravi, and a vessel filled with sand placed on it, after which he ordered a fire to be lit. Guru Arjun Dev was then called and asked to sit on the hot vessel.\footnote{143}{Ibid., p.72,}

Bharat exists, has culture, learning, civilization, religion, good deeds as long as this Hindu jati survives, remains dominant...\footnote{144}{Ibid., p. 77, lines from a poem}

We are one, our culture is one, our tradition is one, our life-current is one, and we have but one history. We have to gain self-knowledge, and on the basis of self confidence, manliness and daring, create for society a monumental national man through the medium of traditional ideology of Indian culture... This view of Golwalkar opposing the pluralistic character of Indian culture and tradition is strongly put forward.\footnote{145}{SS: p.7, Book 4, for Class 6}

It is because, we are the children of Manu that we are known as manushya or manav (human). This is claimed in a tale of blind faith and superstition.\footnote{146}{Ibid., Manu Aur Manav, Chapter 3}

The Muslim butchers are the killers of cows... The Hindus who killed them are to be venerated, their only fault being that they did it while they were asleep.\footnote{147}{Ibid., p.57}

There is a description of Hedgewar unfurling the saffron flag on a British building and it is said that the organized strength of the Hindus that we witness today is the result of his sacrifice and strong commitment.\footnote{148}{Ibid., p.64}

The Muslim children abused Durga Bhavani. They also falsely accused Haqeeqat Rai, and a maulvi forced him to accept Islam. He (Haqeeqat Rai) said that one has to die just...
once and what better cause to die for than one's religion. For this his head was severed from his body, and he became a martyr on the altar of religion and gained immortality.\textsuperscript{149}

Aurangzeb said to Sambhaji "Accept Islam and your life will be spared and your kingdom returned to you". To which Sambhaji replied "Religion is dearer than life or kingdom. I am born a Hindu; I will die a Hindu Aurangzeb ordered, "with a pair of burning tongs tear open every piece of flesh from this kafir".\textsuperscript{150} Such graphic sentences abound in a chapter on this piece of 'history' from which a moral is to be derived, and such chapters abound throughout the book, and in fact the entire series.

Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh are shown as parts of erstwhile India and the student is urged to pray to a picture of this Akhand Bharat and to pledge that he will once again achieve the same shape for our country.\textsuperscript{151} There is a poem with the same sentiment in the book.

The worldview, thought, values and behaviour of the Hindus is most superior in this world.\textsuperscript{152}

In our lives we should accept only the Swadeshi religion, Swadeshi culture and swadeshi goods, celebrate our birthdays according to the Indian tradition. Yes, for the defense of the country it would not be a crime to buy Russian MIGs...\textsuperscript{153}

Bharat is the most ancient nation in the world. Our original ancestors Manu and Shatrughan gave life to this earth... Indian Ocean is referred to as Hindu Mahasagar.\textsuperscript{154}

The real name of Lucknow is Laxmanpuri and it was made into a habitation by Laxman.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p.69-70  
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p.25  
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p.31-32  
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., chapter 21,  
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p.52  
\textsuperscript{154} Akhil Bharatiya Sanskriti-Gyan Pariksha Pradhnotri[hereafter ABSGPP], edited by Vidya Bharati, for Class 8
On refusing to accept Islam Banda Bairagi had the heart of his son thrust down his throat.\textsuperscript{156}

The Aryan civilization is the oldest in the world.\textsuperscript{157}

Shikha, Mekhla, Tilak, Mala, Dand, Saffron clothes, are symbols of Indian attire. Educational reform, a cultural campaign, and doing away with the legal obstacles that prevent its growth are very necessary today.\textsuperscript{158}

There are eight questions just on Rama janmabhoomi in the context of which there are answers such as there were 78 battles fought for the Rama janmabhoomi, around three and a half lakh people were martyred in its cause. Specific dates of the locks to the place being opened, the date when kar seva began, the date of the assault, details of the Kothari brothers etc. are provided and students are asked to remember them as possible exam questions.\textsuperscript{159}

The Hindu belief are characterized as a Dharma (religion, way of life), while the Sikhism, Christianity, Islam are described as sects.\textsuperscript{160}

Our ancestors established national unity on a permanent basis by building Shiv Mandirs and Shivlings.\textsuperscript{161}

Our culture is one. It is also known as Hindu culture. Everybody's heritage, tradition, and belief are one. Everybody celebrates Holi, Divali and Dussehra together. The same mantras are recited on marriages and other occasions. Our cultural symbols, identity marks are the same. The cow, Ganga, Gayatri Mantra and Gita are revered by all equally.

\textsuperscript{155} ABSGPP: p. 7  
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., p.9  
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., p.11  
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., p.13  
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p.14  
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., p.14  
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p.20
All believe in rebirth and karma, and everyone equally pays respect to sadhus and sanyasis.\textsuperscript{162}

Among the builders of Indian culture has been included Sri Krishna.\textsuperscript{163}

Urdu is not an independent language. It is Hindi written in a different (Arabic) script.\textsuperscript{164}

Cultural symbols are identified as and confined to the lotus, gayatri mantra, natraj, ganga, gita, sun, swastika, etc. It is almost nine lakh years since Ram stepped on this holy Arya land and even today his reign is remembered as one of happiness, prosperity and peace.\textsuperscript{165}

Sri Krishna is referred to as a nationalist.\textsuperscript{166}

Man first took birth in Tibet, originally a part of Bharat. All beings were Arya beings. It is from there that they spread out into the fields. It is now 179 million crore, 19 lakh, 59 thousand, 84 years since man stepped on this earth.\textsuperscript{167}

Nandini Sundar firmly argues that it is objectionable to teach subjects which are contested as if they were 'settled facts'. She states, 'good education involves opening children's minds to a variety of perspectives and enabling them to come to their own conclusions.' She rejects the justification of Hindu schools that the Muslims have their madrasas and the Christians their convents. For any 'forward-looking Indian', she emphasises, 'the primary aim of schooling should be to transmit analytical thinking, rather than to maintain or promote a particular religious identity, with its consequent ignorance of other faiths and cultures.'\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{162} Sadacharki Batein [hereafter SKB]: for Class 9
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., Chapter 9
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., p.65
\textsuperscript{165} Dharma Shiksha: for Class 6, p.29
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., p.65
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., p.67.
\textsuperscript{168} Nandini Sundar: 'Response' to EPW: Letters to Editor, May 15, 2004
Anjali Mody argues that 'until the textbooks written by some of the country's best known historians became targets of attack this industry in fantasy fiction hardly provoked comment, never mind the sort of media coverage that the controversy around the NCERT's history textbooks has generated. Neither Vidya Bharati, its long list of publications, nor the 'history lessons' conducted through the thousands of RSS shakhas, inspired the start of a campaign against the Sangh's assault on history.'\(^{169}\)

For, historians practicing their craft from the comfort of universities and research institutes prior to their take over by the Sangh, hardly noticed the expanding reach of the Sangh nor imagined that it would one day claim its share of institutional spoils through political power and then, perhaps, direct its ideological trident against them.\(^{170}\)

It is to be noted that our intention here is not to study the long term, direct-electoral consequences of these ideological projects. Nonetheless these kind of intellectual practices constitute the core of discursive practices which are undertaken with the view to create an immediate ideological influence in the public sphere. It is important to analyse their immediate repercussions, along with far-reaching implications. Our concern is to find out the instrumental values of the contents of the text, prescribed by the state, irrespective of its intellectual depth and academic authenticity.

\(^{169}\) Anjali Mody: 'History as told by Non-Historians', in The Hindu, 16, December, 2001

\(^{170}\) Ibid.