

‘Hinduism and Political Hinduism’

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1. Introduction

The Global Democracy Index 2017 of The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has been released on last January, ranked India 42nd position which is 10 point down from 2016 Index of 32nd rank. The reasons behind this decline towards 10 points below is defined by them are that the rise of conservative religious ideologies, strengthening of right-wing Hindu forces in a democratic country, violence against Muslims and other minority communities and dissenting voices.¹ These are the very facts that India faces today in the name of religious politics. Indian democracy, constitution, equality, unity in diversity, freedom of religion and expression etc. are challenged by political Hinduism but not by Hindu religion. This is a paper where I tried to unearth the real characteristics of Vedic or Classical Hinduism and today’s Political Hinduism.

2. Defining Hinduism

Like a river is formed by different streams, Hinduism is formed from different streams of Vedic scriptures, Puranas, Ithihasas, sects, rituals, philosophies, etc.² It is not a religious faith which centering on a particular name of God based on a particular scripture. It comprises different philosophical thoughts, stories, rituals, practices that differs each other but all stands together. It can be considered as a harmonious federation of followers of many faiths. It doesn’t have founder as well as any central organizations.³ Here, I try to define Hindu religion by finding its characteristics in short level. They are given below:

Religion of Self-Evident Truth: There are no particular or key beliefs and moral principles which Hindus are expected to follow or live. It gives complete freedom to its believer to search his/her own spiritual pathway.⁴ It is not a religion of dogmas. “There are simply no binding requirements to being Hindu. Not even a belief in God.”⁵ So it’s a religion of liberal faiths. This nature of Hinduism led a lot of people to think and interpret it in their own views such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s Neo Hinduism and Vivekananda’s religion of tolerance and acceptance. Like

¹http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy_Index_2017.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=DemocracyIndex2017 Pgs. 26,27 (26/01/2018, 12:25pm)

² O.M.Mathew Oruvattithara, *Introduction to World Religions* (Bangalore: CISRS, 2012), 2.

³ Prabhakar Bhattacharya, “Hindu Thought and Practices” in Santanu K Patro (Ed), *A Guide to Religious Thought and Practices* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2010), 41.

⁴ Paul Oliver, *Hinduism and the 1960s: The Rise of a Counter Culture* (London, New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2014), 53.

⁵ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu* (New Delhi: Alpha Book Company, 2018), 4.

this, different people in different times tried to find out spiritual truths through Hinduism in their own ways, for example S. RadhaKrishnan, Gandhi, Sri Narayana Gurus, etc.

Religion of Acceptance: Hinduism avows that all ways of life and beliefs are equally valid. Nothing is rejected by Hinduism. The main reason for it is that it is a faith system populated by ideas at once ancient and modern, hosting texts, philosophies, belief systems and schools of thought that do not necessarily all agree with each other. It comprises theistic and atheistic systems. Charvaka philosophy of Hinduism says that there is no soul, caste orders and final liberation. But none are rejected by anybody in it.⁶ So it accepts all religions, faiths, etc. with same value.

Religion of Tolerance: As Hinduism is diverse as we see above, it tends to be tolerant and accepting variant religious practices.⁷ In this view it can stand as a religion which doesn't be a threatening to other faiths rather it accepts all other faiths. S. Radhakrishnan defines Hinduism as a way of life rather than a religion. With this he suggests that Hinduism is not like other dogmatic religion instead it is a kind of experience that is spiritual, undogmatic and tolerant.⁸ Even there are places like 'Shrine of Shahul Hamid' which is in Nagpur, Tamil Nadu where Hindus and Muslims share their religious rituals mutually.⁹ It shows that there is no space for intolerance in real Hinduism or real Hindu mind rather it can tolerate anything because there are no boundaries in Hinduism.

Fluid Religion: As we saw above, since Hinduism doesn't have any regulating dogmas, it is not a static religion instead it is fluid one. According to MV Nadkarni, "Hinduism is a dynamic religion, not fixed or revealed once for all, and hence cannot be identified exclusively with the religion of Vedas and Upanishads nor with the religion expounded by 'Dharmashastras' nor with the Hinduism of three eminent Acharyas- Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhava, nor also exclusively with medieval Hinduism and modern Hinduism. All these phases represent Hinduism, and have contributed to its development."¹⁰ It signifies that the characteristic of Hinduism is fluid and the dogmatic characteristics of it can be changed according to the time, space and context for the well being of humanity. For example, Code of Manu is seen as static dogmas in Hinduism but its commentator, Medhatithi gives us authority to reconstruct the code according to the time and the qualification of the person who changes it.¹¹

⁶ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 9,10.

⁷ Paul Oliver, *Hinduism and the 1960s: The Rise of a Counter Culture*, 53.

⁸ Pralay Kanungo, "Public Hinduism and Hindutva," in Brian A. Hatcher (ed), *Hinduism in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 245,24.

⁹ Vasudha Narayanan, "Tolerant Hinduism" in John Stratton Hawley & Vasudha Narayanan (eds), *The Life of Hinduism* (London: University of California Press, 2006) 266-270.

¹⁰ MV Nadkarni, "Is Caste System Intrinsic to Hinduism? Demolishing a Myth," *Economic and Political Weekly* November 8, 2003, 4783, 4784 (https://www.mvnadkarni.com/files/Is_Caste_System_Intrinsic_to_Hinduism.pdf (25/02/2018, 10:35)

¹¹ Sundaram P.K, "Hinduism & Secularism," *Religion & Society*, Vol.11/2, June, 1964, 16-22.

Hinduism as Dharma: For Hinduism, *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Duty) is their religion. It's a way of living through which one may achieve *Moksha* (Liberation). Each one has their own dharma like the dharma of fire is to burn. There are four 'needs of life.' They are 'Kama,' pleasure through sense, 'Artha,' economic and political needs, 'Dharma,' right conduct to be followed in various circumstances and 'Moksha,' liberation. When one's Kama and Artha are guided by Dharma he/she attains Moksha.¹² It shows that according to Hinduism, every needs of a human being should be led by the right conduct (Dharma). In short right conduct in life is the Hindu religion.

Why Caste System? Caste system is the only thing which is seen problematic in Classical Hinduism. But the reality is that Caste system has nothing to do with Vedic or Classical Hindu religion and it is out of Hindu canon. Shashi Tharoor observes that Rig Veda doesn't mention about caste system in its original book instead it was a later interpolation.¹³ MV Nadkarni researched it and examined that there is no correlation between Hinduism and caste system and saying that "The first reference to the four Varna comes in the tenth mandala of Rig Veda, in two verses of Purusha Sukta. According to several scholars who made deep research on the theme, the tenth mandala was chronologically the last to be composed. There is a good consensus on the point that previous to this, there was no varna system in vedic society"¹⁴ And he defines about untouchability that according to Ambedkar, untouchability emerged when Hindus avoided animal-sacrifices and beef eating under the influence of Buddhism. Those who continued to eat beef were considered as untouchables. So Varna system is post Vedic and untouchability is post Buddhism. Hence, he claims that caste system is not intrinsic part of Hinduism. Vedic and classical Hinduism does not support caste system. It has nothing to do with Hindu religion, medieval Bhakti movement was against caste system, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and others rejected caste system, Basaveshvara (Basavanna) who led the Bhakti movement whose followers became known as veerashaiva or lingayats in Karnataka, was truly against caste system but he couldn't succeed in preventing caste system later. Gail Omvedt observes that Caste system in Hinduism of outside India is weak and it is strong only in South Asia. Then why did caste system emerge and survive until now? He continues that it is "simply because, the system performed certain functions that were valued by the society, a System of Checks and Balances, Division of Labour, Decentralized Democracy, Ecological Role and Security of Livelihood and Employment. These functions had nothing to do with religion, being entirely in the 'aihika' (mundane) sphere. The unfortunate part of story is that caste identities have outlived these functions."¹⁵ As conclusion, caste system is more societal than religious but later it was mixed up with religion with personal intentions.

¹² Prabhakar Bhattacharya, "Hindu Thought and Practices" in Santanu K Patro (Ed) *A Guide to Religious Thought and Practices* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2010), 50, 51.

¹³ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 69.

¹⁴ MV Nadkarni, "Is Caste System Intrinsic to Hinduism? Demolishing a Myth," 4784.

¹⁵ MV Nadkarni, "Is Caste System Intrinsic to Hinduism? Demolishing a Myth" 4789, 4790. This articles defines clearly about all these societal functions of caste system deeply and scholarly way.

3. Political Hinduism

3.1 Emergence of Politicization of Hinduism: A Short History

The beginning of political Hinduism can be traced from the scenario of Hindu-Muslim antagonism of the late nineteenth century. It was the time of political modernization in India. Religion was used by both Hindus and Muslims to get support for their social and political upliftment. There was communal competition between Hindu and Muslim communalists. Hindus asked for the use of Hindi in administrative and educational purpose whereas Muslims asked for Urdu. There had the competition for education, jobs and majority rule. Hindus tried to ban cow slaughter whereas Muslims tried to protect their customs which included beef eating and cow sacrifices. With the intention of communal competition, both groups stressed more and more their religious and traditional identities.¹⁶ Bengal renaissance of the 19th century started to spread the Hindu Nationalism through the literature. Raja Ram Mohan Roy emphasized Hindu religion as a good religion by defining Hinduism through the idea of Neo-Hinduism which is monotheism and denying of idol worship. Arya Samaj of Dayananda Saraswathi invoked people to reconvert to Hinduism during the end of 19th century. As a counter act of such backgrounds, there was formed Muslim League in 1906 with the demand of separate electorates for the Muslim community. It was a political challenge to the Hindu community. As a political retaliation to this challenge, Punjab Hindu Sabha was formed by Arya Samaj. Hindu-Muslim antagonism became strengthened and permanent in a political scenario by these organizations at the beginning of 20th century in India.¹⁷

The political conflict between Hindus and Muslims had been started at this point. The congress party was in between them. For political mobilization, congress included both the members of Indian nationalism and Hindu nationalism and party identified itself with Hindu cultural traditions. During this time, Bal Gangadhar Tilak emphasized the Ganapati festival and Shivaji festivals. But this identification was not satisfied by many Hindu communalists due to the view of Gandhi which was an Indian national consciousness; both Hindus and Muslims had an equal role.¹⁸

The Hindu Sabha launched 'Hindu Mahasabha' in 1922 to operate as a pressure group within the Congress. Under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Hindu Mahasabha charted its program of action based on Hindu Nationalism in 1925. Some of the main programs were, to organize Hindu sabhas throughout the country, to provide relief to such Hindus who need help on account of communal riots, reconversion of Hindus who have been forcibly converted to Islam, to

¹⁶ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2017), 46, 47.

¹⁷ Partha S. Ghosh *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 48-55.

¹⁸ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 59, 60.

popularize Hindi, to request the trustees and keepers of Hindu temples to allow halls attached to the temples where people may gather to discuss matters of social and religious interest, to promote good feelings with Mohammedans and Christians, to represent the communal interests of the Hindus in all political controversies etc.¹⁹

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was the president of Hindu Mahasabha in 1936. Before Savarkar, Hinduism was only concerned with the theological and spiritual aspects of the religion but his Hindutva idea, which was first introduced in 1923, encompassed the entire range of cultural, social, political and linguistic aspects of Hindu life. He gave new definition for Hindus and Hindustanis (Indians) through Hindutva concept (His Hindutva ideology is defined below). He completely neglected Muslims and other faith peoples through Hindutva. Even he wrote the Indian history for highlighting the Hindus. In his book *Six Glorious Epoch of Indian History*, he completely ignored the three-century-long Mughal period during the Indian empire experienced its greatest expansion. His political message was Hindus of India must unite in order to fight their enemies, non-Hindus.²⁰

During the time of Savarkar and after him most of the Indian Hindus were instigated by him and his Hindutva ideology and started to strive for a Hindu Rashtra. RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), the National Volunteer Force formed by Keshav B. Hedgewar in 1925 which was influenced by Savarkar's theory of Hindutva. Ideologically it was dependent on Hindu Mahasabha and Savarkar's theory and its members were asked to read his *Hindutva*.²¹ Under its shadow, Indians were forced to use Hindi or other Indian languages than Urdu or English. Muslims and other faith peoples were sidelined by Hindu Political spirit. In this scenario, it is said that "partition of India was not only a Muslim demand, even some Hindus, ironically they were so called nationalist Hindus."²²

There were not stopped Hindu-Muslim antagonisms even after the independence. Even the first Home Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also considered Muslims are disloyal to the country.²³

Formation of BJP: During 1950s, the prominent Hindu Mahasabha president, Syama Prasad Mookerjee realized the limitations of Hindu Nationalism as a political platform and opened the membership of Hindu Mahasabha for all communities. It caused him to be forced to resign and to form a new political party in collaboration with RSS. This was 'Bharatiya Jana Sangh' (Indian Peoples' Union).²⁴ It was a counter party to Congress party. During the time of Emergency (1975-1977) there had been formed Janata Party which was an amalgam of Indian political parties with the intention of defeating Indira Government. So there had a general election in 1977

¹⁹ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 63, 64.

²⁰ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 64-68.

²¹ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 71.

²² Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 55.

²³ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 74.

²⁴ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 155.

after the state of Emergency and the Indian National Congress was defeated by Janata Party. In 1977, 'Bharatiya Jana Sangh' merged into Janata Party.²⁵ Due to the internal contradictions, Janata Government fell in 1979. Following this, in April 1980, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was revived with the new name of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).²⁶ Aftermath of formation of BJP, India has been witnessing different forms of fanaticism and xenophobia until now as part of political and religious endeavors of pro-Hindu groups such as demolishing of Mosque of Babri Masjid controversy, violation on Dalits, alienating all minority peoples, silencing writers, killing the protestors etc. Vishva Hindu Parishat (VHP), Sangh Parivar, Bajrang Dal, Hindu Yuva Vahini etc. are the organizations affiliated and supported by RSS wings and they propagate Hinduism in conservative way by upholding Hindutva ideologies.

3.2 Politicization of Hinduism

Hindu nationalism, Ghar Wapsi, Beef politics, Hindutva etc. are some of the outward expressions of today's political Hinduism. Here, I try to find out the historical backgrounds of these ideologies.

3.2.1 Hindu Nationalism as Communalism: The idea of Hindu nationalism is a Hindu communal ideology and it emerged from the bias love to Hindu community. This Hindu communal ideology was first seen in during Bengal renaissance in 19th century. The Bengali literary peoples like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee willy-nilly mixed up Indian nationalism with Hindu nationalism.²⁷ Their writings reflected the idea of Indian nationalism as Hindu nationalism as well as the Muslims as aliens. Based on this, the idea of nationalism turned into communalism during the beginning of 19th century. Indian people started to be antagonistic and xenophobic towards people of other faiths and to even willing to sacrifice national interest for the advancement of the interest of one's own religion.²⁸ So this so-called Hindu nationalism would be the one of the major reasons for the partition of India.²⁹ Later, after Independence, Golwalkar, highlighted Hindu Rashtra based on communalism with the hatredness towards Muslim community. He called Muslims as *Parakiya* (para- strange, foreign, alien) which means outsider.³⁰ With this Hindu communal interest, Golwalker defined Nation and Nationalism as: 'the idea contained in the word nation is the compound of five distinct factors. They are: Geographical (country), Racial (race), Religious (religion), Cultural (culture), and Linguistic (language). The people who outside this fivefold limit can have no place in the national life,

²⁵ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 179.

²⁶ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 86.

²⁷ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 48.

²⁸ Vincent Rajkumar, "Indian Secularism and Christianity," *Religion and Society* Vol.57, No.4, December, 2012, 15.

²⁹ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 55.

³⁰ Jyotiramaya Sharma, "Digesting the Other: Hindu Nationalism and the Muslims in India" in Vinay Lal (ed), *Political Hinduism: The Religious Imagination in Public Sphere* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009) 155.

unless they abandon their differences and completely merge themselves in the National Race.³¹ This was a kind of communal interested activity of otherness other faith people in the name of nationalism. This othering the other faiths of Golwalkar is repeated in present BJP government in India.

3.2.2 Ghar Wapsi: Ghar Wapsi (Back to Home) is not a Hindu religious quest rather than it was a Hindu communal quest of Dayananda Saraswati, the Hindu reformist. He wanted to keep Hindus in Hinduism. Due to the conversion of Hindus towards Christianity and Islam and the syncretic approach of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 19th century, Dayananda Saraswati started Arya Samaj in 1875.³² He performed *Shudhi* (Purification) to reconvert Christians and Muslims to Hinduism. The first *Shudhi* of a born Muslim was reported in 1877.³³ Still people are being reconverted into Hinduism.³⁴ Even though Dayananda Saraswati had the intention of communal mobilization he had another vision of right understanding of Vedas and its practices with social goodness. Today the pro-Hindu activists more politicize it and use this for political intention.³⁵ In short, Ghar Wapsi has nothing to do with Hindu Religion because it is a reformed activities of its followers not its.

3.2.3 Cow Politics: Banning of cow slaughtering and beef eating is not a Hindu religious agenda or dogma. The idea of cow protection emerged in modern India during the communal struggle between Hindus and Muslims in the end of 19th century. Muslims were slaughtering cows with religious significances during their festivals like Bakr-id but the pro-Hindus gave religious significance to banning cow slaughter by saying that it's an act of deicide, killing their God³⁶. It was mainly targeted on their enemy, Muslim community. The same thing repeated and continues until now. Today, during the tenure of BJP government, more Muslims and low caste people are tortured and killed by cow protectors. In a religious perspective, Wendy Doniger, a professor of History of Religions in Chicago University argues that the ancient Indian religious scriptures like Rig Veda and Brahmanas support cow slaughtering and beef eating. According to her today's Hindu nationalists use this notion of sanctity of cow to disenfranchise Muslims.³⁷ MB Rajesh, MP from Kerala argues that the BJP government tries to violate the principles of federalism through beef ban because even the constitution of India doesn't oppose cow

³¹ Partha S. Ghosh *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 72.

³² Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 54,55.

³³ <http://www.samarthbharat.com/reconversion.htm> (17/02/2018, 3:30pm).

³⁴ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/man-son-reconvert-to-hinduism/articleshow/60180933.cms> (17/02/2018, 3:40pm)

³⁵ Nisha Joseph, "Ghar Wapsi: A Political Religious Reconversion," *Religion and Society* Vol. 60, No.3, September, 2015, 42, 43.

³⁶ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 58.

³⁷ Wendy Doniger, "Hinduism and Its Complicated History with Cows and People who eats them" July 17, 2017, 10:38am (<https://theconversation.com/hinduism-and-its-complicated-history-with-cows-and-people-who-eat-them-80586> 17/02/2018, 5:10PM).

slaughtering but it gives the right for it.³⁸ It shows that the cow is a political tool of pro Hindu people but not a religious tool to propagate their religion.

3.2.4 Hindi as an Official Language: Hindi and Sanskrit are written in Devanagari system. Hindu scriptures were written in Devanagari so it has much religious significance.³⁹ During the beginning of 20th century there had a Hindu-Urdu controversy among Hindus and Muslims to support their social boost. The Hindu communalists began to agitate for the elevation of Hindi to official status but the Muslim communalists demanded for the use of Urdu in Persian script for the protection of their religious things.⁴⁰ There is close imitation in today's claiming on Hindi language by Hindus. So today's pro-Hindu arguments on Hindi language have political and communal significance rather than religious significance.

3.2.5 Hindutva: The term *Hindutva* literally means 'Hinduness.' This ideology of *Hindutva* was first introduced by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his book 'Hindutva' which was first published in 1923. This Hindutva of Savarkar shifted Hinduism from the spiritual identity and ideology to a political identity and ideology.⁴¹ As early mentioned, before Savarkar, Hinduism was only concerned with the theological and spiritual aspects of the religion but the Hindutva idea of Savarkar encompassed the entire range of cultural, social, political and linguistic aspects of Hindu life. No faith which has its origin outside India can ever be part of Hindutva concept. For the people who born and brought up in India with other faiths, India can be *Pitribhu* but India cannot be a *Punjabhu* for them because their holy lands would be according to their faiths such as Arab and Palestine. So the Indian other faiths people would be under suspicion as long as they don't give up their faiths and accept Hinduism.⁴² Shashi Tharoor defines Hindutva as more than Hindu religion and its political intention eliminates Muslims and Christians in India, make them second-class citizenship and make them sufferers.⁴³ Later Hindu societies and organizations like Sangh Parivar, RSS, VHP, BJP defined and propagated Hinduism on the basis of Savarkar's *Hindutva* ideology.⁴⁴ So the present Hinduism which is based on Hindutva is not a real Hinduism or Hindu religious ideology rather it's only the political ideology for the consolidation of Hindu people. Hindutva has nothing do with Hindu religion but only with Hindu community.

3.2.6 Secularism: The term 'secular' was not included in the preamble of constitution by the Constituent Assembly in 1948 but it was later added in the 42nd amendment of the constitution at the tenure of Indira Gandhi government. "Thereafter the description of India in the preamble was

³⁸ MB Rajesh, "Cow Politics is Modi Government's Diversionary Tactic," June 6, 2017, 4:31pm (<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/cow-politics-is-modi-governments-diversionary-tactic-4691627/> 17/02/2018, 5:20 pm).

³⁹ <http://www.ancientscripts.com/devanagari.html> (17/02/2018, 5:43pm).

⁴⁰ Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 46, 56, 68.

⁴¹ Pralay Kanungo, "Public Hinduism and Hindutva," 245, 250.

⁴² Partha S. Ghosh, *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: Savarkar to Vajpayee to Modi*, 64-67.

⁴³ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 144, 145.

⁴⁴ Pralay Kanungo, "Public Hinduism and Hindutva," 245.

changed from “Sovereign, democratic republic” to a ‘sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic.’⁴⁵ The intentions of adding of the words ‘secular’ and ‘social’ in constitution was the unity of India, individual freedom, secular characteristics of constitution etc. Nirad De, the government attorney general argued before the Supreme Court that it was to reassure the nation that the minorities would be safe and the moneyed class would not dominate the economy.⁴⁶ Secularism in European context is a state of complete separation of religion from state but “secularism in India means a state that was equally indulgent of all religious groups, and favoured none.”⁴⁷ Hence Secularism is one of the major challenges to the pro-Hindutva people in India. It doesn’t allow any religion is favoured than other. So the pro-Hindutva people intentionally want to change the constitution in order to divide India. It is clearly evident in recent controversial statement of Anantkumar Hegde, Minister of State for Employment and Skill Development from the BJP party. He said that the secular people do not have parentage, the word ‘secular’ would be removed from the Indian Constitution and we are here to change the Constitution.⁴⁸ So the ultimate aim of the pro-Hindutva people to break the secularism which is the unity and integrity of the Indian people and to make divisions among Indians by favour the Hindu religion.

The factors of politicization of Hinduism cannot be concluded with these six aspects instead there are more other aspects such as Rewriting History through revision of school curriculum, Silencing the writers, etc.

4. Purpose of Political Hinduism

Political Hinduism aims to fulfill the political interest of so-called Hindus but not the interest of Hindu religion. By using and politicizing Hindu religion, they try to achieve their own selfish goals through different crooked ways. One goal is to favour and to get support of the whole Hindus in India in order to acquire power. According to 2011 census, India has 80.5% of Hindus, 13.4 % of Muslims and 2.4 % of Christians of the total population of India.⁴⁹ Holding Hindu religion can bring majority votes from the 80.5% of the Hindu people. Another hidden target of Political Hinduism is homogenization through changing the Constitution. Hindutva ideology doesn’t support Indian Constitution which upholds the motto of ‘Unity in Diversity.’ According to Indian Constitution, Indian nation is a geographical territory with the equality of the plurality

⁴⁵ Adrija Roychowdhury, “Secularism: Why Nehru Stopped and Indira Inserted the S-word in the Constitution” December 27, 2017, 3:29pm (<http://indianexpress.com/article/research/anant-kumar-hegde-secularism-constitution-india-bjp-jawaharlal-nehru-indira-gandhi-5001085/> (18/02/2018, 9:45)).

⁴⁶Salil Tripathi, “Why Secularism and Socialism are Integral to the Indian Constitution” 02 February 2015, 11:50 am (<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/XKcwMBM2WpKX7TM20yPBBP/Why-secularism-and-socialism-are-integral-to-the-Indian-cons.html> (18/02/2018, 10:10pm)).

⁴⁷ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 200.

⁴⁸ A.J.Philip, “Hegde’s Fusillad: Testing the Waters” *Indian Currents* Vol.30, No.1, 01-07 January 2018, 18.

⁴⁹ Nisha Joseph, “Ghar Wapsi: A Political Religious Reconversion,” 42.

of diverse people in culture, religion, ethnicity etc. But for Hindutva, based on the views of Savarkar, Golwalkar and Upadhyaya, Indian nation is not a territory but people, that people are only Hindus no other religious and cultural people. Here, the Constitution is entirely opposite to the Hindutva ideology so the Hindutva people are looking opportunity to change the Indian Constitution into Hindu Constitution of the Hindutva. If the BJP government can acquire majority of two third in Rajyasabha, Loksabha and among states they can change the Constitution. So their ultimate target is to get maximum majority in all these places in order to change the constitution.⁵⁰ This is what Anantkumar Hegde, Minister of State for Employment and Skill Development from the BJP made a statement that we are here to change the Constitution. So the Political Hinduism of Hindutva ideology, intolerance, cow politics, Hindu nationalism, etc are not of Hindu religion rather of Hindu communalism and politics which is made by not the Hindu scriptures, sages etc. instead made by its followers. These are the reflections of bad self of its followers. That's what Shashi Tharoor asks, "Is a religion responsible for the worst behavior of its followers?"⁵¹

5. Conclusion

Political Hinduism, what we experience in present India is entirely different from the Vedic or Classical Hinduism. Political Hinduism is dogmatic, intolerant, conservative and static but classical Hinduism is undogmatic, tolerant, liberal and fluid. The proponents of political Hinduism are the proponents of their politics not of Hindu religion. We have to discern and extract Hindu religion from this vile politics and observe them separately so that we may experience the beauty of Hindu religion and blemish of self-interested politics.

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⁵⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7ZCxrqLBPA> (20/02/2018, 12:30 am).

⁵¹ Shashi Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu*, 80.

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