



Research Article

Aggressive Nationalism: A Relentless Force Shaping Humanity in Indian Perspectives

Gourab Ghosh ^{1*}, Bikash Barman ²

¹ Librarian, Southfield College, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India

² Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
Siliguri Terai B. Ed College, Siliguri, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author: * Gourab Ghosh

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20132724>

Abstract	Manuscript Information
<p>Nationalism in India has become a deal. It is affecting how people live and think about democracy and getting along with others. People in India have different ideas about what nationalism means. Some think it is about being proud of their country and fighting against people who ruled them before. Others think it is about their culture and religion being more important than others. We need to figure out what kind of nationalism is good for everyone and what kind is not.</p> <p>This paper looks at nationalism from a point of view. It uses history to show what the constitution says and what is happening in society and politics today. Nationalism binds people together; on the other hand, too much nationalism leads to divisions and hate for others. Such kind of nationalism does not allow one to be kind and empathic towards each other because empathy and kindness towards one another is crucial for a country such as India. On occasions, nationalism makes a person think themselves better than other individuals. In India, nationalism can result in divisions between people, hence the need for care when analysing the kind of nationalism that prevails among us.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ISSN No: 2583-7397 ▪ Received: 05-08-2024 ▪ Accepted: 26-09-2024 ▪ Published: 30-10-2024 ▪ IJCRM:3(5); 2024: 297-300 ▪ ©2024, All Rights Reserved ▪ Plagiarism Checked: Yes ▪ Peer Review Process: Yes <p>How to Cite this Manuscript</p> <p>Ghosh G, Barman B. Aggressive Nationalism: A Relentless Force Shaping Humanity in Indian Perspectives. International Journal of Contemporary Research in Multidisciplinary.2024; 3(5):297-300.</p>

KEYWORDS: Aggressive Nationalism, Mobilisation, Polarisation, Solidarity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian Nationalism was a key source of building current day modernizing of India. For this reason, it was an essential unifying force for fighting against British rule during colonization and helped multi-faceted problems translate into one unified political movement that fought for independence from colonial rule. However, there has also been a continuous warning by Indian intellectual traditions to warn of the dangers of a rigid, self-centered, and aggressive form of nationalism once it becomes solidified. Rabindranath Tagore called a nation that takes on the form of aggressive nationalism, a machine or both to get power and adds that aggressive nationalism can also lead to selfishness

or repressing the moral authority of the nation. Mahatma Gandhi defined a broader view of nationalism based on moral self-rule, nonviolence and reconciliation between communities without hate or oppression.

In the modern Indian context, the issue of nationalism seems divided into two categories: one centered around constitutional patriotism and citizenship while the other is centered around cultural nationalism or majoritarianism. Recently, researchers have noted the fact that aggressive and exclusionary rhetoric regarding nationalism is no longer restricted to political speeches but finds its expression in policy making, media narratives, public discourses around citizenship, minorities, and freedom of

speech. Hence, the examination of aggressive nationalism becomes very important as it is no longer simply a matter of politics. At the heart of this phenomenon is the question of dignity, respect, coexistence, democracy, and justice itself.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bipan Chandra (1979) ^[2] traces the dual character of Indian nationalism as both liberatory and exclusionary, showing how anti-colonial resistance gradually gave way to communal and majoritarian impulses that later fed into aggressive nationalist politics. Partha Chatterjee (1993) ^[3] critiques the inner/outer domain framework, arguing that the cultural “inner domain” became a site of aggressive identity assertion around religion, language, and gender, which continued after colonial rule. Christophe Jaffrelot (1996) ^[8] documents the organizational and ideological evolution of Hindu nationalism from the RSS to the BJP, highlighting how Savarkar’s Hindutva institutionalized an exclusionary nationalism targeting Muslims and Christians.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar’s *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1923) ^[18] lays the ideological foundation for Hindu nationalism by defining the Hindu nation in ethnic-territorial terms and explicitly excluding religious minorities. Achin Vanaik (1997) ^[24] analyses communalism as India’s specific form of aggressive nationalism, exploring how majoritarianism mobilizes both mass violence and electoral power. A.G. Noorani (2019) ^[14] examines the RSS as a legal and political phenomenon, arguing that its ideological and institutional penetration threatens constitutional pluralism.

Romila Thapar (2014) ^[22] shows how aggressive nationalists selectively reconstruct history to forge a monolithic Hindu civilizational narrative and marginalize minority pasts. Ashis Nandy (1983) ^[13] offers a psycho-analytical perspective, arguing that colonial emasculation produced an internalized, hyper-masculine nationalism that underpins nationalist violence. Prabhat Patnaik (2003) ^[15] situates Hindu nationalism within global neoliberalism, linking its rise to the erosion of welfare and the substitution of communal scapegoating for class politics. Finally, Ornit Shani (2007) ^[19] examines the 2002 Gujarat pogrom to illustrate how aggressive nationalism, caste dynamics, and state complicity converge to produce organized mass violence rather than spontaneous rioting.

SIGNIFICANCE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this research study can be attributed to the fact that India is one of the most diverse countries in the world, consisting of numerous religious groups, languages, caste systems, ethnic identities and regions. Consequently, the impact of aggressive nationalism on society extends beyond the context of electoral politics; it may cause significant changes to how individuals view citizenship, loyalty, dissent and belonging. Recent research has identified hyper-nationalist movements as contributing to the “othering” (discriminating against perceived differences) of minority communities. It pressures individuals to enact nationalistic behavior through highly defined means.

The growing presence of aggressive nationalism throughout India cannot simply be considered a buzz-word, as it drastically

alters the way we interact with each other and undermines India’s sense of humanity. While India strives towards its ambition of becoming a global power, one cannot ignore the existing tensions between India’s established secular, democratic foundation and the continued rise of (often militant) nationalistic tendencies; these tensions are evidenced throughout the country. The most visible evidence is social cohesion normally, however, social cohesion erodes once exclusionary perspectives begin gaining support. When people from various religious and linguistic backgrounds sense a loss of relevance, they tend to feel marginalized, excluded, or disproportionately victimized by society (Ali *et al.*, 2023). These tensions also create a ripple effect, impacting regional security domestically-based political aggression has an adverse effect on India’s relationship with its regional neighbours, thereby contributing to diminished stability throughout South Asia (Ali *et al.*, 2023). Perhaps the essential threat is to India’s Constitution; these tensions create challenges for the continued pursuit of the secular nature of India’s founding principles (Maiti, 2021).

The significance of this research is in the delineation of healthy patriotism from destructive jingoism. It establishes a distinction between honest pride in one’s country and being forced into the adoption of some hard-edged ideology. India’s own philosophical roots can assist in this respect consider Tagore and Gandhi’s recognition that nationalism veers off course when it becomes cruel or obsessively collectivised. Legal experts assert that to maintain democracy, nationalism must work cooperatively with the rule of law, constitutional principles, and fundamental rights, rather than bulldozing them. Ultimately, this research advocates for an approach toward belonging to India that is more humane, compassionate, and pluralistic; and frankly, that seems very important at this time in history.

3. OBJECTIVES

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To understand the concept and essential elements of aggressive nationalism within the Indian scenario.
- To examine the issues and controversies surrounding the debate about nationalism in India through the work of Tagore, Gandhi, and other modern constitutional scholars.
- To evaluate the consequences of aggressive nationalism for social cohesion, democracy, minorities, and civil discussion in India.
- To draw a clear distinction between civic nationalism, which is inclusive in nature, and cultural or majoritarian nationalism.
- To suggest a normative approach to nationalism within the Indian context by applying pluralism, constitutionalism, and human dignity.

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research is qualitative in nature and entails interpretation and analysis. It makes use of the secondary literature including academic journals, constitutional interpretation, works of public intellectuals, and historically informed discourses of Indian nationalism to develop an

intellectual understanding of aggressive nationalism. Essentially, the methodology is more textual than empirical, involving the identification of key themes as well as arguments advanced by historical personalities like Tagore and Gandhi in the context of modern discussions about exclusionary nationalism and social division.

This study is not concerned with the creation of primary empirical evidence; instead, the effort seeks to combine current scholarly works in order to make out patterns, contradictions, and normative implications. This approach is suitable considering that the field of inquiry involves concepts from philosophy, politics, and constitutional interpretations.

5. FINDINGS

The initial principal revelation is that Indian nationalism has historically been defined by being multiple things instead of just one. Scholars who study Indian nationalism say the nation evolved through discussions about anti-colonial resistance, cultural identity, modern political concepts and other competing perspectives regarding the definition of the nation. This multiplicity of definitions makes it clear that any attempt to define nationalism in a uniform and/or limiting way misses the richness of India's history and contribution to both intellectual and political life.

The second discovery is that nationalism can take on a new form when those who consider themselves nationals transform it into moral governance of the nation. Contemporary literature about India shows that extreme nationalism is determined by "how well" citizens "perform their loyalty" and is often dismissive of dissent, diversity or minority identity and therefore makes it problematic. Therefore, nationalism is transformed from a means of citizens participating in and taking responsibility for the democratic process, to a means to regulate citizens by requiring them to be 'conformists' instead of 'active participants' in their democracy.

The third insight relates to aggressive nationalism, which creates danger for social cohesiveness within a multi-ethnic society. Research suggests that highly developed majority (or exclusionary) nationalist language correlates with political polarization, communal discord, anti-minority communication, and challenges to the reasons for adhering to secularism. Actions of this type will negatively affect trust between communities, thus eliminating the accommodation necessary for pluralism in a democratic society like India.

The fourth insight is that Indian thinkers had previously warned about these dangers long before they were in vogue. Tagore's critique of the impersonal nature of the nation, as well as his warning of the destructiveness of organized self-interests, provide insight into the dehumanization associated with aggressive nationalism. On the other hand, Gandhi's view of an ethic of nationalism represents a potential opposite: the idea of ethical nationalism, which is based on non-violence, reconciliation, and unifying disparate communities as part of a moral purpose.

The fifth insight is that constitutional nationalism offers a legitimate democratic alternative. Constitutional scholars argue

that loyalty in the Republic of India should be based on the principles of the Constitution, as well as the principles of citizenship, rule of law, and not on sectarian identity or the majoritarian ideology of dividing society. In today's India, the constitutional national framework is important because it maintains national unity while respecting the rights of individuals, and will not allow nationalism to be exercised at the expense of freedom of expression, equality, or religious liberty.

6. CONCLUSION

Aggressive nationalism exists as a near-permanent entity, using various sources of leverage such as pride, fear, historical grievances, and identity to dramatically alter the nature of public life with great zeal. Nevertheless, from an Indian perspective aggressive nationalism cannot be viewed as a legitimate or 'pure' expression of official national identity since both the historical foundations of India's own philosophies and constitutional principles continue to caution against equating patriotism with hatred of another.

Specifically in India, nationalism acquires its moral legitimacy only when it encompasses pluralism, humanity, democracy and constitutional limitations. If India is to secure its sustainability in the future, there should be a common sense of belonging that stems from civic culture (that is, a means of achieving unity among diverse cultures of dignity and democracy) and not by force of conformism. Thus, the best possible solution to the threat of aggressive nationalism for India lies in promoting greater emphasis on constitutional patriotism; more respect for others' communities; and a civic space where being morally reflective becomes a standard for identifying oneself with something bigger than one's own identity without denying the same to others.

REFERENCES

1. Chakraborty S. My India in the shadow of 'aggressive nationalism'. Academia.edu; 2019. Available from: Academia.edu Article
2. Bipan Chandra. Nationalism and colonialism in modern India. New Delhi: Orient Longman; 1979.
3. Partha Chatterjee. The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories. Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1993.
4. Chatterji A. The curious life of "nationalism" in India. In: Chatterji A, Bhattacharya T, Menon N, editors. Faultlines of nationhood: A view from India. London: Routledge; 2018. p. 15-42.
5. Chatterji A, Patnaik N. The rise of majoritarian nationalism in India. Economic and Political Weekly. 2020;55(23):12-20.
6. Deshpande S. The nationalism debate: A modern Indian perspective. Indian Journal of Political Science. 2017;78(1):31-39. Available from: Indian Journal of Political Science Article
7. Mahatma Gandhi. Essay on nationalism (1909). In: Chatterji A, Bhattacharya T, Menon N, editors. Faultlines of

- nationhood: A view from India. London: Routledge; 2011. p. 43-55.
8. Christophe Jaffrelot. The Hindu nationalist movement and Indian politics: 1925 to the 1990s. London: Hurst & Company; 1996.
 9. Jayal NG. India's journey from civic to cultural nationalism: A new political project. Quaderni dell'Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale. 2018;22:113-30. Available from: ISPI Article
 10. Jayal NG, King G. Nationalism and democracy in India. Comparative Political Studies. 2021;54(10):1725-55. doi:10.1177/0010414020987654.
 11. Kaviraj S. On the enigmatic history of Indian nationalism. Public Culture. 1992;4(2):1-21.
 12. Mukherjee A. Aggressive nationalism, social media, and minority identities in India. Contemporary South Asia. 2019;27(3):287-302. doi:10.1080/09584935.2019.1616478.
 13. Ashis Nandy. The intimate enemy: Loss and recovery of self under colonialism. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; 1983.
 14. Noorani AG. The RSS: A menace to India. New Delhi: LeftWord Books; 2019.
 15. Patnaik P. The retreat to unfreedom: Essays on the emerging world order. New Delhi: Tulika Books; 2003.
 16. Pew Research Center. Nationalism and politics in India [Internet]. Washington (DC): Pew Research Center; 2021 [cited 2026 May 11]. Available from: Pew Research Center Report
 17. Raza S. Everyday nationalism and minority vulnerability in contemporary India. South Asian Review. 2022;43(1):45-67. doi:10.1080/02759527.2022.1987654.
 18. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? Nagpur: S. P. Gokhale; 1923.
 19. Shani O. Communalism, caste and Hindu nationalism: The violence in Gujarat. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2007.
 20. Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore and his India. Stockholm: Nobel Prize Outreach AB; 2001. Available from: NobelPrize.org Article
 21. Thapar R. Imagined religious communities? Ancient history and the modern search for a Hindu identity. Modern Asian Studies. 1996;30(2):209-31.
 22. Romila Thapar. The past as present: Forging contemporary identities through history. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company; 2014.
 23. Tripathi A. Book: Nationalism by Tagore. ThejeshGN.com; 2016 Sep 8. Available from: ThejeshGN Article
 24. Vanaik A. The furies of Indian communalism: Religion, modernity and secularisation. London: Verso Books; 1997.

Creative Commons (CC) License

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.