

The Role of Religious Nationalism in Shaping Indian Political Culture: The Rise of Bharatiya Janata Party and Hindutva

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Abstract

The triumph of BJP in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha had caused various changes in the socio-political landscape of India. Various research discussing the topic focuses a lot on the electoral aspect of the phenomenon. This research would focus on a different change, that is within the scope of political culture, where there are gradual shifts in ideological and political attitudes of the people towards political processes in general inside India. BJP being a part of the umbrella Hindu Nationalist organisation term *Sangh Parivar*, influence changes that comes from the Hindutva ideology. Alongside fellow Hindu Nationalist organisation the RSS, they promote a Hindu centric approach in social and political life. This is a contrast to the existing Indian political culture that is pluralist and accepting of differing religion.

This research aims to determine the influence that the rise of religious nationalism have towards the Indian political culture. Utilizing the concept of political socialisation, it explains the process which political culture is transferred or changed in the society. The BJP and the RSS play a crucial role as an agent of socialisation that is responsible in creating such transformation in the society. Through their action to promote the establishment of a Hindu Nation, they provide certain values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are influencing the status quo of political culture in India. Due to their dominance in the government and rise of legitimacy in the public, the gradual change of political culture is seen on the shift in attitudes and actions that is currently occurring in India socio-political dynamics.

Keywords: Political Culture, Political Socialisation, Hindutva, BJP, RSS, *Sangh Parivar*