

RGICS

RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES
JAWAHAR BHAWAN, DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

RGICS BRIEF

September 16, 2016

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Prepared By: Dr. Sushree Panigrahi and Jeet Singh

PART-I

Introduction

The rhetoric of ‘Hindu Rashtra’ has picked up momentum ever since the BJP ruled government came to power in 2014. The Hindu right wing has been trying to gain a foothold in Indian society since 1920s (Shah, 2004). However, they could not gain a firm foothold in mainstream politics until late 1980s. Sarkar (1999) observed that around 1989-90, in a sudden and dramatic spurt in activities; the Sangh Pariwar (an informal coalition of Hindu right wing and sectarian groups) started large number of organizations. The increased number of organizations helped the Sangh to spread and nurture its regional leadership across the country. Many political commentators have attributed the historical victory of BJP in the 2014 general elections to the relentless efforts of RSS and Sangh pariwar. Given this fact, for Sangh, the time is appropriate to assert its Hindutva agenda in general and idea of a Hindu Rashtra in particular.

The Hindu right wing in India, largely represented by the Sangh Pariwar, have been advocates of a Hindu rashtra or in other words a Hindu state. Non-political organizations associated with Sangh Pariwar, including the leading organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have been vocal about their demand for a Hindu rashtra on various occasions to create a public opinion. The current right wing government backed by a popular mandate has given a boost to the Sangh Parivar. They now have an active role to play in politics and the government. The ruling party- BJP publically has refrained from using the term Hindu Rashtra but has been supporting the idea of ‘Hindu Rashtra’ (expressed by RSS and its associates). The Sangh Pariwar has been, for quite some time now, aggressively asserting its idea of Hindu Rashtra. Explaining this aggression of Sangh Pariwar, Ananya Vajpeyi in her recent article said that, having full majority BJP government in centre, for the first time the RSS can dream of a restitution of Hindu Rashtra in the modern national pantheon (Vajpeyi, 2014).

In this changed political situation of the country, it is important to understand how the idea of a Hindu Rashtra impacts the life of common people. It is also important to understand what kind of society it perceives to constitute. Demystifying the idea of Hindu Rashtra, leading human right activist Prof. Ram Puniyani argues, “Hindu Rashtra is not a religious state; it is a ‘modern’ phenomenon to impose the pre-modern social hierarchies on all sections of society. It is about preserving social, cultural, economical and traditional privileges of powerful and excluding traditionally powerless people. The strategy here is to suppress and suspend rights of the oppressed and weak” (Puniyani, 2006). Therefore, if India at all becomes a Hindu Rashtra, weaker sections of the society, such as women, children, dalits, tribal and minorities will suffer the most. Due to persisting gender-based hierarchies across Indian communities, women are probably the weakest and most exploited group in this country. So, how does the idea of Hindu Rashtra address the issues of gender and women?

This brief is an attempt to understand how women and their role in society in perceived within the broad framework of the idea of Hindu Rashtra.

PART-II

IDEOLOGY

Idea of India vs Hindu Rashtra

The first half of 20th century was marked by democratic and secular freedom movements in various colonized parts of the world. In India, the freedom movement in this period developed a discourse and built consensus around the idea of secular, independent and egalitarian India. The freedom movement of India played a crucial role in developing the idea of the Indian republic. It was not merely limited to the overthrow of British rule but also sought to equal opportunity to each and every Indian citizen, irrespective of caste, creed, religion and gender. On the other hand, the Right wing fringe elements in India attempted to divide people/nation through their narrow and sectarian politics. Jawahar Lal Nehru in his much acclaimed book, 'The Discovery of India', denounced the strategy of Hindu and Muslim sectarian groups. He observed that sectarian groups from both side were involved in instigating communal violence in various provinces. The ideas of the Right wing found expression in its groups such as All India Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League. Hindu Right wing (sectarian groups) such as All India Hindu Mahasabha opposed the secular discourse of Indian freedom movement and advocated for the concept of Hindu theocratic state 'Hindu Rashtra'.

The Hindu Mahasabha and RSS leader, V.D. Savarkar conceptualized the term 'Hindu Rashtra' during the Indian freedom movement. Savarkar in his book 'Essentials of Hindutva' differentiates between Hinduism and Hindutva and explains that the Hinduism is a religious concept whereas Hindutva is a political construct. Hindu Rashtra is one of the pre-requisite of Hindutva. According to him there are three essentials of Hindutva- common nation (Rashtra) a common race (Jati) and a common civilization (Sanskriti). A person endorsing these essentials is a 'Hindu' to whom India is not only a 'Pitribhu' (fatherland) but also a Punyabhū (holy land). Savarkar explains, "For the first two essentials of Hindutva—nation and Jati—are clearly denoted and connoted by the word Pitrubhu while the third essential of Sanskriti is pre-eminently implied by the word Punyabhū, as it is precisely Sanskriti including sanskaras i. e. rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, that makes a land a Holyland." The concept of Hindu Rashtra has helped the Hindu fundamentalists in India to assert their political agenda since the early 20th century. Sangh Pariwar including the Bhartiya Janata Pary (BJP) has sought to make Hindutva its ideological mascot, rooted in the 'one nation, one people, one culture' concept of Savarkar (Das, 2008).

The mainstream Indian freedom movement under pragmatic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and Jawahar Lal Nehru subscribe to the idea of Swaraj and mobilized people around democratic and modern principles of independence. According to Yechuri (1993), this strategy of Sangh Pariwar during pre-independence period actually made RSS an ally of the British. Mahatma Gandhi, the tallest of devout and practising Hindus, was assassinated because he along with the majority of Indian people embraced secular democracy - rejecting the RSS ideology- Hindutva (Yechuri, 1993).

Essentials of Hindutva defined by V.D. Savarkar, endorsed by Sangh Pariwar and the BJP not only discards diversity, tolerance, openness and spiritual sprit of Hinduism but also project Muslims and Christians as enemy of the state of Hindu citizen. The Sangh Pariwar has been using selective memories of past to explain how barbaric and unjust the rule of

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Muslim rulers was and have been perpetuating myths to create fear among Hindus, non-Muslims and non-Christians in India. Even during the freedom struggle, the Sangh Pariwar targeted Muslims whereas those not aligned to the Right Wing were concentrating only on overthrowing the British. This communal strategy has been used by the Sangh to mobilize people around the concept of Hindu Rashtra.

The concept of Hindu Rashtra believes in re-structuring of society by instilling what they perceive to be ancient and glorious traditions, practices and systems of India. It comes as no surprise that the Sangh Pariwar has been vocal in expressing support to 'Sati', Varna system and 'Khap Panchayat'. According to Hindutva ideology, the ideal Hindu society should discard modern and progressive concepts of equality, equity, individualism, rights and external influence such as globalization and modernization. Gatade (2013) argues that the concept of Hindu Rashtra was based on an inbuilt antagonism towards the assertion of the Shudras, Atishudras and women. Various other commentators on the discourse of Hindu Rashtra, found that, even after many years of independence and democratic rule, the Sangh Pariwar has not changed its fundamental beliefs. Even in 21st century, it seeks to stop democratic process of social change and imposes discriminatory unjust traditions in the name of nation, religion and culture.

Women in Hindu Rashtra

The Hindu nationalism (Hindu Rashtra) of Hindu Right wing borrows much from European fascism, especially the manipulation of people on the basis of religion and emotions. Caslori (2003) argues that the Hindu nationalist leaders repeatedly expressed their admiration for authoritarian European leaders such as Mussolini and Hitler and for the fascist model of society. An analysis of the content of the Hindu right wing magazine Kesari, from 1924 to 1935, shows that , various European fascist rulers were praised not only because of their way of governance but also because of the way they treated women (Caslori ,2003). According to Caslori, a fairly detailed article of August 13, 1929 published in Kesari about Italian fascism praised the fascist government of Italy for instilling traditional values such as no divorce, no singles, and no right to vote for women. According to the article, this treatment is best for women, whose only duty was to sit at home, by the fireplace.

Hindu right wing organizations borrowed these narrow concepts of nation from European fascists, and formulated their idea of a Hindu Rashtra. Women had almost no role to play in nation building in their understanding of a nation and were to be relegated to the private space – mainly the home. Right wing leaders have been opposed to the freedom of women – be it in choices they make in life or mobility, both before and after independence. This was reflected in the various campaigns and movements initiated by them. The Suddhi and Sangathan movement of Hindu Mahasabha and Arya Samaj in 1920s effectively attempted to restrict Hindu women's movement, choice and freedom. Gatade (2013) in his article spoke about the anti-women nature of Hindu Right wing movement in India; according to him, Bal Gangadhar Tilak led strong opposition of Hindu right wing forces of India to denounce education for women and dalits. Rao (2008) in a detailed article describes Hindu fundamentalist's opposition to education for women and dalits in late nineteenth and twentieth century. The article reads, "The Hindu nationalist, led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak during 1981 to 1920 consistently opposed the establishment of girl's schools, the imparting of education to non-Brahmins." Using original writings of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Rao (2008) presented his views on education for women as follows:

The nationalists led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak used twin arguments to oppose women's education. First, women were weak, and hence 'should not be taxed with subjects which are beyond their powers to understand', and 'waste their energies in cramming up like students studying for the Matriculation examination'. They argued that teaching English to girls interfered in the natural aspect of a woman's life'. The second argument against women's education was that educated women would become immoral. They quoted the police reports, the scandals of the town to prove their point. Tilak

Women in Hindu Rashtra

opposed the teaching of history, English, mathematics and science to girls, and suggested that 'High school girls should be taught Sanskrit, sanitation and needle work' as 'women well versed in English would have nothing substantial to offer the society, because English did not offer any tangible knowledge.' Tilak declared that 'English education had dewomanising impact on women, which denied them a happy worldly life'.

(Rao, 2008, pg. 13)

The Hindu nationalist discourse guided by rhetoric of Hindu Rashtra not only opposed efforts of women's empowerment such as education and equal rights. To gain legitimacy for views on the role of women in a Hindu society the Hindu Rashtra discourse draws inspiration from selectively picked Indian social, religious and moral traditions and practices.

PART-III

STRATEGY

Construction of an Image of Ideal Hindu Woman for Hindu Rashtra:

In the early 1920s, Hindu Mahasabha and Arya Samaj launched an aggressive and violent campaign called 'Shuddhi and Sangathan'. Here Shuddhi was used to define as reconversion from Islam to Hinduism and reclamation of lower castes into the Hindu caste hierarchy much like the ghar wapasi today; whereas the term Sangathan was used to explain community defence. Historian Charu Gupta in her paper (Economic and Political Weekly, 1998) explains how this campaign effectively constructed a Hindu identity by deploying certain gender icons, images and themes. She found that even before this campaign, there were attempts to militarise Hinduism, but the Shuddhi and Sangathan campaign became more aggressive and hence more influential. It was the time when freedom fighters across the country were engaged in mobilization and organization of people against colonial British rule. However, these two fringe organizations were engaged in dividing and polarizing Indians on religious lines. While polarizing people, they used conventional communal methods and approaches where they painted the entire Muslim community as a threat to society. Moreover, they tried to explain the importance of Hindu female chastity and purity and portrayed all Muslim men as rapists who have been violating chastity and purity of Hindu women for centuries. "There was a clever appropriation of certain legends and myths, by resorting to falsified historical narratives, leading to a cultural acceptance in collective Hindu memory of such myths of medieval Muslim rapist" (Gupta, 1998). According to Charu Gupta (1998), the Suddhi and Sangathan campaign used four major strategies to use women as an instrument for the success of this campaign. These strategies are as follows:

- 1- They constructed a full-bodied Hindu Masculine male in opposition to the image of emasculated/effeminate Hindu Male. It was used to militaries Hindu men.
- 2- They evoked the specter of Muslim rapist, seeing him as the 'other'.

Women in Hindu Rashtra

- 3- It allowed the space for an obsession with Hindu female 'chastity' and 'purity', someone to be protected from them.
- 4- It was linked to an obsession with numbers, i.e, the constructed fear of declining Hindu race and Shuddhi a way out of it.

Source: Gupta, 1998, pg. 727-29)

Locating women's role in Hindu right wing forces of India and tracing its history, Manisha Sethi (2002) has also argued that the Hindu fundamentalist groups in India started creating a particular image of Hindu womanhood in late 19th and early 20th century. She further observed that the "social, religious reformist and nationalist movement did not evoke 'woman' merely as 'site of contestation' but also drew them into this process as active agent." The right wing forces such as Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha in the beginning and RSS later cleverly played with information and emotions not only to create an image of ideal Hindu women but also to involve them in the process. Manisha Sethi (2002) in her article identified following major strategies of Hindu Right wing in late 19th and early 20th century.

- 1- **Muslim as Enemy:** The Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha and RSS created a series of myths surrounding Muslim rulers and Muslims in India, beginning from Allaudin Khilji to the present day with stories of forceful abductions of Hindu women, their rape, pillage and conversion by Muslims. They attempted to paint all Muslims as villains and created a fear among Hindus. Muslim men were defined as violators of honour and chastity of Hindu women.
- 2- **Arming Hindu Women:** The Hindu women were then expected by these right wing organizations to be part of active violence against Muslims. The call of violence against Muslims was justified as an act of self-defence. The 'Suddhi and Sangathan' campaign of Hindu right wing in 1920s recommended that women should keep a sharp knife with them. To justify it, one of the campaign documents reads, "It is a prime religious duty of all the women who enter the army of -Sangathan to be able to defend their chastity and honour."
- 3- **Hindu a Dying Race:** the Hindu Mahasabha and Arya Samaj used the census data to propagate that the Hindu race is dying and in contrast, the Muslim population is continuously increasing. Through this false propaganda, the right wing was able to argue that soon Muslims would outnumber Hindus in India. Today 100 years later, the Sangh Pariwar is using same lines to create fear of dying Hindu race.
- 4- **Hindu Women as Reproduction Machine:** By creating a fear of an increasing Muslim population and decreasing number of Hindus, the Hindu right wing emphasized on increasing number of Hindus. The only function of women in the Hindu rashtra was that of reproduction. They were to increase the Hindu population by bearing more children.. Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj and RSS rigorously emphasized on number and 'quality of stock' in their campaigns. They wanted and still want Hindu women not only to have more children but also to produce brave and fearless children who could protect their women and religion.

The Suddhi and Sangathan campaigns attempted to justify their activities related to victimization of women and communal divide in the name of nationalism. Here, they communalized the notion of the nation, by giving it a Hindu identity. To further this agenda they referred to the the nation as 'matribhumi' or motherland. Various writings of Hindu Mahasabha and Arya Samaj of that time asked men and young children to pledge that they will restore matribhumi's (India's) lost glory. According to Charu Gupta (1998), the campaign not only used women and gendered symbols to instigate violent emotions but they also tried to engage women in the campaign as well. Besides, this new idea of Motherland, a new notion of woman was also created who was not only the ideal wife and mother but also a sister in fight for protecting Hindutva.

The campaigns encouraged women to be part of the sangathan so as to fight against alleged Muslim aggression and to save her chastity and honour. They were asked to be violent against Muslims in the name of 'atmaraksha' (self defence)

Women in Hindu Rashtra

and become 'virangana' (brave women). Charu Gupta in her article reported writings of various women leaders of the campaign where they were trying to spread messages about these campaigns to their fellow Hindu women. In an article of Ranavati Debi of Allahabad, in her article in Arya Mitra (May 31, 1924), warns "Hindu women to be on their guard against unscrupulous Muslims who appeared to be bent on ruining them and to be ready to punish those who attempted outrage against them." The campaign used poems, pamphlets, songs, posters, pictures and pledges to propagate their ideas. In the image of Bharat Devi, they portrayed a Hindu woman killing a Muslim. The directives released for Hindu women by the campaigns suggested them that they carry a knife with them always and use that to protect their chastity, honor and purity when needed. A false sense of fear from Muslim was the centre of the discourse of Hindu Right wing organizations and campaigns. The campaign attempted to utilize the strength and energy of women in its propaganda, but to make use of this empowered strength of women, the Hindu right wing constructed a victimized picture of Hindu women.

Imposition of Patriarchy in the Name of Nationalism

During the 'Suddhi and Sangathan' campaign, it was found that many women were participating in public events organized by the campaign. Some of women participants were as active and violent as their men counterparts were. Charu Gupta argues that the relaxation for women to participate in public events organised by the Hindu fundamentalists through Suddhi and Sangathan campaign should not be perceived as pro-women changes in their ideology. Actually, it was just a strategy to control social, political and economical empowerment of women. The campaigns used women as an active agent of violence against Muslims but on the other hand, they imposed several other restrictions on Hindu women. Gupta (1998) observe, "by branding Muslim men as rapists and Hindu women as victims, there was also an attempt to efface differences based on class/caste within each community. More so, it was an effective instrument to establish and strengthen control over Hindu women. Popular inflammatory and demagogic appeals during such times were based on atrocity stories about women, ranging from allegations of rape, to abduction, forced marriage and luring of women by males of the 'other' community." The leaders of the campaign went into details as to how to control women. Swami Shraddhanand, the then chief of Arya Samaj and others issued a whole list of restrictions, some of which are as follows:

- 1- Hindu men should take care of their 'own' women and children in order to avoid conflict with Muslims.
- 2- Hindus men should not allow their women and children to have any dealings with Muslim traders, teachers and servants.
- 3- Men were told never to let their women board 'ekkas' driven by Muslims, not to keep Muslim servants, not to invite Muslim prostitutes or singers on joyous occasions, not to buy any household items from Muslims, etc.
- 4- Women were specifically warned not to let any Muslim, selling bangles, inside the house, never to touch a 'tazia' as she would soon become a widow, not to visit anymaulvis, 'pirs' or 'melas'.
- 5- Further, if any woman ever got lost, she was advised never to take help of any Muslim but go to the nearby Arya Samaj.
- 6- By misrepresenting the all-India census data, the campaign tried to create a sense of panic that India is headed towards a Muslim majoritarianism with alleged decrease in the number of Hindus and ever-increasing population of Muslims and Christians, which then became another cause for justifying the ghar wapasi programme. In order to reverse this trend of an increasing muslim population, the campaign appealed that our first and foremost concern should be to increase the numbers of Hindu by having larger families.
- 7- The campaign supported the remarriage of Hindu widows, saying that otherwise they will elope with Muslim men and will subsequently bear muslim children and thereby increasing their numbers. Gupta (1998) reported campaign's views in this matter as follows: "The sexuality of the widow had to be disciplined through 'proper' channels. Hindu woman, of whatever kind and form, could efficiently breed and thus her reproductive capacities

Women in Hindu Rashtra

were to be channeled to produce a Hindu child..... a loss of a Hindu widow was not just the loss of one person, but also of many more. While that many numbers were subtracted from the Hindu population, they were added on to Muslims, making it a double loss.”

Manisha Sethi (2002) explains the role of women as defined by Hindu right wing in pre independence period. According to her, the Hindu right wing in early 20th century was convinced that their Hindu nationalist discourse could not be pushed ahead without involving women. To ensure women as an active agent in their propaganda, they defined role of women in detail. Manisha Sethi observed following role and responsibility of an ideal wife and mother.

Ideal Hindu Wife: As a wife of Hindu man, “their bravery was to shame and shake their men out of their slothful cowardliness by putting into question their masculinity and ability to protect their women and religion.”

Ideal Hindu Mother: “As a mothers, they were perfectly suited to nurture in the young, the qualities of fearlessness, patriotism, love for the nation and of course hate for the Muslim.”

The concept of an ideal Hindu woman accompanied with number of manufactured symbols, identities, roles and responsibilities by the Hindu right wing forces in India helped them to mobilize people around Hindutva and assert restrictions on women’s freedom and choice. Therefore, the concept of an ideal Hindu woman is nothing but a strategy to perpetuate patriarchy and use women to gain political powers.

The Ideal Hindu woman in Post Independence Period

The current Hindu Right wing largely operates under the broader framework of Sangh Pariwar, led by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS draws its inspiration from the above mentioned discourse of Hindu nationalism. Their idea of Hindu Rashtra remains firm and constant and thereby associated role and responsibility of citizen based on caste, gender and religion remain unchanged. After independence in 1947, the RSS led various movements to oppose modern and democratic policies of government of India. They opposed the ‘Hindu Code Bill’ which gave Hindu women the right to property and inheritance. The second chief of RSS Mr. M.S. Golwalkar, even opposed voting rights for women and said that India made big mistake by giving voting rights to women.

RSS has been defining women as Matru Shakti (literally means the power of the mother), The term has been used to emotionally charge both men and women for narrow communal agenda. However, the supreme ideological guru of RSS MS Golwalkar explains the role and responsibility of women in the society of Hindu Rashtra. In nutshell, Golwalkar explains women’s role and responsibility for the purpose of Sangh Pariwar’s agenda as follows:

“Our mothers have a special responsibility of rearing up the budding generations of our society. Now, what does “rearing up” really imply? Is feeding and clothing the children and sending them to schools, the only thing to be done? On the contrary, the essential aspect is to inculcate in them the right type of samskars such as devotion to duty, spirit of personal endeavour, love of the motherland and readiness for service to society. Our mothers have to attend to this aspect of character formation as their first duty. And for this purpose, they have to be mindful of the many little things, which go to fashion the young minds.”

(M.S. Golwalkar, ‘Bunch of Thoughts’, Chapter-31)

RSS and Sangh Pariwar have continued to assert their idea of subordinating women. Analyzing a debate of the RSS journal, Organiser during July-September 1969 on women and their role in public life, Ms. Paula Bacchetta sees the entire

Women in Hindu Rashtra

debate asserting the view that women ought to remain in the background with occasional forays into the public realm. She also sees it as a reaction to Indira Gandhi's rise to power. According to Bacchetta, the debate in the Organizer endorses the view: "whenever women have been invested with absolute power, it argued, they have caused havoc. It, then, turns to an interpretation of Freud by arguing that the physical changes in women's bodies supply the motivation to their actions and influence their thinking (Sharma, 2004)."

The women's movements in India have been challenging these mediaeval, patriarchal and oppressive gender ideas and there has been considerable progress in India; however, there has been no significant change in the gender ideology of Sangh Pariwar. Sharma (2004) argues that the Sangh has been arguing for the liberation, enlightenment, education and employment of Muslim women but it rejects the same for Hindu women. According to Sharma (2004), In a pamphlet produced in 2000 'Nari Jagran Aur Sangh, it marginally alters this view in relation to Hindu women by suggesting that women have a right to role in public life as long as they remain committed to the family and motherhood ideals (Sharma, 2004). In 2008, the RSS passed a resolution in its Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), which negates the idea of individualism and freedom of women. The resolution reads, "the ABPS wishes to emphasise that Bharatiya values envision man and woman as fundamentally complementary to each other, who, with a mutually understanding relationship, engage themselves in their respective roles to build a harmonious family. ... the society must honestly realize that it is created by the institution of family and women is the pivot of the family...." Even today, the RSS continues to believe that women should be confined to home.

The Hindu Right wing organizations in India are no longer in the periphery. Its close ally BJP is amongst the largest national political parties in India. Apart from BJP led central government, the party is ruling in 9 different states of India and is in alliance in 4. The Prime Minister and most of its Chief Ministers in states hails from RSS. This significant shift in their position led to planning public policies backed by their own ideology. Academician and intellectuals in recent have argued that in order to capture public institutions and system of governance, the BJP government has been appointing RSS workers in various ministries, government offices, academic and cultural institutions at scale. The influx of RSS cadre in the space of public policymaking and implementation is a setback to progressive women's right movement as the cadres continue to believe in Sangh's anti women ideology. Following recent public statements of some RSS and BJP leaders show their commitment for patriarchy and anti-women traditions.

"A husband and wife are involved in a contract under which the husband has said that you should take care of my house and I will take care of all your needs. I will keep you safe. So, the husband follows the contract terms. Till the time, the wife follows the contract, the husband stays with her, if the wife violates the contract, he can disown her (India Today, 2013)."

RSS Chief Shri Mohan Bhagwat, January, 2013

While responding a question related to infamous Nirbhaya gang rape case of Delhi, BJP leader and minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said just like Sita was abducted by Ravana, a woman will be punished if she crosses her limits.

Kailash Vijayvargiya, Cabinet Minister, MP, January 2013

"Girls wanting a night out may be all right elsewhere but it is not part of Indian culture," the union minister was quoted telling a private television channel. He further explained that he had nothing against western culture but said that Indian should not ape the west blindly (Times of India, 2015).

Mr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of Culture, Government of India, September, 2015

Women in Hindu Rashtra

10

“If a girl is dressed decently, a boy will not look at her in the wrong way, If you want freedom, why don't they just roam around naked? Freedom has to be limited. These short clothes are western influences. Our country's tradition asks girls to dress decently. ... pre-marital sex occurred when the minds of girls and boys "are not on the right track (Scroll, 2014). "

Mr. Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana
During his assembly election in 2014

“Before independence few women were employed. But today women are employed in all sectors that has increased the proportion of unemployment among men. (Indian Express, 2015)”

A lesson in class X book of social science
Chhattisgarh Government (BJP)

“For their own safety, women foreign tourists should not wear short dresses and skirts..... Indian Culture is different from the western.”

Mahesh Sharma, Minister of Culture, Government of India, August, 2016

"The Hindu population is decreasing. Is there any law which says 'Hindus decrease your population'. There is nothing like that. If other people's are increasing then why not you?"

RSS Chief Shri Mohan Bhagwat, August, 2016

PART-IV

INSTRUMENTS

Women Branches of Hindu Right Wing

Until late 19th and early 20th century, only men were active in Hindu Right wing activities. However, thinkers and leaders of Hindu Right wing found that identity of women could be an effective tool to mobilize Hindu men against Muslims. In this period, the Right wing movement in India used various gender icons, images and themes to construct identity of ideal Hindu woman. In the process of conceptualizing of the ideal Hindu women, the importance of women's purity, chastity and honor for a Hindu man was further emphasized. A parallel distortion was doing the rounds regarding the Muslims that they were the enemy and violators of Hindu women's purity, chastity and honor. According to them Muslims were behind, rape, abduction and forced marriage of Hindu women. It helped them unite many Hindu men against Muslims. After 1920s the Hindu Right wing changed its strategy and allowed women to actively participate in their campaigns. Various Hindu right wing organizations retained their narratives of ideal Hindu women but expected women to publically fight Muslims.

For the first time in 1920s during 'Suddhi and Sangathan' campaign of Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha, women were allowed in active violence against Muslims. In 1936, the RSS officially constituted its women wing called 'Rashtra Sevika

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Samiti' to reach out to the women in society. Historians have argued that Hindu Right wing women activism received no attention in pre-independence era of India. Progressive women right movements and Indian freedom movement overshadowed women activism of Hindu right wing. During 1980-90s the Sangh Pariwar floated number of women organization to mobilize women around Sangh's agenda. As a result, thousands of women 'kar-sevikas' participated in 'Ram Mandir Movement' of Sangh Pariwar. Currently there are number of women organizations affiliated with Sangh Pariwar, but not even one is an independent entity. Most of them draw their ideology, strategy and action from RSS and VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad). Even on issues of women and gender relation these right wing Hindu women organizations reiterates the ideas of RSS and VHP. Following is an attempt to understand how leading Hindu right wing women organization works.

Rashtra Sevika Samiti

Keshav Baliram Hedgewar founded the RSS in 1925. He was assisted by like minded upper caste men. It remained a men's organization asserting patriarchal notions in society to justify their demand of creating India a Hindu Rastra. Motivated by the idea of RSS, Ms. Lakshmibai Kelkar, whose son was associated with the RSS, approached the first chief of RSS Mr. Hedgewar to allow women's participation in the activities of the Sangh. Mr. Hedgewar as a patron of patriarchal traditions refused involvement of women in Sangh. Before approaching Hedgewar, Ms. Kelkar had spent some time with Mahatma Gandhi and nationalist movement. According to the literature on Ms. Kelkar, she continued her persuasion and finally Mr. Hedgewar agreed to allow her to start a separate women wing of Sangh. In 1936, 11 years after its beginning, the Sangh formally founded Rashtra Sevika Samiti (hereafter Samiti) as a closely monitored women wing of the Sangh. The Samiti is the oldest Hindu Right wing women organization but remained a small and low-keyed affair. It is important to remember here, that while all this was happening, women were actively participating in freedom movement. Many of them were leading women's progressive and anti-colonial movement. Famous historian Tanika Sarkar (1999) argues that, pre-independence period was full of activism and many women organizations participated in that. However, the Samiti participated in no mass struggles be it anti-colonial or women's right movements. "The Samiti was completely overshadowed and overtaken by nationalist and left women's movements." She further describes the state of Samiti in pre-independence period as a completely inactive collective within Sangh's framework. Samiti started its daily Sakhas in few Sangh influenced pockets followed by physical, martial arts and ideological training for women. However, it had no important role in Sangh's own activities.

The second chief (Sarsanghchalak) of the RSS, M.S. Golwalkar, who developed the entire ideological base for RSS further neglected its women wing 'Samiti'. He is the longest serving 'sarsanghchalak' of RSS and regarded as supreme ideological guru of RSS. However, he did not give importance to the Samiti during his tenure but he developed an ideological framework for women in Hindu Rashtra. In his most well known work, 'Bunch of Thoughts' he explained how women should be treated in society and what should be women's role in family and society. In his explanation, he tried to define women in highly patriarchal way and imposed number of restrictions. Going against the claims of women's rights movement of the time, he wanted to confine women within the boundary of home. Under the leadership of Golwalkar, RSS opposed many progressive and secular developments in Independent India. Today, the RSS is talking about bringing Uniform Civil Code to provide legal protection for Muslim women, but under the leadership of Golwalkar, RSS had opposed the Hindu code Bill. In the 1940s, under the stewardship of Ambedkar and Nehru attempts were made to give limited rights to Hindu women in property and inheritance through the passage of Hindu Code Bill. M.S. Golwalkar launched a movement opposing this historic empowerment process of Hindu women. "RSSs' contention was simple: this step is inimical to Hindu Tradition and culture (Gatade, 2007)."

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Women activism of Hindu Right Wing had taken a new spin in early 1990s. The Hindu Right wing forces planted various women leaders and allowed them to occupy public space as an involved activist. Tanika Sarkar (1999) observed a sudden and dramatic spurt of activities by Hindu Right wing women. It was the time when “Sangh Parivar threw up a large number of women’s organizations and women leaders into dazzling prominence- the BJP Mahila Morcha, The VHP Maitri Mandal and Durga Vahini with their different regional versions.” Sangh Parivar highlighted the aggressive activism of women leader during ‘Ram Janam Bhoomi’ Andolan. Thousands of karsevikas participated in Babri Masjid demolition. Tanika Sarkar further observed, “This was also the time when the Sangh began to flaunt its women for the first time in its history, in public places and roles..... I observed at that time that the Samiti had come a long way from the parameters laid down by Golwalkar about pure domesticity.” Various commentators found that Right wing women organizations played important role in influencing people to become ‘karsevak’ or ‘karsevika’ in 1990s. Going beyond its traditional beliefs, after Suddhi and Sangathan campaign in 1920s, it was second big movement where Sangh parivar allowed women to come into the public space and gaze. In fact the participation of karsevikas and women leaders in Ram Janm Bhoomi Andolan was very high as compared to sangh’s other activities.

Functioning and Objectives of Samiti:

The Rashtra Sevika Samiti is an outfit of RSS being represented by women. In true sense, the Samiti reiterate voices of Sangh to convince its women target group. The men dominated Sangh and most of its other outfits have floated organizations like the Samiti to influence women. Various commentators on functioning of Samiti have found that most of its leadership comes from the higher castes. In most of the cases these women belong to families whose men are engaged with Sangh’s activity (Sethi, 2002; Sarkar, 1999; Tyagi, 2014). It runs daily shakhas for women, however, most of these shakhas are functional in areas where Sangh has greater influence. Tyagi (2014) observed that most of women and young girls attending activities of samiti come from family who supports activities of Sangh. Therefore, even today the Samiti is entirely dependent on Sangh for its activities and audience. Sethi (2002) have observed that the Samiti don’t believe in modern concept of gender equality. Women are not independent beings with rights and thoughts of their own according to them. The samiti has faith in gendered relations propagated by Golwalkar in his writings. While describing the idea of gender equality for Samiti, Sethi (2002) argues, “It is rare to view women outside of their familial ties. Several sevikas (workers of samiti) also pointed out that women enjoyed a unique power owing to their task of infusing values in the family and especially the children.” The Samiti is a firm believer of traditional patriarchal roles assigned to women. It supports participation of women in public activities such as Shakhas so that they can be indoctrinated with Sangh’s ideology.

According to an article entitled, ‘60 years of Rastra Sevika Samiti’ published in organizer in 1996, the samiti was founded to defend and resurrect cherished Hindu values. The Samiti believe that these Hindu values have been frittered away by women seeking to ‘compete’ with men. The task given to Samiti is to wean away women from the western women’s movement to their traditional tasks of imparting Samskaras to children in order to mould them into patriots and men of character (Sethi, 2002). Manisha Sethi further explores aims of Samiti, two of its aim are as follows:

- 1- Development and honing of the woman’s ability for leadership and the arousal of the sense of duty and motherliness- ‘Kartava’ and ‘Netratva’ – to enable her to dedicate herself to the service of motherland.
- 2- Develop women leadership so that they can inspire their father, brother, husband and son to take to the path of Hindu nationalism.

According to the Sangh and Samiti, Hindu men are active agent of Hindu nationalism. Women’s role is to sensitize and push men in their family for this cause. Women in Samiti are asked to support their men at a family level and thus enjoy a sense of satisfaction. This feminine role has been defined as an important task in the larger project of Hindu nationalism.

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Activities of Samiti:

The internal structure and function of the Samiti is similar to that of the Sangh. A nominated 'pramukh sanchalika' leads the organization. The current chief of Samiti nominates next 'pramukh sanchalika' of the samiti. For the purpose of delivering its services and expanding the activities of Samiti, it employs many full time members called 'Pracharika'. The most basic unit of the Samiti remains the Shakha, where the members meet daily or weekly. Its members are called sevika. The Samiti has number of activities to lure women and young kids in order to indoctrinate its ideology. Some of its main regular activities are as follows:

- 1- **Baudhik Charcha:** Samiti's Baudhik Charcha is an intellectual discussion, which allows for discussion on issues of political significance. According to Manshi Sethi (2002), Baudhik Charcha is not a freewheeling discussion on any topic. "It is gently guided by a pramukh where arguments are built and opinions invited around these basic issues. It is here that the sevikas learn to sharpen their skills of arguing, convincing and awakening the Hindu people for the cause of Hindutva."
- 2- **Varga:** The training of Samiti is referred to as Varga. Manshi Sethi (2002) describes a Varga as follows: "Varga – literally a class and represents a typical pedagogical situation with a teacher- the disseminator of knowledge and the students- the uncritical recipients of the knowledge. A theme is constantly played upon until it becomes part of common sense."
- 3- **Sharirik:** The Samiti imparts physical training to its member and audience. It involves Yoga, games and learning skills in wielding Churikas, Lathis and Judo-Karate.
- 4- **Correspondence Courses:** The Samiti also offers correspondence course to women who are unable to attend regular shakhas as well as to those women who independently run shakhas to help them to organize their activities.

Other than above-mentioned main activities, The Samiti imparts various other activities to influence women and young girls. Several researchers who have studied content of Samiti's program have found that all of these activities indoctrinate participants with communal and patriarchal ideas.

Recruitment of Members in Samiti:

The Samiti does not keep records of its membership and Shakhas across the country. It seems that leaders and office bearer of Samiti are not aware of the exact number of its members and Shakhas. In 2002 Manisha Sethi reported that there were 3500 to 5000 Shakhas being run by the Samiti. However Neha Dixit in 2013 in her article published in Outlook reported that the Samiti has 55,000 Shakhas all over the country. It has been observed that in the absence of proper documentation, office bearers of the Samiti quote a random number, when they are asked about their membership and Shakhas. Astha Tyagi (2014) analysed the background of women participating in activities of Samiti in parts of western Uttar Pradesh. In her study she found that the current member base of Samiti comprises of both married and unmarried women. The other finding of the study is that all of these members of Samiti are in some way or the other connected to Sangh Pariwar. Tyagi (2014) identified following various ways by which Samiti recruits its member.

- 1- **Through Sangh Pariwar:** Samiti is not a popular organization. Many women and young girls attending camps of Samiti were unaware about Samiti and its work before they joined the camp. However, in her study Tyagi (2014) found that most of these women attending camps of Samiti were aware about Sangh or its other male dominated affiliates. Study found that most of these women were family members of Sangh activists. They encountered Samiti through their male family member- father or brother. Young girls in the camps confessed that they were initially forced into attending the camp, almost all accepted that it was a learning experience.

Women in Hindu Rashtra

- 2- **Through Summer Camps-** summer camps organized by Samiti is one the important activities of organization to reach out and induct fresh minds. They carefully select location of summer camps so that more women or young children can enroll for their camps, where they introduce them to the right wing ideology.
- 3- **Through Contacts (Sampark):** Shakhas are instrumental in developing contacts with new people. Once member are trained they are asked to organize shakhas and develop contacts with people in their localities. Shakha is a disciplined and regular activity, which helps member of Samiti to induct new people in their organization. To acquire a status and position in the Samiti, members are required to open as many Shakhas as possible and induct and further train potential members.
- 4- **Teachers of Sangh Affiliated Schools:** Sangh Pariwar has a huge network of schools and hostels. Thousands of teachers and lakhs of students are associated with these schools. The study found that female teachers of RSS affiliated schools such as Sarswati Shishu Mandir are asked to attend camps organized by Samiti. This is described as OTC (Optional/officer Training Course). Attending this course is a requirement for their job in Sarswati Shishu Mandir. Study found that these teachers were not “necessarily from Sangh families but adapted very quickly to the camp setting. In fact, most of them admitted to not knowing about the existence of the Samiti as a separate entity, prior to the camp.”
- 5- **Students of Sangh Run Hostels:** Various organizations affiliated to Sangh Pariwar are running hostels for girls across the country. Sangh Pariwar has been hosting poor girls from various parts of country including northeast in these hostels, where they continue their study. These girls are required to attend these camps during their holidays. Study found that such girls attending these comes were in the age group of 12-18 years.

The study shows that the Samiti has no credibility and mechanism to draw members by its own. However, it uses large network of RSS activists to fill this gap. Largely Samiti has been providing appropriate training to the women in the families of male RSS activists and other patriarchal organizations. Moreover, it has been using large network of RSS' schools and academic institutions to induct fresh members forcefully.

Durga Vahini

Durga Vahini is the women's wing of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and was founded in 1984. Literally, it means army of 'Durga'. Durga Vahini (hence forth Vahini) is known for its aggressive campaigns and movements across the country. The objectives of Vahini and Samiti are similar but the Vahini is an organization exclusively for young women of age 15 to 35 years. Describing Vahini's aim and objective on their website, they claim that the organization strives for security and society and imparts knowledge of culture and tradition. Sethi (2002) observed that Durga Vahini came into being at the height of the Ram Mandir agitation to recruit young women and girls and was given an organizational structure much later in 1994.

Vahini replicates organizational structure of Samiti. Vahini's basic unit is called 'Shakti Sadhna Kendra' which is similar to the Shakhas of Samiti. Through Shakti Sadhana Kendra, Vahini imparts various kinds of activities to recruit new member in their army. They organize trainings for its member for 2-3 days to 10-15 days. Sethi (2002) observed that unlike Samiti, the Vahini has great potential to penetrate and expand its activities especially in socially and economically disadvantaged Hindu and Tribal communities. It makes mass recruitment from among the lower castes women, while retaining the upper castes leadership drawn from traditional Sangh Pariwar. To induct young women from these disadvantaged section, Vahini uses large network of schools and health care facilities provided by Sangh Pariwar to these communities, across the country. Vahini believes that people who are not touched by the Hindu values such as Tribals and Dalits are uncivilized. The Vahini thus choose to call its membership drive and training for young women of SCs and STs a 'civilizing mission'.

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Radicalisation of Durgas of Vahini:

Durgas (members of Vahini) have been part of various agitations and violent protests in last 2-3 decades. Durga Vahini was at the forefront of the attack on M F Hussain's paintings, film 'Fire' amongst several others and many more. They have been organizing processions in different parts of country openly shouting slogans against Muslims. On several occasions, their anti-Muslim procession instigated communal violence as well. Leaders of Vahini are more vocal than the leaders of other Hindu right wing women organizations. However, most of the time, it is been observed that they attempt to create conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities by attacking Muslims of India.

From where does this aggression and hatred come from? To answer this question an Indo-Canadian film maker Nisha Pahuja documented proceedings of their training. In her documentary 'The World before Her' she revealed how mere 10 days training programme of Vahini converted a shy, soft-spoken and naive poor woman into a violent and aggressive Hindu fundamentalist. In her interview after releasing this documentary Pahuja said that most of the participants in the training of Vahini were from small villages, had little education, and were from the lower caste. Their age was anything between 13 and 25. She also observed that before they got the training, many were also free of the deep-rooted prejudice against Muslim and Christian. But in just 10 days they were completely brain washed. In the procession carried out by these trainees on the last day of their training, these trainees were shouting slogans against Muslim in open. The leaders grin: "You could be put in jail for what you are saying!" "We'll die for our beliefs!" postures one young girl. "We'll kill anyone who gets in our way!" yells another (BBC, 2014).

While talking about brain washing process through these training, Pahuja observed:

“Apart from the military-style combat training, the girls are fed a revisionist history that promotes Hindu supremacy and posits Hinduism as the only legitimate religion of India. They are also taught to see their role in the defense and propagation of Hinduism as a service to their country (BBC, 2014).”

“They are trained to be warriors and wives - they must be strong enough to break the bones of the enemy but docile enough to never question their husbands. The Durga Vahini leadership is blind to this duality - but that it has repercussions is abundantly clear (BBC, 2014).”

Durga Vahini is integral part of Sangh Pariwar aiming to make India a Hindu Rashtra. Its task is to influence and radicalise young women especially from social and economically weaker sections, so that they can become voice for a Hindu Rashtra. However, within the broader concept of Hindu Rashtra, the Vahini has been effectively infusing patriarchal values, which is necessary for the realization of Hindu theocratic nation.

BJP Mahila Morcha:

BJP Mahila Morcha is a frontal organization of Bhartiya Janata Party which seeks to engage on women related issues. The stated objectives of Morcha on its website seem to be progressive; however, its leaders and other women leaders in BJP have been echoing gender ideology of Sangh Pariwar. Following are some examples which show how the beliefs of the Morcha is against the beliefs of all progressive women movements.

- 1- “Wife beating is bad. But if it has to be done to bring the women on proper track, it's all right because it is the women who is wrong in her new home, new situation in life. Women in their own life should not take

Women in Hindu Rashtra

independent decisions about marriage and other things. The family should take these decisions (Puniyani, 2006, Page: 271).”

- Ms. Mridula Sinha, Second President of BJP Mahila Morcha, Interview appeared in the Telegraph in 1993
- 2- Responding to infamous Roop Kanwar incident in Rajasthan, who was forced to become a Sati, the then vice-president of BJP, Ms. Vijaya Raje Scindia led a morcha of women in support of Sati Tradition to Parliament in Delhi. The morcha was of the view that “to commit Sati is a glorious tradition of our Hindu society and those who are opposing this tradition are western oriented anti-nationals (Puniyani, 2006, Page: 273).
- 3- In 1990, in one of the interview to ‘Dharmayog’, a Hindi magazine, Mr. Atal Bihari Bajpayee says that all those women who want to become equal to men are worth the ridicule. It is a wrong demand on the part of women to be equal to men (Puniyani, 2006, Page: 273).

Being part of Sangh Pariwar the Bhartiya Janata Party draws its ideology from RSS. Therefore, the above mentioned incidents, statements and approach of BJP and its women organization should be seen as an effort of advancing patriarchal Hindu Rashtra agenda of Sangh Pariwar.

Conclusion

The Hindutva ideology of Hindu Right wing in India and its idea of Hindu Rashtra have been against women’s rights and their freedom of choice. It expects an ideal Hindu woman to abide with traditional feminine role, which they ascribe to traditional scriptures. The idea of an ideal Hindu woman has been created by defining her role, responsibility, chastity, honour and purity. These roles and themes were further implemented by contextualizing them in cleverly defined social concepts such as Matri-shakti, Bharat Mata, women as honor of family and guardian of culture. All these manufactured roles were then glorified by confining their work within the boundary of a home. In order to do this, the Sangh Pariwar attempted to legitimize highly unequal patriarchal practices in families and within society. However, when it comes to garnering support for active violence against enemy of Hindu Rashtra, women are also expected to be violent (like traditional masculine role) against Muslims in the process of Sanghs’ assertion for Hindu Rashtra.

Women and men’s organization within the umbrella of Sangh Pariwar officially conducts training to teach patriarchy as a part of culture, which demand sacrifices only from women. Many Hindu right wing organizations are regimenting young Hindu women to kill Muslim men but they are categorically asked to not even doubt their own husband. In most of their trainings, women are also asked to not assert for their demand in family. The Hindu Right wing does not believe in equal rights to women, rather it demands harmony in family. To maintain this harmony, Sangh Pariwar in its trainings for women indoctrinate them with patriarchal gendered role. The Hindu right wing in India is doing all this to transform India into a theocratic state (Hindu Rashtra) and women are asked to contribute in this mission by maintaining these patriarchal values. The Hindu Rashtra, therefore, is nothing but re-enforcement of patriarchal oppression, restricting rights and limiting choices of women.

Appendix Excerpts from Bunch of Thoughts (Written by second RSS chief M.S. Golwalkar)

M.S. Golwalkar's book, 'Bunch of Thoughts' is the guiding light for the functioning of RSS and it gives ideological perspective to the RSS workers. The book deals with various issues around the concept of Hindu Rashtra but also explains the role and responsibility of ideal Hindu women in the process of forming India a Hindu Rashtra. Following are few selected excerpts of Bunch of Thoughts which explains RSS stand on gender and women equality.

M.S. Golwalkar on Role of Women:

- **“Let all persons physically fit be ready for military service. And let their mothers bless and send forth their sons at this hour of trial.** When the five Pandavas went to seek the blessings of their mother Kunti before the commencement of the Mahabharata war, she blessed them saying, "Go ye all to the battle. This is the occasion for which Kshatriya women give birth to sons. Go and give your best in this dharmayuddha." Let every mother speak in the same heroic strain to her sons even now.” (BOT, pp- 227)
- **“Let our mothers make the children wake up early** in the morning, make them salute the elders in the family and offer worship to the family deity. The sacred responsibility of instilling Matrubbhakti, Deshabhakti and Daivabhakti in every Hindu boy and girl is upon our mothers.” (BOT, pp- 284)
- **“Modernism”** is taking the toll of many more of our cherished values of life. A couplet in Jnaneshwari says, **“A pious man spreads a cover of modesty over his good actions just as a virtuous lady covers her body.”** It describes the nature of virtuous womanhood. But “modern” women think that “modernism” lies in exposing their body more and more to the public gaze. What a fall!” (BOT, pp- 284)
- **“There is a special burden upon our mothers of serving our needy sisters in society. True, a majority of our mothers will not be in a position to go to far-off places to carry on social work among the distressed and the destitute.** However, this does not mean that they should sit back in their homes all the while. They could establish useful contacts among the womenfolk in their own neighbourhood and carry out programmes, which would inculcate our cherished ideas among them and their children. The spirit of mutual help and service would also have to be made popular through our day-to-day social intercourse. Our womenfolk should not be allowed to develop inferiority complex or a feeling of helplessness. They should be taught that they are the living emblems of parashakti.” (BOT, pp- 286)

M.S. Golwalkar on Women's Right:

- **Against Reservation for Women:** “There is now a clamour for 'equality for women' and their 'emancipation from man's domination!' Reservation of seats in various positions of power is being claimed on the basis of their separate sex, thus adding one more 'ism'-'sexism'!- to the array of casteism, communalism, linguism, etc” (BOT, pp- 104)
- **Against Formal Education of Women:** “Literacy campaign among women is one more important programme, which our educated mothers alone can successfully tackle. **But here also, inculcating noble samskars in them should be given the priority, teaching of alphabets should come second.** In order to do this, instill in them a spirit of pure devotion to our motherland, faith in our Dharma and pride in our history. Show them the map of our sacred motherland, the holy streams and mountains, the Tirthas and temples stretching right from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. Introduce them to the rich variety of our national life in language, literature, art and social traditions. Thus make them become intimate with the true spirit of our national being.” (BOT, pp- 286)
- **Against Women's Freedom of Choice:** **“Then about the dress,** it must be borne in mind that the dress and decorative items also leave their imprints on the young minds. Mothers should see to it that the children acquire traits of our culture through these things also. (BOT, pp- 286)

Women in Hindu Rashtra

- **Against Women’s Right over family property and inheritance:** M.S. Golwalkar opposed the ‘Hindu Code Bill’ that founded base of Hindu women’s right in property and inheritance. According to him the Bill was a step against the Hindu Tradition and culture (Gatade, 2007).” Worried over men’s patriarchal position the Sangh argued, “granting of rights to women would ‘cause great psychological upheaval’ to men and “lead to mental disease and distress. The result would be a race of effeminate men. Similarly, the Sangh opposed the Hindu Law of Succession on the grounds that it was regressive (Sharma, 2004).”

References:

Gupta Charu, 1998, ‘Articulating Hindu Masculinity and Famininity: Shuddhi and Sangathan movments in united provinces in the 1920s’, Economic and Political Weekly, March 28, 1998.

Sarkar Tanika, 1999, ‘Pragmatics of the Hindu Right: Politics of Women’s Organisations’, Economic and Political Weekly, July 31, 1999

Kapur R, Brenda Cossman, 1993, ‘Communalising Gender/Engendering Community: Women, legal discourse and saffron agenda’, Economic and Political Weekly, April 24, 1993

Sethi Manisha, 2002, ‘Avenging Angels and Nurturing Mothers: Women in Hindu Nationalism’, Economic and Political Weekly, April 20, 2002.

Sabhlok Anu, 2005, ‘Book Review: Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologues’, Journal of International Women's Studies, 7(1), 110-112.

Golwalkar, M.S. ‘Bunch of Thoughts’ Third Edition.

Gupta Charu, 2009, ‘Hindu Women, Muslim Men: Love Jihad and Conversions’, Economic & Political Weekly EPW. December 19, 2009 vol xliv no 51

Tyagi Aastha, 2014, ‘Vasudeva Kutumb?: Membership and Recruitment in the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti’, Sub Version, Volume 2. Issue 2. 2014

Das, Runa, 2008, ‘Nation, Gender and Representations of (In)Securities in Indian Politics’, European Journal of Women's Studies 15 (2008), 3, pp. 203-221.

Casolari Marzia, 2000, ‘Hindutva’s Fascist Heritage, Communalism Combat, retrieved from: <http://www.sabrang.com/cc/comold/mar00/document.htm>

Gatade Subhash, 2013, ‘Manu Reloaded! Brahmiism Yesterday, Hindutva Today? www.countercurrent.org, March 18, 2013, retrieved from: <http://www.countercurrents.org/gatade180313.htm>

Dixit Neha, 2013, ‘Holier than cow, Outlook India, January 28, 2013, retrieved from: <http://www.outlookindia.com/article/holier-than-cow/283593>

Women in Hindu Rashtra

BBC News, 2014, 'Inside an Indian camp for radical Hindu women', BBC News, November 9, 2014, retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-29798148>

Menon Kalyani Devaki, 2010, 'Everyday Nationalism: Women of the Hindu Right in India', University of Pennsylvania Press.

Shah Chayanika, 2004, 'Hindu Fundamentalism in India: Ideology, Strategies, and the Experience of Gujarat', Warning Signs of Fundamentalisms, WLUML Publications, December 2004, retrieved from: <http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/import/english/pubs/pdf/wsf/07.pdf>

Yechuri, 1993, 'What is this Hindu Rashtra? On Golwalkar's Fascistic Ideology and the Saffron Brigade's Practic, Frontline, Madras, March 12, 1993, retrieved from: <http://www.sacw.net/DC/CommunalismCollection/ArticlesArchive/Yechuri1993.html>

Vajppeyi, 2014, 'Hind Swaraj vs Hindu Rashtra', The Hindu, July 12, 2014, retrieved from: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/hind-swaraj-vs-hindu-rashtra/article6201620.ece>

Sharma Jyotimaya, 2004, 'The Women of The Sangh', Counter Current, September 24, 2004, retrieved from: <http://www.countercurrents.org/gender-sharma240904.htm>

India Today, 2013, 'RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat at it again, says women should be just housewives and husbands should be the breadwinners', India Today, January 06, 2013, retrieved from: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/rss-mohan-bhagwat-at-it-again-says-women-should-be-just-housewives-and-husbands-should-be-the-breadwinners/1/241008.html>

Times of India, 2015, 'Night out for girls not in our culture, says union culture minister Mahesh Sharma', Times of India, September 19, 2015, retrieved from: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Night-out-for-girls-not-in-our-culture-says-Union-culture-minister-Mahesh-Sharma/articleshow/49019712.cms>

Scroll, 2014, 'Manohar Lal Khattar, who blamed women for India's rising rapes, is new Haryana CM', Scroll, October 22, 2014, retrieved from: <http://scroll.in/article/684700/manohar-lal-khattar-who-blamed-women-for-indias-rising-rapes-is-new-haryana-cm>

Indian Express, 2015, 'Working women behind rising men's unemployment: Chhattisgarh school textbook', Indian Express, September 23, 2015, retrieved from: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/working-women-behind-rising-mens-unemployment-chhattisgarh-school-textbook/#sthash.diBVTUCE.NzwZ8cKi.dpuf>

Gatade, 2007, 'Golwalkar Guruji: superhuman or Less than Human?' Counter Current, February 17, 2007, retrieved from: <http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-gatade170207.htm>

BBC, 2014, 'Inside an Indian Camp for Radical Hindu Women', BBC News, November 09, 2014, retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-29798148>

Puniyani, Ram, 2006, 'Contours of Hindu Rashtra: Hindutva, Sangh Pariwar and Contemporary Politics', Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi, also available at:

https://books.google.co.in/books?id=KblMm_JZzEEC&pg=PA267&source=gb_s_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

Women in Hindu Rashtra

Rao, Parimala V., 2008, 'Educating Women and Non-Brahmins as 'Loss of Nationality': Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the Nationalist agenda in Maharashtra', Occasional Papers, Centre for Women's Development Studies, retrieved from: <http://www.cwds.ac.in/OCPaper/EducatingWomen-Parimala.pdf>

Huffington Post, 2016, 'RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat Exhorts Hindus to have More Kids', Huffington Post, August 22, 2016, retrieved from: <http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/08/21/watch-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat-asks-hindus-to-have-more-kids/>

Business Standards, 2016, 'Mahesh Sharma's Skirt Comment Forced him to Issue a Clarification', Business Standards, August 29, 2016, retrieved from: http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/mahesh-sharma-s-skirt-comment-forced-him-to-issue-a-clarification-116082900813_1.html