



MISJONSHØGSKOLEN
SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY

COMMUNAL POLITICS IN INDIA:
THE ROLE OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND BHARATIYA
JANATA PARTY IN THE HINDU NATIONALISTS' ATTEMPT OF BUILDING
A HINDU TEMPLE ON THE SITE OF BABRI MOSQUE

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BY
DHIRAN SHARMA

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with the communal aspect of Indian politics in 1998s and 1990s Through the role of Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party in the Hindu Nationalist's attempt of building a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri Mosque.

The site of the Babri Mosque is a complex debate because of the different myths, histories and even the scientific truths. The study of the Babri Mosque's disputed aspects is the purpose of the second chapter. Beside this, an attempt is given to study the present scenario of the Babri Mosque.

The third chapter studies about the ideological perspectives of Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Vishva Hindu Parisad, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Focus is only given to their view about nationalism, secularism and minority issue.

Fourth chapter of this thesis is about the political strategies of Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party in the Hindu nationalist's attempt of building a temple.

The fifth is an analysis of the thesis. Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party's political strategies divided the Indian community in terms of religion. The religious division of the Indian community manifested in the communal violence.

The research concludes with a conclusion that religion and politics are two different ideologies and they should function separately.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

With 1.2 billion inhabitants, India is the largest democracy and fourth largest economy in the world. It is also the seventh largest country in the world. With its large population and big territory, the country has many religious, linguistic, regional and ethnic varieties. Nearly 30 different languages are spoken by more than a million of native speakers. Almost 1 billion of people are Hindus and world's third largest Islamic population resides in the country. Christians occupy nearly 2.5 percentages of total population. Caste system is another diversity in Indian society. Caste system is a form of social stratification characterized endogamy, hereditary transformation of a style of life which often includes an occupation, ritual status in hierarchy, and exclusion based cultural notion of purity and pollution. About 16 % of lower caste population exists in the country. The government of India considerably addresses these cultural, linguistic and religious diversities.

Religious diversity of India was often addressed in colonial rule of India. The British government used the religious diversity of the country for the benefit of ruling Indian societies. British colonial administration emphasized on the religious difference to create the rivalry between two religious societies. The religiously defined societies started to oppose each other which reflected on the communal violence. To quote Bipin Chandra "the communal conflict of Indian society strengthened the British rule of divide and rule."¹

From the colonial period, Communal politics became a part of Indian society. Even in the modern politics communalism served the same British policy of 'divide and rule'. The broad subject of this research is an attempt to find the communal aspects of Indian politics. Communalism in India is a very comprehensive issue. To discuss every aspect of communal politics is not possible within the limits of a thesis like this. Therefore I will focus my discussion on the politics of the 1980s and 1990s, and more specifically on the role of political parties and organizations in the Babri mosque controversy. The Hindu nationalist movement was at the peak in those decades, their strong demand for the Hindu unity and a temple affected whole Indian politics. The political parties like Indian National Congress and

¹ Chandra, Bipin, *Communalism in Modern India*, (New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House: 1984), 239.

Bharatiya Janata Party approved the Hindu Nationalist demand of the Hindu unity and a temple at the site of Babri Mosque. The approval of the Hindu unity and a temple became a successful support. Political parties win the election because of the approval of the Hindu unity and a temple. But, the political approval of Hindu unity and temple led to religious polarization of society which brought disturbance and violence. Many people are killed all around the country. The Temple-mosque debate not only affected the secular democratic notion of India but also the fundamental rights. For these reasons, I think that the temple-mosque debate is an appropriate case for a discussion of communal aspects of Indian politics. So, a temple-mosque debate is an appropriate issue to deal the communal aspects of Indian Further, the BJP's formation in 1980s and its quick success to become as strongest as the Congress Party because of the Hindu nationalist movement is another argument for why this time period is suitable to study the role of communalism in Indian politics.

1.2 Statement of Problem:

In this thesis, I will argue that Indian National Congress (the Congress party) and Bharatiya Janata Party's (the BJP) response to the attempt of Hindu nationalist organization's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parisad (VHP) at building a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri Mosque shows communal aspects.

The place of the Babri Mosque has always remained a controversial site because of the contested of two different religious faiths: Hindu and Muslim. Hindus demanded the place because they supposed the site as a birthplace of their god. The Muslims of India claimed the Babri Mosque because they were worshipping in the place from 16th century². The dispute of the Babri Mosque is also a part of historic scholarly writings. There are two different historic writings contest to each other. The first claims that a site of Babri Mosque is renowned religious place of Hindus, and Muslim rulers destroyed a temple to build a mosque.³ The other part of historic writings reveal that a site of Babri Mosque never been a part of Hindu religion.⁴ This dispute also compelled the archeologists and the Indian government to find the scientific truth of the site, but the archeological findings could not solve the dispute. First, a part of finding claimed that there in no evidence of a Hindu temple in the site of Mosque, and other part claimed there was an evidence of a Hindu temple which

2 Pant Ashok, *The Truth of Babri Mosque*, 158

3 Panikkar, K.N. "A Historical Overview," in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991) 23.

4 Panikkar, K.N. "A Historical Overview," 23-24

was destroyed to erect a mosque.⁵ The findings itself disputed because of the two different truths.

The dispute of the site became a national issue when the Hindu nationalist organizations started to pressurize the legal authorities and the political parties for a Hindu temple on the site of Babri Mosque. This pressure revealed on the ritual ceremonies and mass mobilization⁶. The mass mobilization for a Hindu temple divided the Indian communities into two religious ideologies. The split of religious ideologies shaped violence all over the country. Thousands of people were killed in the violence and many properties were destroyed, even the Babri Mosque was destroyed in the riots.⁷

The purpose of this research is to discuss the role of the BJP and the Congress party in the Hindu nationalist's attempt of building a temple on the site of the Babri Mosque. The Congress party and the BJP approached different political strategies to impress and win the favor of Hindus in the election. The Congress party raised the issue of national unity to save the country from external and internal threats in 1984 election.⁸ The party also violated the Supreme Court's decision of stay-order opening the lock of the Babri Mosque for the Hindu worshippers in 1986. It also allowed the stone foundation ceremony for a Hindu temple in a disputed land of the Mosque in 1989.⁹ The BJP also tried to win the Hindu votes with organized mass mobilization like "Rama Silan Pujan" in 1989¹⁰, "Rama Chariot Procession" in 1991¹¹. The purpose of the BJP's mass mobilization is to unite the Hindus and build a Hindu temple.

Through the discussion of the roles of the BJP and the Congress party in the Hindu nationalist's attempt of building a temple on the site of the Babri Mosque, I would like to address the following main question: Are these political strategies of the BJP and the Congress party in Hindu nationalist's attempt of building a temple an expression of Communalism?

5 Gopal, Sarvepalli. "Appendix," in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 224-25

6 Plavoet, Jan. "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict" in *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour*, eds. Plavoet, Jan and Karel van der Troon (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 201.

7 Akhtar, Mohammad Jamil, *Babri Masjid: A Tale Untold* (New Delhi: Genuine Publication and Media Pvt., 1997) 136

8 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, (New Delhi: Penguin Book, 1999), 340-342.

9 Plavoet, Jan. "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict," 209.

10 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 160.

11 Davis, Richard H. "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot" in *Making India Hindu: Religion Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. Ludden, David (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29

Babri Mosque-temple debate is a complex debate, consisting of many different elements. The history of the site and its significance is contested. There exist at least two different main interpretations of the myth, history and scientific findings surrounding the site. Thus in order to understand what happened in the 80s-90s, there need to examine the temple-mosque's history, and discuss how this history are used. As we will see later on, one of the characteristics of communal politics is that it often interprets history and myth in an ideological way.

1.3 The Structure of the Research:

The first chapter of this thesis presents a brief introduction of the research, research questions, the subject of the research, methodology as well as the main material used in this thesis. In methodology, the theory of communalism and the sources of the research are discussed. The second chapter focuses on the issue of the Babri Mosque. The Babri Mosque from history to present is an attempt of the chapter. The mythical history of the Babri Mosque, contested history of Babari Mosque and Ayodhya, politicization of temple-mosque debate, the demolition of Babri Mosque, archeological findings of Babri Mosque, the legal perspectives on dispute and the present Ayodhya issue are focused. The third chapter of the research is a study of Hindu nationalist organizations and the political parties of India. The introduction of these groups, their ideologies of nationalism, secularism and minority issue will be considered.

The fourth chapter is an analysis of the political strategies of the BJP and the Congress party. Hindu nationalist organizations like the RSS and the VHP are also the part of discussion. A decade long mass mobilization for a Hindu temple, the politics of secularism and pseudo-secularism in the temple-mosque debate, politics of myth history, and archeology is the main focus. This chapter also talks about the outcome of the political strategies which is communalization of Indian society. How communal violence is evil and political parties are using the violence for the vote politics will be analyzed.

The analysis part of the research is the fifth chapter. In this part of the thesis, an attempt is given to examine the political strategies of the BJP and the Congress party from the theory of communalism. The political parties divided the society in terms of religion for vote politics. A decade long consciousness of Ayodhya movement, turned into false when the agenda of a temple was left by the BJP. The politics of myth, history, archeology and secularism helped to communalize the society are some of the finding of the research. The

research also tries to do a separate analysis of each participants of the Ayodhya movement. The future of communalism in India and some solutions are also presented. In short, the research will answer the problems raised in the starting of the thesis. The research concludes with a conclusion.

1.4 Theory and Method:

Dictionary suggests the origin of a word communal is 'commune' or 'community'. The word community is used in the sense of commune in France. In old French it also meant, having spiritual intercourse or to receive 'Holy Communion'. The origin of communalism had positive connotations referring to promotions of interests of one local group. It become negative only when community confront one another and start to threaten each other¹²

Communalism can be defined as socio-political organizations where people are grouped through religious, linguistic affiliations. The grouped people not only share their religious, linguistic and ethnic interests, they used to have common economic, political and social and cultural interests.¹³ For example, in Indian scenario, it is a belief that the most meaningful distinction among the Indian people on social, cultural, economic and political issues is to be made on the basis of religious communities. Bipin Chandra defines communalism as a "religious affiliation, the followers of particular religion like Hindus, Muslims, and Christians share economic, political, cultural, and social interests along with common religious interests"¹⁴

This research tests the theory of communalism developed by Bipin Chandra in his book *Communalism in Modern India*. He is an Indian historian specialized in political history of modern India. Chandra has published this book in 1984 to see the Indian modern politics from the perspective of communalism. In this book, he has observed the Indian politics from the starting of 1900 to 1970 and developed a perspective of communalism. He is influenced form Marxist philosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Chandra is a leader of pro-communist struggle in India since 1950s. Here, I will paraphrase the theory of communalism from his book *Communalism in Modern India*.

The communalist assumes that the most meaningful distinctions of community like socio-political cultural and economical can be made on the basis of religious communities. So, the communal view asserts that religious distinction is the fundamental distinction and

12Kumar, Sunil, *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics: Study of the BJP*, (New Delhi: Rawat Publication), 30.

13 Chandra, Bipin, *Communalism in Modern India*, 1-5.

14 Chandra, Bipin, *Communalism in Modern India*, 2.

this distinction overrides all other identities like social, political and economical. That is to say, communalism manipulates the socio-political distinctions of communities to give a religious identity.

The another perspectives of communalism is it usually starts from differences and divergences and leads to the antagonistic relationship between two different communities. Communalism manipulates the religious society to choose their leader from their own religion. It also assures that the elected leader will work for betterment of his religious community. What happens then, those religious communities who couldn't elect their leader perceive a threat that the opponent leader would dominate their community. This leads to the antagonistic relation of different religious communities.

Communalism is a modern ideology that incorporates some aspects of past ideologies, political institutions and historical background to form a new ideological and political discourse. Bipin says ideology of communalism is the communal interpretation history. Stereotypes of various religious groups, especially myths from different religion, symbols and legends are the major part of communal ideology. History teaching at various levels is used to create the parallel line to separate the religious community.

The communal ideology occurs in the mind of community either spontaneously or as a result of the growth of communal feelings and propaganda. C. G Shah says "under the pressure of communal propaganda, the masses are unable to locate the real causes of their exploitation, oppression, and sufferings and imagine the fictitious communal source of their origin"¹⁵

The socio-politico, historical conflict is distorted into communal from not by the participants but by the observer, the official, the journalist the politicians. They provide a communal explanation of socio-political and historic conflict. In other words, the social, political and historical conflict of the society is interpreted into religious conflict. Communalism also enables the people to disguise their privileged socio-economical and political interests in the grab of communal ideology and religious identity.

The communalism is based on religious differences but it has no religious solution. What communalism poses as a problem is not a problem and what it suggests as a solution is not a solution. So according to Bipin Chandra, communalism is a false consciousness. It is not narrow or false in the sense that it represents only one community but because it did not

¹⁵ Citation found in Chandra, Bipin, *Communalism in Modern India*, 55.

do either. The communalist not only failed to represent national interest, he did not represent even the interest of the community he claimed to represent.

Religion appears to be the unifying factor that is used by the political leaders to garner support for their parties. Religion is one of the ideologies of society. The leaders of the community use this ideology in its political forms for mere personal political rivalry or promotion of personal interests.¹⁶ This is the political exploitation of religion, which leads to the communalization of society as a whole because members of different communities appear to show more tendencies towards the religious based appeal.

Bipin Chandra has divided the communalism into three forms: communal nationalism, liberal communalism, and extremist or fascist communalism. Communal nationalism operates into the broad framework of nationalism. It is an unclearly or imprecisely defined nationalism. The communal nationalist accepts the basic notions of community and special communal interest but believed in the possibility as well as the desirability of their integration into the broader national interests. Communalist believed and propagated that even when the interests of the different religious communities were different, they did not clash and that it was only within the developing nationalism that the different communal interests could be protected.

Liberal communalist believes in communal identity but practices the communal politics. But one good aspect of it is that it maintains certain liberal, democratic, humanist and nationalist values. It believes in a merger of different communities in a broader national unity. Liberal communalism frequently demands for the separate communal rights, safeguards and reservation.

The third form of communalism is the extreme or fascist communalism. It is based on the irrational, fear and hatred, and has a tendency to use violence or terror as weapon against political opponent. It is a most dangerous form of communalism because the follower of this communalism is religiously blind. That is to say, it only sees every phenomenon from the religious point of view.¹⁷

1.4.1 Sources: Books and Articles:

The present research is only possible because of the books and articles. The official websites of the BJP, the Congress party, the VHP, and the RSS, the legal documents like *The Constitution of India*, the *Archaeology of Ayodhya*, United Nation's *Declaration on the*

¹⁶Chandra, Bipin, *Communalism in Modern India*, 5.

¹⁷ The whole concept of communalism was taken from Chandra, Bipin, *Communalism in Modern India*,

Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief 1981, a television program *Big Fight on Ayodhya Debate*, 2012 are some of the first hand data I used in my research.

Sunil Kumar's book *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics: Study of the BJP*, Christophe Jaffrelot's *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, Thomas Blom Hansen's *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, Achin Vanaik's *Communalism Contested: Religion, Modernity and Secularism*, Rajagopal Arvind's *Politics After Television: Religion Nationalism and Reshaping of the Indian Public* are some of the books I used in my research.

K.N. Panikkar's "A Historical Overview", *Indian Archeology: A Review* Neeldari Bhattacharya's "Myth History and Politics of Ramjanmabhumi" Sushil Shrivastava's article "How British Saw the Issue", Jan Palvoet's "Ritual as Confrontation", Richard H. Davis's "The Iconography of Rama Chariot", K.N Panikkar's "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization", B.N. Sinha's "Swami Campaign in India Election". H. Srikanth. "Secularism Versus Pseudo Secularism: An Indian Debate" and Johannes Schwalke's "Secularism for the State and Religion for the People?", "Epic Contests: Television and Religion Identity of India" by Purnima Mankekar are some of the articles I used in my thesis. I have also used some Internet sources to conduct my research.

1.4.2: Hypothesis:

The hypothesis of the research is, the role of Congress party and the BJP in Hindu nationalist's attempt of a temple is an expression of communalism. They were only looking for Hindu favor to win the election. The theory of communalism says that political leaders use to divide the communities in religious ideologies for winning election. The research will analyze the text related to temple campaign of the Congress party and the BJP to prove the research hypothesis.

Political strategies of the Congress and the BJP in the attempt of a temple ultimately lead to the religious violence and challenged the secular democratic objective of the nation. Communalism is a manipulation of religious society. And the manipulation creates antagonistic relationship between two different religious communities. A textual analysis related to the political attempt of a temple and the religious violence will be conducted.

Stereotypes of various religious groups, especially myths from different religion, symbols and legends are the major part of communal ideology. The contested of mythical

history of Ayodhya, archeology debate about the excavation of the site of Babri Mosque, widely used religious symbols in the mass mobilization like “Rama Chariot Procession”, the “Rama” who is a ideal legend for millions of Hindus are some of the areas where I will operate the theory. Are they an ideology of communalism?

The purpose of Hindu nationalist’s attempt of widely mobilized mass is to build a temple. The theory of communalism says that purpose what communalist emphasized is not a purpose. And what communalist gives a solution is not a solution. This research analyzes the mass mobilization and a temple project. That is to say, where a temple project is now. For this, I will analyze the text connected with Hindu nationalist agenda and the present position of temple.

2. A STUDY OF BABRI MOSQUE: HISTORY TO PRESENT

2.1 Introduction:

Babri Mosque from history to present is an attempt of this chapter. Since an independent India, the issue of Babri Mosque has been religious-political debate. The sixteenth century constructed mosque got a considerable space in the colonial writing too. It is also claimed that colonial power were very much conscious about the dispute of Babri Mosque, they tried to benefit from Hindu Muslim conflict with the issue of mosque. After independence, political parties tried to impact on the Hindu communities with their political agenda of building a temple on the site of the mosque.

The Hindu nationalist's attempt of a Hindu temple is not only a religious matter it is associated with history, politics, faith and belief. This study is a specify account of the events related with the assertion of building a Hindu temple. This study is examined in order to understand what was happened in the process of making a temple and why.

2.2 Myth, History and Construction of Babri Mosque:

A mosque at Ayodhya, popularly known as the Babri Mosque; was constructed in 1525 A.D. by Mir Baqi, a nobleman of Emperor Babur.¹⁸ The name of the mosque as "Babri Mosque" was named after him. Before 1940s the structure was also called Masjid-i-Janmasthan.¹⁹ The Babri Mosque was one of the largest mosques like structure in Uttar Pradesh, India. Although there were several older mosques in the surrounding district, the Babri structure became an important due to the importance of disputed site between Hindus and Muslims of India. It was claimed by some Hindu organizations that the Babri structure was build in the birthplace of God Rama to humiliate the Hindu psyche, and it stands as a shame to the honor and prestige of the Hindus²⁰.

¹⁸Elste, K. "The Ayodhya Debate." in *Indian Epic Values: Ramayana and Its Impact*, ed. Pollet, G, (Leuven: Orientaliste, 1995), 28.

¹⁹Pant Ashok, *The Truth of Babri Mosque* (USA: iUniverse, 2012), 158.

²⁰Puniyani, Ram, "Abode of Ram or House of Allah-Babri Masjid Ram Janambhumi dispute"; available from http://www.countercurrents.org/Ayodhya_E_Digest.pdf; Internet; accessed 10 January 2013.

An inquiry into the history of Babri structure will be helpful considering the dispute of the site of Babri Mosque. This section of writing attempts to identify the location of Babri Mosque whether the birthplace of God Rama, and the construction of Babri Mosque demolished the existing temple or not?

The fictional description of God Rama, born on the city of Ayodhya is available in the Hindu religious scripture. According to Ramayana, a long religious epic poem, Rama, the king of Ayodhya was born in Treta Yuga²¹, thousands years before - sometime calculated to begin in 3201 B.C.²²The Ayodhya of Ramayana had an advanced and relatively luxurious material life. It was an urban center with splendid palaces and buildings and a pattern of life commensurate with developed condition.²³The description of Ayodhya in Ramayana does not correspond to the archeological evidence of B.B Lal. In his archeological writing, the Ayodhya as described in Ramayana couldn't have existed at the present day site.²⁴He writes that Ayodhya begin with early phase of the Northern Black Polished Ware culture. The material conditions during the early phase of the Northern Black Polished were fairly simple, certainly more primitive than those described in Ramayana.²⁵ The development of the area as an urban settlement came in the seventh century B.C.²⁶ The dynastic history of the post-fifth century BC is fairly well documented, among the rulers of this period the name of Rama do not figure.²⁷ The archeological evidence of the region, therefore, raises a doubt about the identity of present-day Ayodhya with the Ayodhya of Ramayana.

Apart from this archeological evidence, there are some literary evidences which further reinforced the doubt of the Babri structure built demolishing the existing temple. Abdul Qadir Badauni, a chronicler, who wrote his book with the professed objective of demonstrating how the glory of Islam was declining during the construction of a mosque at the site of a temple of major significance.²⁸ A medieval Persian chronicle which contains a description of Ayodhya is the Ain-i-Akbari, written in the seventeenth century by Abul Fazal, where the Ayoodhya is recorded as a holy place, but it does not mention the existence of a

21According to Aihole inscription, *Epigraphia Indica* Treta Yuga is the second out of four yugas, or age of mankind, in the religion of Hinduism. Panikkar, K.N. "A Historical Overview," in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991) 23.

22Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," 23.

23Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," 23.

24Indian Archeology "Indian Archaeology- A Review, 1976-77"; Available from http://asi.nic.in/nmma_reviews/Indian%20Archaeology%201976-77%20A%20Review.pdf; Internet; accessed 10 January 2013

25Indian Archeology "Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1976-77."

26Indian Archeology "Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1976-77."

27Indian Archeology "Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1976-77."

28Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," 28.

temple and its replacement by mosque, nor does the book record any religious strife in the area.²⁹ Beside this Persian chronicles, the texts by Hindus themselves are also silent about the destruction of temple at the site of Babri structure. An example of such text is the *Ramcharitramanas* by Goswami Tulsidas, who is a great devotee of God Rama. He does not mention about the existence of a temple at the birthplace of God Rama and its destruction by Muslims.³⁰

Still there are lots of beliefs and faiths about the destruction of temple at the birthplace of God Rama, which cannot be denied. But, with the help of an archeological and the literary evidences that has been cited above, it can be said that the Babri Mosque was constructed at the site of a temple is a relatively recent belief rather than historic. I will make a further discussion of these beliefs and faiths comparing scientific findings surrounding the site.

2.2.1 Ayodhya and Babri Mosque in colonial writing

In writing about the controversy about the Ayodhya's Babri Mosque-Ramjanmabhumi issue British writing made no distinction between local myths and historical evidence and utilized local myths as dependable sources.³¹ This is clear from their attitude towards the rediscovery of Ayodhya by Vikramaditya of Ujjain in the fourth century A.D. Montgomery Martin was the first British observers who related the myth of Vikramaditya, but he was convinced that the story is myth and no more.³² Yet in 1860, Sir H.M. Eliot wrote about Vikramaadity, according to his writing Vikramaditya came to Ayodhya and erected temples in 360 places rendered scared by their association with Rama.³³ Another British writer W.C. Benet expressed surprise at the erection of 360 temples and observed in 1877 that at that time there were only forty-two such temples in Ayodhya.³⁴ Most of the British writers of the nineteenth century observed that 360 temple were destroyed by Muslim zealots.

It seems that in the 19th century the idea started developing that Babur had destroyed the Ramjanmabhumi temple and erected a mosque in its place. In 1838 Montgomery Martin told that the people of Ayodhya maintain that a mosque was raised by Babur.³⁵ So it can be said that the story of Babur and his mosque got significance in the nineteenth century. In 1819, a British translator, John Lyden translated the memories of Babur and he wrote that

29AbulFazal, *Ain-i-Akbari*, II. Translated into English by H.S. Jarrett, Reprint, Delhi, 1987, p.182. Citation found in Panikkar, K.N, "A Historical Overview," 28.

30Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," 28.

31 Shrivastava, Sushil. "How the British Saw the Issue," in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 45

32 Shrivastava, "How the British Saw the Issue," 45.

33 Shrivastava, "How the British Saw the Issue," 45.

34 Shrivastava, "How the British Saw the Issue," 45.

35 Shrivastava, "How the British Saw the Issue," 47.

Babur had encamped near Ayodhya on 28 March 1528.³⁶ In 1826 William Erskine remarked that in Babur had remained in Ayodhya for a fort-night and involved in building activities.³⁷ According to Shrivastava “most of the British officials and scholars who tried to put together a history of Ayodhya highlighted the desecration of a temple honoring the birthplace of Rama. The idea became so strongly entrenched in the psyche of the British officials and the local people that it was difficult to dislodge it”³⁸.

The idea of these two scholars somehow supports the above-mentioned statement that the local myth of Babur and his destruction of Hindu temple being strengthened from 19th century.

The colonial writing about the Babri Mosque and Ramjanmabhumi debate strengthens the mythical aspect of the issue. There is also another charge imposed on colonial power, they want to benefit from the division of religion of colonial India. Irfan Engineer says “there is little doubt that the colonial rule benefited from the dispute and therefore did not seem to take effective steps to the disputed resolved. The authorities under the colonial rule of the land to acquire communal over-tunes.”³⁹

2.2.2 Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque debate in Post-Independent India:

After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the debate of Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque became tense. Because of the deteriorating relation between Hindu and Muslims, Indian government declared site of the Babri Mosque out of bounds for both Hindus and Muslims and placed a guard outside the mosque.⁴⁰ In 1948, the local congress politician Baba Raghava Das used the cult of Ram for his own electoral; criticizing the opposition’s idea of Ayodhya and Rama as a myth⁴¹. This revived the temple and mosque issue that had lain dormant for decades.

Before 1949, December 22 it was only a belief that Hindu Deity Rama was born in the site of Babri Mosque, and Hindus of India from mid nineteenth century were worshipping their god Rama in the Rama Chabutra, which was situated outside the mosque. In other words,

36 Shrivastava, “How the British Saw the Issue,” 47.

37 Shrivastava, “How the British Saw the Issue,” 47.

38 Shrivastava, “How the British Saw the Issue,” 47.

39 Shrivastava, “How the British Saw the Issue,” 50.

40 Veer, P, van der. “Hindu nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity: The Vishva Hindu Parishad,” in *Accounting for Fundamentalism*, eds. M. Marty and R. Scott (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 653-668.

41 Hasen, Mushirul. “Competing Symbols and Shared Codes: Inter-Community Relation” in *Modern India*, in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 114.

till 22 December 1949, the Hindus worshipped at the Chabutra and Muslim in the Mosque. But the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya, in the Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, India was converted into Ramjanmabhumi temple on the Night of 22 December 1949. In 1949, nine days continuous reading from the *Ramayana* was performed in front of the Babri mosque, a statue of God Ram was smuggled into the mosque during the night of 22 December.⁴² And the rumor was spread all around the Ayodhya that idols of Rama was miraculously appeared in the birthplace of Rama. This incident increased the existing tension and the case was filed in the local court. Then the court ordered in the restriction for both Hindus and Muslims entering into the Babri mosque to resolve the exiting tension. When the district Magistrate, K.K, Nayar was ordered by the court to remove the statue from the mosque he refused to comply.⁴³ So, the statue remained in the mosque and

“...this led to lengthy litigation by Muslim to regain and Hindus to gain, entrance to the mosque for worship. The courts, however never reached to the verdict to these appeals. Committee of the servants of Ram birth place, was, however granted permission to perform rite for the Ram statue in Babri mosque once a year, on the night of 22nd December”.⁴⁴

The government proclaimed the Babri Mosque premises as disputed area thereafter and locked the gate to the entrance.⁴⁵ After the 1949 event, civil order in Ayodhya turned precarious, and for a brief moment the fate of the Babbri Mosque became an issue of national political concern. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Valla Vai Patel advised local officials on different courses of action to resolve the problems. The issue entered the courts, and in 1950 the court enforced an uneasy trace, which allowed the Rama image to remain inside the Mosque.⁴⁶

2.2.3 Politicization of Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque debate:

Although the Muslims and Hindus both were not satisfied to the legal solution to lock the gate of Babri Mosque, but the issue was largely parochial and largely forgotten till 1983. The attempt of Hindu organization the VHP to resurrect the old dispute to liberate the God Rama from the birthplace through the huge mass mobilization was an issue of national concern. In

42 Citation found in Plavoet, Jan. “Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict: in *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour*, eds. Plavoet, Jan and Karel van der Troon (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 201.

43 Citation found in Noorani, A.G. “Legal Aspects to the Issue,” in Modern India,” in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 58-98

44 Plavoet, Jan. “Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict,” 201

45 Noorani, “Legal Aspects to the Issue,” 68.

46 Davis, Richard H. “The Iconography of Rama’s Chariot” in *Making India Hindu: Religion Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. Ludden, David (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39

the decade of 1980s, huge mass was mobilized with the purpose of building a Hindu temple in the Ramjanmabhumi, firstly from Hindu organization and then from Bharatiya Janata Party.⁴⁷

'Sacrifice for unanimity' (Ekatmatayajna) in 1983 is an Ayodhya centered mass mobilization started from Sitamarti by VHP⁴⁸. It was also an attempt to find ritual imagery with which they could reach a broad, national audience. Through this movement VHP had been able to provide a compelling statement of the "Hindu unity". Along with Hindu unity, VHP also charged the Muslim communities as the violators of the sacred homeland.⁴⁹ But, the assassination of India Gandhi (the then Prime Minister of India) brought a dramatic change in the national political arena; thus the effect of 'Ekatmatayajna' had less political impact.⁵⁰ Then VHP developed a program that would involve a much larger part of Hindu India.

Prior to the parliamentary election of 1989, the VHP launched the nationwide campaign to 'liberate the Rama from his jail'⁵¹. Hindu people believed that their God Rama was prisoned in the Babri Mosque. The main purpose of the campaign was similar to the earlier campaign, to replace the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya with a newly constructed temple to the god Rama.

During the movement both VHP's and Bharatiya's Janata Party's leaders reached out to thousands of villages and town throughout India with their mobilizing rituals of preparing bricks to build a temple on the site of Babri Mosque.⁵² All through October and November of the same year, procession-carrying 'Sri Rama' printed bricks baked in the every parts of the country started arriving in Ayodhya.⁵³ The movement for building a Hindu temple on the site of Babri Mosque has steadily gathered momentum through this campaign. Richard H. Davis writes, "no Hindu temple has ever been built with such a heterogeneous assortment of building materials, nor has the sponsor of a temple ever so explicitly involved the public at a large in the building scheme"⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the VHP began producing and distributing other emblems that would spread the message of its campaign. Small stickers depicting Rama and the temple began to appear throughout north India. Hindu household were requested to fly banners of saffron, the color of renunciation, to signal their adherence to Hindu values.⁵⁵

47Plavoet, "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict," 205.

48 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 40.

49 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 40.

50 Plavoet, "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict," 205.

51 Plavoet, "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict," 208.

52 Verghese, B.G. *Witness to the Making of Modern India* (India: Ranauebar Press, 2010)

53 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 41.

54 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 41.

55 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 40.

In the 9th of November 1989, great silanyas puja (foundation stone ceremony) was held out. The then-president of the congress party and the Prime Minister of India declared to construct the Rama temple on the disputed land of Ayodhya on the silanyas puja by ritually breaking the coconuts.⁵⁶

On the one side the result of 'Brick Production Campaign' induced the VHP to plan a much larger procession to Ayodhya, while on the other, the BJP pursued a more broad-based and pragmatic rhetorical strategy to continue the electoral success. The BJP has achieved some unexpected result in the general election of 1989, because of their participation and assertion in the brick project. So in September 1990, the third movement was launched by the VHP, and led by the BJP. The intention of this movement was alike previous movements, "to contextualize Ayodhya in the historical lineage of Muslim aggression and then to seek the legitimacy for the temple movement".⁵⁷ This movement was named as " Rama's Chariot Procession Campaign and Kar Sevak Campaign" in which a statue of God Rama was put in the chariot and would travelled to the different parts of the country.⁵⁸

Yet the procession was planned jointly by BJP and VHP, the leader of BJP L.K. Advani ride on the podium of the chariot and the VHP leadership setting the stage and offering strategic advice behind the scene. As a movement progress *Times of India* reported that Prime Minister V.P. Singh believed the BJP had hijacked the procession from the VHP and removed its threatening aspects. VHP as a Hindu organization was of course religious, beside its religious nature it was also allusive, militant, masculine and anti Muslim.⁵⁹ But BJP as a political party was political, realistic and ostensibly inclusive. So it is quite logical to say that the procession not only got height in the BJP leadership but also able to promulgate the message in a different way. According to the BJP, the opponents of this movement were not Muslims, but the "pseudo-secularist" who practiced the politics of appeasement on the behalf of Muslims and other minorities.⁶⁰ In other words, it was not Muslims, but the pseudo-secularist who is in against of making a Hindu temple on the site of Babri Mosque.

The yatra "Advani Road Show" as described by the *Times of India* –covered 300 kilometers daily and Advani on an average addressed six public meetings a day.⁶¹ Advani's

56 Ananth, V. Krishna. *India Since Independence: Making Sense of Indian Politics* (India: Dorling Kindersley PVT.LTD., 2011), 325.

57 Panikkar, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya," 50

58 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 42.

59 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 41.

60 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 41.

61 *Times of India*, 25 September and 14 October, 1990. Citation found in Panikkar, N.K. "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya," in *In Quest of a Secular Symbol: Ayodhya and After*, ed. Ghose, Rajeswori (Perth: Indian Ocean center, 1996), 49.

public meeting pictured the Ayodhya issue as a controversy between Ram and Babur⁶² and the construction of the temple as an assertion of national pride.⁶³ The chariot campaign turned out to be a chariot of fire⁶⁴. The beginning of chariot campaign started to create tension between Hindus and Muslims. This can be seen from the riots it caused. From 1 September to 20 November 116 communal riots occurred in which 546 people were killed.⁶⁵ The procession posed a provocation that could not be ignored. Growing disorder, riots and final destruction of the mosque loomed ahead. Yet there would be serious consequences stopping it. With Advani active in the driver seat of Rama's chariot, V.P Sing and his ruling National Front government found themselves in a dilemma in stopping the procession. Stopping the chariot means stopping the Rama, and also putting the coalition government in danger.⁶⁶

For BJP the RathYatra and the Ayodhya mobilization is a matter of "national identity" that has been grounded in the "Hindu ethos". In BJP's White Paper it is written

The BJP firmly believes that construction of Ram Mandir at Janamsthal is a symbol of the vindication of our cultural heritage and national self-respect. For BJP it is purely a national issue and it will not allow any vested interest to give it a sectarian and communal colour. Hence, the party is committed to build Shri Ram Mandir at Janamsthan by relocating the super-imposed Babri structure with respect. (BJP, 8)

The BJP campaign for making a Hindu temple at the site of Ayodhya has a far-reaching aim: an autonomous national sovereignty, which they designated as a Hindu dominion or the righteous regime of Rama, based on an "assimilative Hindu cultural nationhood."⁶⁷ Religious vision and political agenda united.

2.2.4 Demolition of Babri Mosque:

The destruction of the mosque loomed ahead from the very beginning of the chariot procession. On 6 December 1992, about 70,000 Hindus assembled outside the disputed place of Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque along with 500 Hindu monks and leaders for a public meeting.⁶⁸ When the BJP and VHP leaders were addressing the crowd, around 150 Hindu Kar

62 Indian express, 19 September, 1990 Citation found in Panikkar, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya," 50.

63 Telegraph, 15 October, 1990 (CF) Citation found in Panikkar, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya," 51.

64 Tribune, 8 October, 1990. Citation found in Panikkar, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya," 51

65 Divided We Stand- A Dossier on Masjid-Mandir Conflict, prepared by Delhi Forum, New Delhi, 1992. Citation found in Panikkar, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization: The Agitation for a Mandir at Ayodhya," 51.

66 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 46

67 Davis, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 51.

68 Akhtar, Mohammad Jamil, *Babri Masjid: A Tale Untold* (New Delhi: Genuine Publication and Media Pvt., 1997) 136.

Sevaks regrouped themselves, stood on the terrace and started pelting stones at the police. At the same time, around 1000 kar Sevaks entered into the structure of the Babri Mosque. About 80 of them climbed the structure and started damaging the domes.⁶⁹ There were strict instruction from Kalyan Singh, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh to the local authorities and the police not use force against the karsevaks, so the Inspector General of Police, Deputy Inspector of Police and the Commissioner were on the scene as a passive viewer.⁷⁰ *The Indian Express* reported that L.K. Advani was heard ordering sealing all the entry points to Ayodhya to prevent central forces from entering the town. This was around 2 P.M. when Kar Sevaks were hammering away the mosque.⁷¹

Eventually the entire mosque was totally demolished and the karsevaks built the makeshift temple in the rubble of the mosque installing an image of Rama. Along with the process of the demolition of the mosque, some karsevaks were engaged in setting fire to the house of the Muslims and killing them. Later that night BJP president L.K. Advani wrote to the speaker of Lower Assembly “I deeply regret the happening at Ayodhya...I feel sorry that I couldn’t prevent the occurrence.” (Advani, quotation found in Noorani, A.G, p. 74, 2001) When the news of demolition of mosque to BJP office, the vice president of BJP Sundar Singh Bhanari told that the act as ‘unfortunate’, ‘unexpected’ unjustified and told that the groups who vandalized will be identified and taken action if any of his party member was involved.⁷²

After the perpetuated violence around Ayodhya, the central government dissolved Kalyan Singh, chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, and a Commission of Inquiry was set up to inquire into the matters related to the demolition.⁷³ On 7th December 1992, the central government decided to ban communal organizations and the prime minister announced the decision to re-establish the demolished structure. Who is responsible for the wanton act in Ayodhya? Later in the writing, this question will be broadly analyzed, but here its appropriate to cite BJP’s *White Paper*, in this it is written “the government of India told that as many as 248 Hindu temples and cultural centers were damaged in Pakistan, 350 in Bangladesh, 4 in Afghanistan and 18 in the United Kingdom, yet not a single party other than the BJP condemned these wanton acts of destruction.”⁷⁴

69 Akhtar, *Babri Masjid: A Tale Untold*

70 Akhtar, *Babri Masjid: A Tale Untold*, 138

71 *The Indian Express*, citation found in Noorani, A.G, *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour* (New Delhi: Progressive Printers, 2001), 74.

72 *The Indian Express* citation found in Noorani, *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour*, 75.

73 *The Indian Express* citation found in Noorani, *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour*, 139-40

74 Bharatiya Janata Party, “White Paper on Ayodhya Debate and Rama Temple Movement,” available from <http://www.hvk.org/specialrepo/bjppwp/> Internet, accessed, 12 January 2013.

Two days later BJP's leader Advani started to defend the charge that has been labeled to him and his party. He remained unrepentant for December 6 and told

And today, when an old structure which ceased to be a mosque over 50 years back is pulled down by a group of people exasperated by the tardiness of the judicial process, and the obtuseness and myopia of the executive, they are reviled by the President, Vice-Presidents, and political parties as betrayers of the nation, destroyers of the Constitution and what not.⁷⁵

The assertion of making a Hindu temple, did not stop here, for Hindu organizations, the act of demolition is one step ahead in their assertion. And for BJP, the mission of 'Hindu cultural nationhood' is still on the progress, BJP in its political agenda and in the election manifesto still talks about making a Hindu temple. Sir Mark Tully, a television broadcaster says that issue of Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque debate was a hot potato for BJP, so demolition is like killing the chicken that was laying the egg.⁷⁶

2.3 Ayodhya debate: 20 years on:

20 years after the demolition of the Babri structure where the Indian politicians are, when it comes to the politics and religion together? And where the Ayodhya case is now? These two questions are discussed.

After the Allahabad High Court pronounced the verdict of Ayodhya debate on September 2010, both Hindu and Muslim communities challenged the High Court's decision to Supreme Court of India. Allahabad High Court decided to divide the disputed land into three parts, 1/3 goes to Ram Lallah represented by Hindu MahaSabha, 1/3 to Sunni Waqf Board, 1/3 to NirmohiAkshara⁷⁷ (group without attachment). But in May 9, 2011, The Supreme Court of India stays the High Court order splitting the disputed site in three parts and says status quo will remain.

In a television interview Chandan Mishra, the BJP leader says that millions of Indian people along with BJP still believe that the site of Babri Mosque is a birthplace of Rama. He added that BJP has to do nothing with the demolition of Mosque, BJP leaders Advani, and Vajpayee were unhappy with the demolition that took. Today, BJP is ready to accept the Supreme Court's verdict. But some political agendas are still alive, he further spells, BJP want

⁷⁵ Advani, quotation found in Noorani, A.G, 76, 2001

⁷⁶ Big Fight, a television program "Ayodhya Debate" 1st December 2012; available from <http://www.ndtv.com/video/player/the-big-fight/ayodhya-debate-20-years-on/256745>; Internet; accessed 13 January 2013

⁷⁷ newkerala.com, "The Babri Morass: How did it transpire"; available from <http://www.newkerala.com/news/newsplus/worldnews-112843.html#.U5VfpKUeJv0>; Internet; accessed February 18 2013.

to make a Hindu temple on the site of Mosque.⁷⁸ In the same interview Mani Sanker Aiyar, a congress prominent leader speaks that the December 6 is a black day in the history of Indian politics, if something like that happened again that would be a disaster. As a secular party, Congress is proud of Islamic heritage and ready to agree on the Supreme Court verdict.⁷⁹

Nothing has been changed regarding the status of the site. Neither a temple was made nor mosque. Politics is still being played in the name of Babri Mosque-Ramjanmabhumi debate. Spreading religious hatred for political benefits had been a part of Indian politics in 1980s and 1990s and still this is a work on progress.

2.4 The Archaeological evidence about the Babri Mosque:

The first archaeological survey in 1975 was carried out in Ayodhya to examine some sites that were connected to the Ramayana story by Prof. B.B. Lal. Fifteen years later, in 1990 Prof. Lal had made a statement that 'carved stone pillars' used in the Babri Mosque claimed as 'conclusive evidence' of the existence of a Hindu temple at the site of the present Babri Mosque.⁸⁰ It was further claimed that the temple was dated to the eleventh century, was deliberately destroyed and replaced by the mosque in 1528.⁸¹ Numbers of questions has been raised about the acceptability of the Prof. Lal's evidence. Dr. S.P. Gupta raises a question of archaeological method and procedure which archaeologist feel has been violated.⁸² In the case of this excavation of Babri Mosque, Prof. Lal has not so far published a detailed report. In his *Indian Archaeological- A Review 1976-77* he states

After the early historic deposit there is a break in occupation, with considerable debris and pit formations before the site was again occupied around the eleventh century A.D. Several later-medieval brick and kankar lime floors have been met with, but the entire late period was devoid of any special interest.⁸³

This is the period in which it is now claimed that a Hindu temple of the eleventh century was destroyed in the 16th C. There is no mention of the pillar bases even in his later preliminary report 1979-80.

In July 1992, some archaeologists including former ASI directors Dr. Y.D Sharma and Dr. K.M. Shrivastava went to Ayodhya to evaluate and examine earlier findings. After the

78 Big Fight, a television program "Ayodhya Debate" 1st December 2012,

79 Big Fight, a television program "Ayodhya Debate" 1st December 2012,

80 Gopal, Sarvepalli. "Appendix," in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 224.

81 Gopal, "Appendix," 224.

82 Gopal, "Appendix," 225.

83 Prof. Lal's quotation found Gopal, "Appendix," 223.

evaluation they said that the inner boundary of the disputed structure, which may have belonged to an earlier temple.⁸⁴ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) excavated the mosque site at the direction of the Allahabad Bench of the High Court 2003. The archaeologist reported evidence of a large 10th century structure similar to a Hindu temple having preexisted the Babri Mosque.

There are still some controversies about the archaeological findings by ASI. Dr. Sushil Shrivastava in his review of ASI report says that two Muslim graves were also recovered in the excavation. ASI videographed and photographed the graves on April 22, it avoided further analysis of the important evidence. The skeletons found at the site were not sent for carbon dating, neither the graves measured.⁸⁵ Anirudha Shrivastava a former ASI archaeologist said that in some trenches, some graves terracotta and lime mortar and surkhi were also discovered which indicated Muslim habitation and it was also surmised that there existed some mosque on the site and when Babri was built on the site of another mosque.⁸⁶

2.5 Legal Aspects on the Attempt of a Hindu Temple on the site of Babri Mosque:

In 1885, the Col. F.E.A. Chaimier, district Judge in Ayodhya, told that it is most unfortunate that a mosque should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that event occurred 356 years ago it is too late now to remedy and grievance, all that can be done is to maintain the parties in status quo. In such a case as the present one any innovation could cause more harm and derangement of order than benefit.⁸⁷

The Constitution of India in part III, Article 25, embodies the guarantee of “freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion” (The Constitution of India, Part III, Article 25) Article 26 says “subject to public order, morality and health, every, religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right: (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purpose; (b) to manage its own affairs in matter of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law”⁸⁸.

84“Archaeology of Ayodhya”; available from <http://archaeology.blogspot.com/2007/05/26/archaeology-of-ayodhya/>; Internet; accessed February 2013.

85Archaeology of Ayodhya”;

86Archaeology of Ayodhya”;

87 Noorani, A.G. “Legal Aspects to the Issue,” in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 65.

88 The Constitution of India, Part III, Article 26

United Nation's Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief where India and all United Nations member rectified without a vote on 25 November 1981, Article I says that "every one shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, ...Para 3 refers to limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or fundamental rights and freedoms of others"⁸⁹. Article VI spells out the content of right, it says "In accordance with Article I, and subject to provisions of paragraph 3 of Article I, the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief shall include, *inter alia*, the following freedoms: (a) to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes.." ⁹⁰ Denial of the right to maintain a house of worship of religious denomination in as much a denial of religious freedom as a refusal of right to establish it in the first instance.

According to the *Indian Post*, on 6 April 1989, BJP's most influential leader A.B. Vajpayee asserted that the 'Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque' issue could not be solved by the court. He added that the Muslims should be persuaded to give up their claim to the mosque. It should be handed over to the Hindus unconditionally. He rejected the proposal to declare the mosque a national monument, saying that it belonged to the Hindus as a part of their cultural heritage. (*Indian Post* 7 April 1989 found in Noorani, 62) He said that the need of the hour is to revive the Hindu Nationalist spirit to fight fissiparous tendencies. Being secular does not mean that we disown our religion, yet even a person of his high intelligence could see no contradiction between asking the Muslims to deliver the historic mosque to the Hindus.

The recent archaeological excavation, (ASI) claims that the site of Babri Mosque may have belonged to an earlier temple but those findings are with full of controversies. Only on the basis of archeological findings and believes and faith of Hindu people of India, the assertion for making a Hindu temple seems to be a forcible conversion of the house of worship. The foundation ceremony for making a Hindu temple on the site of Babri Mosque was held on 9th of November 1989. Sayapal Dang says that according to the agreement the government would allow the foundation ceremony, some distance away from the mosque.

89 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, 1981 available from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/religion.htm>; Internet, March 2012.

90 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

2.6 Conclusion:

A study on the Hindu nationalist attempt of a Hindu temple on the site of Babri Mosque concludes with the idea that Hindu nationalist's attempt of Hindu temple begin before BJP's direct involvement, and Indian National Congress's supportive role in 1984. It began with the belief and faith of the Hindus that their deity Rama was born in the site of the Babri Mosque. Historic and scientific attempt of verifying the site as a birthplace of Rama is yet not proved because of the intellectual controversies. All the national-political assertions still not able to built a temple but the political assertions are responsible for destroying the place of worship, which is against the national and International law.

20 years have been passed, the case of Babri Mosque-Ramjanmabhumi debate is still in the Supreme Court of India. Political parties are agreed to decide on the courts verdict but still politics is still being played in the name of Babri Mosque-Ramjanmabhumi debate. Spreading religious ideologies for political benefits had been a part of Indian politics in 1980s and 1990s and still this is a work on progress.

3. POLITICAL PARTIES AND NATIONALISM, SECULARISM AND MINORITY ISSUES IN INDIA

3.1 Introduction:

Communalism in India has challenged the secularism and nationalism, which led to the crisis of secularism and affected the nation. The genesis of communalism in India, according to Achin Vanaik should be searched in the nature of nationalism, secularism and other various policies and programs like caste schedule and minority issues.⁹¹ The political debate in India after 1950s is on the concept of Indian nationalism. Indian National Congress insists that Indian nationalism must derive the secular perspectives, where all the regional, linguistic, and ethnic varieties can be woven for the broad nationalism. The other concept of nationalism is forwarded by Bharatiya Janata Party, which claims that Indian Nationalism should be based on the cultural and psychological foundation. Achin Vanaik claims that the growing communalism in India is the outcome of political debate on nationalism⁹².

This chapter deals with the ideological aspect of Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party, and Hindu organizations like Vishva Hindu Parisad and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The main focus is given to the issue of nationalism, secularism and minority identity.

3.2 Indian National Congress and Ideological Affirmation:

The Congress party is an Indian Political Party founded in December 1885, has played significant role in the Independence movement of India. The Congress party led by Mohandas Gandhi promoted nonviolent and noncooperation to protest the British rule. Indian National Congress was able to pressurize the British rule through civil disobediences like tax avoidance to British rule.⁹³ After the independence of India, the Congress party formed most of India's

91 Vanaik, Achin *The Furies of Indian Communalism: Religion, Modernity and Secularization* (New York: Verso, 1997), 1-35.

92 Vanaik, Achin. *The Furies of Indian Communalism: Religion, Modernity and Secularization*, 1-35.

93 Encyclopedia Britannica, "Indian National Congress"; available from <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/285841/Indian-National-Congress> ; Internet; accessed 10 March 2013.

government, so the Congress party is a successful political party in the history of Indian politics.

The basic ideology of the Congress party is secularism, nationalism, social justice and economic growth of all citizens. Beside this, the Congress party is committed to the welfare of the people, especially to the weaker section of society.⁹⁴ The constitution of Indian National Congress articulates “The Indian National Congress bears true faith and allegiance to the constitution of India as by law establishment and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy and would uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India”⁹⁵. Here is a brief account on the Congress party’s ideological commitments-commitment to Nationalism and Secularism, welfare of weaker section of society.

The Congress party has a long history in the politics of India. It is also an oldest political party in India. It not only fought for the freedom of India with the colonial rule but also preserved freedom. J.L. Nehru, at the presidential address at Kalyani uttered, “freedom is precious and has its rights and responsibilities and obligations. We should preserve that freedom if we are conscious all the time of discharging our duties”⁹⁶. D.K Barooah in 1976 told that congress fought for freedom, but it did not attempt to reduce of power through conspiracy or violent insurrection. He means that congress sought to develop a political culture based on nationalism, secularism, democracy and social justice.⁹⁷

The objective of the Congress party is to form a single nation mixing the varieties like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhist, Jains, Persian and Christian. It agrees that in spite of some local variations there should be one culture. J.L. Nehru in his address at the New Delhi Session, affirmed “India has a basic outlook of her own, but it has been enriched in the distance past by numerous streams, coming from various parts of Asia and in the later years from the western world. All rich and intricate parts of India now and have been woven into her rich and intricate pattern. It is this composite culture which is our proud heritage and which we have to preserve and develop”⁹⁸. The Congress party believed that India is a country with full of diversities, and these diversities can be found in language, religion, in food, dress,

94 Indian National Congress: “Lok Sabha Election 2009: Manifesto” p.2 Available from <http://aicc.org.in/new/home-layout-manifesto.php> Internet, accessed 13th March, 2013

95 Indian National Congress, “Constitution and Rules of the Indian National Congress,” p. 1. Available from <http://www.aicc.org.in/Constitution%20FINAL%2012.5.08.pdf> Internet, accessed 13 March 2013.

96 Johari, J.C. *Indian National Congress since Independence* New Delhi: Lotus Press, 2006, p. XIV

97 Johari, *Indian National Congress since Independence*

98 Johari, *Indian National Congress since Independence* p. XVI

habit etc. and these diversities should be used to make a wider, stronger and long lasting national unity.

The Congress party believed that religion could not be used as the ground of discrimination among the citizens. Its leaders remained dedicated to its ideology. While speaking on the Second Round Table Conference held at London in September 1931, Mahatma Gandhi declared that the Congress alone was the national and secular organization of India.⁹⁹ Another prominent leader of the party J.L. Nehru, presidential address at the New Delhi Session in 1951 identified Indian communalism with European fascism.¹⁰⁰ *Text of Resolution on Communal Situation* adopted in New Delhi Session in 1970 states a war on communalism on the social political and economic fronts. The Congress party has called upon all secular forces to carry the message of communal harmony all around the country and render relief to the victims of communal conflicts¹⁰¹. The Congress has shown its commitment to the secular ideal in the election manifesto of 1991. The manifesto enforced every Congress member to fight against the religious inequalities.¹⁰² That is to say, if any one raises the hand in the name of religion it is a duty of every congressman to fight against such unfair treatment.

It is called that Secularism has been always the essence of the party. It believed that cornerstone of secularism is the security of minorities. It pledged to protect the constitutional and legal right of the religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities. The Congress party election manifesto of 1991 emphasized to continue the legal and constitutional protection for the educational institutions of minority communities.¹⁰³ The manifesto also undertook to establish a 'Composite Rapid Force' to quell the communal riots.¹⁰⁴ *The Political Resolution* adopted at Bangalore session in 1992 talks about the protection of security, identity and interests of the religious minorities. It particularly stated "the Congress will translate into reality the guarantees given by the constitution of India in the educational and other spheres of the minorities"¹⁰⁵. Indian National Congress recognizes religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities are the disadvantaged group of the society because they are not empowered to attain the equal opportunities. So for the welfare of these disadvantaged group Congress has established the

99Johari, *Indian National Congress since Independence*, XVII.

100 Johari, J.C. *Indian National Congress since Independence* p. XVIII

101 Indian National Congress. *Text of Resolution on Communal Situation* adopted at the All India Congress Committee Meeting, New Delhi, 13-15 June, 1970. (New Delhi: National Herald Press), 1970, 3-4

102Indian National Congress. "Lok Sabha Election 1991: Manifesto"; Available from <http://www.aicc.org.in/new/salient-points.php> Internet, accessed February 10 2013

103Indian National Congress, "Salient Points of Previous Manifesto"; Available from <http://www.aicc.org.in/new/salient-points.php> Internet, accessed February 10, 2013

104 Indian National Congress, "Salient Points of Previous Manifesto"

105 Johari, J.C. *Indian National Congress since Independence*, XVII.

'National Minority Finance and Development Corporation'. It used to get 5000 millions rupees grant from the government to empower minorities.¹⁰⁶

The study on some of the political documents of the Congress party disclosed the political opinion of nationalism, secularism and welfare of minorities. It uttered the religious, regional and cultural diversities in Indian should woven to make a wider, stronger and long lasting national unity. Congress believes in the nationalism of 'unity in non-uniformity'. Religion should not be the ground of discrimination for the people of India. Secularism also means the security of minorities of India. Indian National congress is committed to provide constitutional and legal protection for the minorities. The empowerment of the weaker section of the society is for equal opportunities Indian citizens.

3.3 Bharatiya Janata Party and its Ideological Premises:

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is one of the largest political parties in India. The BJP was founded in December 1980, under the leadership of A.B. Vajpae and L.K. Advani. In the dperiod of 1990s the party succeed asa governing party in state and various federal state of India. Here is an attempt to examine BJP's basic ideology.

Article III and IV in the Constitution of the party described its basic philosophy and the ideological commitment. The BJP has adopted Integral Humanism as the basic philosophy. The ideological commitments of BJP focused on nationalism and national integration, the party shall be committed to democracy. BJP believes in the policy of secularism. The other commitment is defined as 'Gandhian socialism'.¹⁰⁷

The National Executive and National Council of BJP had derived integral humanism as a basic philosophy in October 1985. It aimed at achieving individual liberty, economic prosperity, social equality, and political stability¹⁰⁸. Integral humanism conceived of man as a whole comprising of body, intellect, mind and soul, which generate diverse thoughts and actions. To quote Chandra P. Agrawal "Integral humanism stressed on the individual's right action, that is, action according to *dharma*. Dharma is the operational aspect of the characteristics of man which helps to engage in right action, sustain in life and identify social

106 Indian National Congress. "Salient Points of Previous Manifesto,"

107 Bharatiya Janata Party. "Constitution and Rules," available from <http://ap.bjp.org/about-us/bjp-history/61-bjp-constitution?showall=1> Internet, accessed 13 March, 2013

108 Swain, Pratap Chandra, *Bharatiya Janata Party: Profile and performance*, (New Delhi: APH Publiishing Corporation), 2001, 98-99.

behavior”¹⁰⁹. According to BJP integral humanism organizes and energizes the life of the individual as well as of the society.

In 1986, BJP entered a new dynamic era in ideological terms with the vision of Hindu Nationalism in the leadership of L.K. Advani. Hindu nationalism presents BJP’s concept of nationalism.¹¹⁰ According to BJP’s *Hindutva: The Great Nationalist Ideology* “Hindutva will not mean any Hindu theocracy. However it would mean that the guiding principles of India will come from two of the great teachings of vedas, the ancient Hindu and Indian scripture, which so boldly proclaimed.”¹¹¹ The definition of Hindutva did not excluded Christians, Muslims and other religious minorities minorities. Hindu nationalism is portrayed as cultural nationalism and Hinduism as an entire system of faith and worship, culture and history that has been developed in India over the past 5000 years. The beginning of Hindu nationalism as an ideology of the party became a political strategy to get the new height in national politics. The BJP achieved massive success in parliamentary election of 1989, and the reason behind its succeed was the strategy of mass mobilization under Hindu Nationalism. In 1996 the party departed from its Hindu Nationalism to Cultural Nationalism¹¹²

The BJP believed in the policy of secularism. For the BJP, secularism followed the principles and universality and tolerance of Hindu religion that formed the core of India’s cultural heritage.¹¹³ The universality and tolerance of Hinduism are the principles of equality of law and equal protection of law. In other words, the BJP’s secularism makes no provision for any discrimination on the ground of religion. The BJP leaders claimed that their insistence on Hindutva as the basis of Indian Nationalism is not anti-secular. Jay Dubashi, the BJP’s spokesperson said “Secularism is a doctrine which gives most priority to nation than religion. And viewed in this perspective the BJP is the only secular party in India because it has always kept nation above religion”.¹¹⁴ According to the party, the word Hindu is merely the term for every inhabitants of India. So it believed that the Christians, Muslims and Parses of India are Hindu Christians, Hindu Muslims and Hindu Parses. That is to say that the term Hindu has nothing do with the Hindu religion, it is more about Indian Nationalism.

109 Kumar, “Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics,” 82.

110 Kumar, “Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics,” 83.

111 Bharatiya Janata Party, “Hidutva: The Great Nationalist Ideology,” available from http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369:hindutva-the-great-nationalist-ideology&catid=92&Itemid=501 Internet, accessed 13 March, 2013.

112 Kumar, *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics*, 83.

113 Kumar, *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics*, 304.

114 Kumar, *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics*, 304.

The BJP claimed that minority appeasement in form of Article 30 and 370 in Indian constitution should either be abandoned or rationalized.¹¹⁵ Article 30 in Indian constitution talks about the rights of education to minorities, it says that all the minorities based on religion or language have the right to establish and administer educational institution based on their choice.¹¹⁶ The BJP believed that the categorization of communities as ‘minorities’ perpetuates the notion of discrimination, therefore the BJP is committed to a common Indian Identity that “transcends community, caste and gender, with every Indian an equal participant in prosperous nation building and an equal beneficiary of that prosperity.” Article 370 in Indian constitution granted a special status to the state Jammu and Kashmir guaranteeing its autonomy except for defence, foreign affairs and communication¹¹⁷. That is to say, beside defence, foreign affairs and communication, the central laws passed from the parliament of India do not automatically apply in the state of Kashmir. The state owned the right to approve it by passing a parallel act. The party believes that autonomy of Article 370 in the Indian Constitution is the main cause of rising problems in Kashmir. Kashmiri Pandits are the indigenous community of Kashmir, who occupied the 95 percentages of total Hindu population in Kashmir. Massive numbers of Kashmiri Pandits were forcibly pushed out of Kashmir because of the terrorist threat since 1989. According to the BJP Article 370 poses a psychological barrier for the full integration of the people of Jammu & Kashmir with the national mainstream. The BJP committed to the abrogation of this Article.¹¹⁸

The party blames Indian National Congress for introducing western concept of Nationalism, and this foreign concept of nationalism is the “real demon” which resulted the greater erosion of Indian-ness by diverting the national identity and national consciousness.¹¹⁹ Secularism defined by BJP gives double meaning because BJP makes no provision for any discrimination on the ground of religion. But this equality can be achieved only through Hinduism. Article 30 and 370 in the constitution of India appease the minorities, which perpetuate the discrimination among the citizens of India. So those articles according to the BJP, should be abrogated.

115 Kumar, *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics*, 305.

116 “Constitution of India, Ninety-Seventh Amendment 2011,” available from <http://www.indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/welcome.html> Internet, accessed, 13 March 2013.

117 “Constitution of India, Ninety-Seventh Amendment 2011,”

118 Bharatiya Janata Party, “Election Manifesto: Lok Sabha Elections 2009, available from http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=137:manifesto-lok-sabha-election-2009&catid=50:election-manifestos&Itemid=549 Internet, accessed 13 March, 2013.

119 Bharatiya Janata Party, “White Paper on Ayodhya Debate and Rama Temple Movement,” available from <http://www.hvk.org/specialrepo/bjpwp/> Internet, accessed, 12 January 2013

3.4 Vishva Hindu Parishad and its ideologies:

The Vishva Hindu Parishad, abbreviated VHP, is a Hindu organization in India, founded by K.K Shastri in 1964. The objective of the VHP is to 'organize-consolidate the Hindu society and to serve-protect the Hindu Dharma'.¹²⁰ The VHP is promoting and protecting the Hindu religion raising the issues like constructing and protecting the Hindu temples, opposing cow slaughter, opposing religious conversion of Hindus from Christian church. It also believes that it is an organization that is preserving the core values and sacred traditions Hindu society.¹²¹

As a protector and promoter of Hindu organization, it considers that Hindu religion in India is in danger because of 'catholic action' and 'Islamic Jihad'. More than 80% of Indian follow Hindu religion, the Interest of Hindus is the interest of nation. The majority interest should be protected at any costs. In his political paper 'Why Vishva Hindu Parishad', S.S. Apte, the first General Secretary of the VHP says "the only way for the Hindu society to save itself from the foreign onslaught of Christianity, Islam and communalism is to organize itself...hence Vishva Hindu Parishad"¹²². In 1996, the VHP under the President of V.H. Dalima and the working presidentship of Ashok Singhal issued the "Hindu Agenda" and argued all political parties to adopt it. The document strongly reiterated its beliefs on 'India as a Hindu Nation'¹²³. According to the VHP, the glorious ancient Hindu culture and civilization dominated by Muslim ruler before independence and the anti-national element of minority appeasement after the independence. This document talks about several other perspectives like the Article 370 in Indian Constitution, minority issue of Indian constitution, and the Place of worship (special provision) Act, 1991. The VHP argues that Article 370 in the Constitution of India spreads the myth of separating Jammu-Kashmir from India, so this article should be abrogated immediately. On the issue of minority, all the special rights granted on the behalf of minorities in the constitution of India should be available to all segments of the society, whereby social inequalities could be removed.¹²⁴ Place of Worship (Special Provision) Act 1991, prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for maintenance of the

120 Degvekar, M.P., "The Origin and Growth of Vishva Hindu Parishad," available from <http://vhp.org/organization/org-the-origin-and-growth-of-vishva-hindu-parishad> Internet, accessed 10 February, 2013.

121 Degvekar, M.P. "The Origin and Growth of Vishva Hindu Parishad."

122 Apte, S.S., "Why Vishva Hindu Parishad," available from <http://vhp.org/organization/org-why-vishva-hindu-parishad> Internet, accessed 10th February 2013.

123 Visva Hindu Parishad, "Hindu Agenda," Available from <http://vhp.org/organization/org-hindu-agenda> Internet, accessed 10th February 2013.

124 Visva Hindu Parishad. "Hindu Agenda."

religious character of any place of worship¹²⁵. It disagrees on this act of Indian Constitution, it further claimed that the act would either be amended or rescinded on the basis of unambiguous historic, literary and archaeological facts.

VHP is mainly known for its campaign to build a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya. The campaign to build a Hindu temple started with the huge mass mobilization around the country. VHP believes that the campaign came across the barrier of caste, cult, creed, language and provinces and strengthen the objective of VHP to develop the Hindu nationalism in India.

3.5 Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh and its principles:

Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh (RSS) is a Hindu organization in India founded in 1925 by Dr. Keshava Baliram Hedgewar. RSS believes that it is one of the biggest voluntary organizations of the world with more than 5 millions volunteers.¹²⁶

The purpose of this organization is to unite Hindus for the glory of India. The RSS believed in the uniqueness of India is rooted in spiritual heritage and cultural homogeneity, which is essentially Hindu. So awareness for the pride of Indian culture and spiritual heritage among the newer generation of India is the need of today.¹²⁷ The constitution of the RSS declares “the objective of the Sangh is to eliminate the differences in class from the Hindu society and to strengthen it on the basis of its culture and religion and to bring about its rejuvenation so that the Hindu society may be able to achieve all round prosperity of Bharat.”¹²⁸ RSS agreed that Indian society is diverse with many religions, language, and regional differences, because of this diverseness the Indian society is disorganized. So, it believed that only through the spiritual heritage and cultural homogeneity the Indian society can be organized to achieve social and material prosperity. Spiritual heritage and cultural homogeneity in Indian context can be achieved only with the Hindu way of life, the RSS claimed. In other words, the success of India is possible following Hindu culture and religion that is Hindu nationalism.

125 The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, available from http://indianchristians.in/news/images/resources/pdf/places_of_worship_special_provisions_act_1991.pdf Internet, accessed 10th February 2013.

126 Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh, “About RSS.” available from <http://www.sanghparivar.org/about-rss> Internet, accessed 20th February 2013.

127 Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh, “About RSS.”

128 Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh, “Constitution of Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh, available from <http://www.sanghparivar.org/about-rss> Internet, p. 23 accessed 10th February 2013.

The RSS in its early days disagreed with the Congress party's concept of freedom. Hedgewar, the founder of RSS believed that Congress's party concept of freedom is not sufficient to solve the problem of India. For him, India should adopt Hindu nationalism, which can guarantee the free and prosperous life of minorities. Although, the first two decades, RSS was also active in the anti-British struggle to remove foreign rule, under the broad umbrella of the Congress party. The RSS did not share the Congress party's commitment to non-violence and nationalism.¹²⁹ After independence, RSS was critical to Congress's policy of welfare of minority. Congress policy of welfare of minorities is not for equal opportunities, instead of bringing equalities in the Indian society, this treated Hindus as a second order citizens.¹³⁰

The RSS argued that the concept of 'secularism' in India. Secularism in India, in practice, meant anti-Hinduism. Secularism was originated in the western world as a reaction to theocratic hegemony of Pope and has no relevance to India. Secular state is opposed to the theocratic ones, but in India there has been no such history of conflict. Nation is a whole and living entity. It has lots of functions and one of them is statecraft. Secularism is one of the qualities of statecraft. If secularism mean not anti-religious but equal opportunities and belief for every religion then that is undoubtedly in tune with the spirit of Hindu nation. Then the word for such a state would be 'multi-religious' not 'secular'.¹³¹ The multi-religious state is Hindu state where it does not restrain one religion from another.

After the independence, the RSS realized its role in Indian politics, and it formed a political party named Bharatiya Jana Sangh. In 1951, the RSS member Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and S.P Mookerjee, a cabinet member of Indian National Congress government together formed Bharatiya Jana Sangh. According to Richard H. Davis Hindu Nationalism took the political form, and ideology of the RSS filled more effectively by Bharatiya Jana Sangh.¹³² One of the reasons behind the political engagement of the RSS was the exclusion of RSS members from the working committee of Indian National Congress. The Congress party took such action because of the assassination of Congress leader Mahatma Gandhi from RSS member Nathuram Godse in 1948. Later in 1975-1977 the emergency rule of Indira Gandhi banned all the political activities. To present a united opposition to Congress, Bharatiya Jana

129 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. "About RSS."

130 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, "Widening Horizons: Philosophy, Methodology, Progress and the Thrust of RSS," available from <http://www.sanghparivar.org/widening-horizons-philosophy-methodology-progress-and-the-thrust-of-the-rss-0> p. 7-8 Internet, accessed 15 March, 2013.

131 Golwaker, M.S. "Bunch of Thought," available from <http://www.sanghparivar.org/bunch-of-thoughts-msgolwalkar> p. 134-137, Internet, accessed 15 March, 2013

132 Davis, Richard H, "Cultural Background of Hindutva" available from <http://inside.harvard.edu/~rdavis/PDFs/hindutva.pdf> p. 16, Internet, accessed 15 March 2013

Sangh with other political parties merged to be Janata Party in 1977. But soon, the ideological fractions in Janata Party made the division, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was formed in 1980. The newly formed BJP maintained its close ties with RSS in ideology. The first president of BJP was the RSS member A. B. Vajpayee. Most importantly, the RSS ideology of Hindu nationalism was carried in political form through Bharatiya Jana Sangh after independence, and after 1980, BJP advanced the ideology more systematically.¹³³

While Bharatiya Jana Sangh and Bharatiya Janata Party carried the RSS ideology of Hindu nationalism in political form, Vishva Hindu Parishad according to Richard H. Davis carried the same ideology of the RSS in religious form.¹³⁴ VHP not only spread the Hindu nationalism of the RSS, it also added religious values in Hindu Nationalism along with the spiritual harmony and cultural homogeneity. Through VHP, the RSS not only strengthens Hindu society and spread Hindu values but also Hindu nationalism became strong in all aspects: spiritual, cultural, religious and political.

3.6 Conclusion

Nationalism, if means, the formation of state, determine to produce homogeneous culture, authorized histories shared symbols and authority, Indian Nationalism has two images. The first one is 'Indian Nationalism' by the Congress party. Second is from the BJP termed as 'Hindu Nationalism.' The Congress party's nationalism is similar to the 'Constitution of India.' The constitution of India has referred India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic that secures for all citizens: social, economic and political justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; equality of status and of opportunity; and promotes among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.¹³⁵ Article 25-28 in the constitution of India has discussed the role of religion. Article 28-30 talked about the rights of minority. 'Hindu Nationalism' was forwarded from the RSS. With the rise of the BJP Hindu nationalism it is a part of Indian politics. Hindu Nationalism countered with the Congress party's nationalism. This contest of Indian nationalism is manifested in the politics of India in the form of communal politics in the decades of 1990s.

133 Davis, Richard H. "Cultural Background of Hindutva."

134 Davis, Richard H. "Cultural Background of Hindutva." 18.

135 "Constitution of India, Ninety-Seventh Amendment 2011,"

4. POLITICAL STRATEGIES OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY AND INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE OUTCOMES.

4.1 Introduction:

Hindu nationalist organizations like the RSS and the VHP asserted the religious obligation to construct the sense of humiliation in Hindus reciting the 16th century constructed Mosque as an Islamic domination. They mobilized the religious ritual and mass mobilization to unite Hindus and claim a temple. The mass movement became a strategy to bid the political parties in the Hindu nationalist's attempt. Political parties also couldn't remain away from Hindu Nationalist organization's offer of Hindu votes.

4.2 Mass Movement: Prerequisite or wooing the electoral support

The purpose of Ayodhya centered mass movement is to construct a Hindu temple on the site of Babri Mosque for the Hindu unity. The initiation of the campaign to build a Hindu temple in Ayodhya is derived primarily from two organizations of India: Hindu Cultural organization the RSS and Hindu religious organization the VHP. As the campaign moved ahead, Indian National Congress participated in the initial phase¹³⁶, and the Bharatiya Janata Party in the later phase. The BJP's performs mass mobilization for a temple¹³⁷. It is often argued that the Congress party was not involved in the mass mobilization. The argument goes on, the Congress party believed on winning election from Hindu votes. But, the party believed in Muslims votes too. The Congress party's strategy to win both religious votes could not succeed because of the BJP's policy won the Hindu favor. The mass mobilization was the BJP's attempt.¹³⁸ The BJP with the Ayodhya centered mass movement focused on increasing the electoral support. In this section, I will discuss the purpose of uniting Hindus with a

136 Embree, Ainslie T, "The Function of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: To Define the Hindu Nation," in *Accounting For Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, eds. Marty Martin E. and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 617-618.

137 Basu, Amrita, "Mass Movement or Elite Conspiracy? The Puzzle of Hindu Nationalism," in *Making India Hindu: Religion Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. Ludden, David, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56

138 Hasan, Zoya, "Communal Mobilization and Changing Majority in Uttar Pradesh" in *Making India Hindu: Religion Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. Ludden, David, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 93.

temple in Ayodhya. I will analyze how the Congress party became the part of a temple. This chapter also analyzes the BJP's position on a building a temple through mass mobilization.

The conversion of lower caste Hindu to Islam and the increasing population of Muslim in India in early 1980s viewed as a threat to Hinduism from Hindu organizations like the RSS and the VHP.¹³⁹ The mass conversion of lower class Hindus to Islam in 1981 in a small village of Meenakshipuram, in the southern part of India, according to Jaffrelot, was hyped as an international Islamic conspiracy¹⁴⁰. An article published in *Indian Express* predicted that if the conversion like Meenakshipuram continued, the Hindu population in India will decline to minority by the year 2281 or 2231.¹⁴¹ The increasing population of Muslim in India also backed this prediction. Statistics shows that from 1941-1981 the growth rate in Muslim religion increased from 19.09% to 30.58% from 10% of total population to 12% where as Hindu population decreased from 85% to 82% of total population with the growth rate of 13.23% to 24.15%.¹⁴² For example, during the period *The National Family Health Survey* indicted that the fertility rate for a Muslim woman was 4.41%, it was 3.30% for a Hindu woman, meaning that in the average an Indian Muslim woman had one more child than a Hindu woman.¹⁴³

The growth of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in the early 1980s is another concern of Hindu organizations in India. The world witness the significant rise of Islamic fundamentalism most notably fundamentalism of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Iran and Taliban in Afghanistan in early 1980s. A parallel phenomenon like the militant fundamentalism of General Zia ul Haq in Pakistan, emergence of a terrorist group 'Student Islamic Movement in India' (SIMI) and the ethnic cleansing and forced relocation of 'Kashmiri Hindus' occurred in Indian society.¹⁴⁴ The majority of Muslim population did not turned to advocating violence or radical reform but still these factors fed into the perception of Hindu organizations that the Muslims are challenging the Hindus of India, and the excessive hype on the rise of Muslims population in Indian media helped to perceive the threat of Islamic fundamentalism in India.

139 Hasan, Zoya, "Communal Mobilization and Changing Majority in Uttar Pradesh," 90.

140 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, (New Delhi: Penguin Book, 1999), 340-342.

141 Quoted in Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, 342.

142 Nadadur, Anuj, "The Muslim Threat and the Bharatiya Janata Party's Rise to Power," *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, (Vol. 2 November 1 and 2, 2006), 89-90.

143 Nadadur, "The Muslim Threat," 89-90.

144 Nadadur, "The Muslim Threat," 92-93.

The enforcement of 'Hudood Ordinances' in 1979 under the rule of General Zia ul Haq was an example of severe punishment. The 'Hudood Ordinances' implies the amputation of right hand of the offender from the joint of the wrist by a surgeon for the penalty of theft, and amputation of right hand from the joint of the wrist and left leg from the ankle as the punishment of robbery, prohibition for drinking, flogging as punishment for adultery, and strict enforcement of Islam in all aspects of daily life. The Islamization of neighbouring Pakistan, according to Nadadur, demonstrated the adverse consequences engendered by an adaptation of Islamic fundamentalism. Thus there was heightened consciousness in Hindu organizations emerged as a reactionary response.¹⁴⁵

The rise of the extremist group 'Student Islamic Movement of India' (SIMI) draws the attention of the Hindu organizations of India in early 1980s.¹⁴⁶ SIMI was founded in 1977 by some of the Muslims students of Aligarh Muslim University. SIMI gathered some support from the grassroots level when it started to promote the 'land of Islam' converting Hindus to Islam in India. But soon SIMI was involved in the terrorist activities like attacking civilians and the police. The forced relocation of the Kashmiri Hindus from Jammu and Kashmir in the early 1980s by the terrorist group 'Laskar-e- Taiba' (LeT) was another factor strengthens the suspicion about Islamic fundamentalism as a threat to Hindus of India. Thousand of Kashmiri Hindu Pandit, the native people of Jammu and Kashmir, forced to flee the Kashmir, leaving behind their ancestral homes and properties.¹⁴⁷

The evils of fundamentalism and conversion of lower caste Hindu to Islam set the ideal time period for Vishwa Hindu Parisad and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to approach the Hindus of India for an unified Hindu Society. The propaganda about the Islamic threat led to the highly successful nation-wide mobilization "Sacrifice for Unity". The "Sacrifice for Unity" according to Platvoet, produced the geographic and demographic unity of Hindus in India¹⁴⁸. This campaign was started in November 1983, carried the three large processions. The first went from Hardwar to Kanyakumari, second from Gangasar to Somnath and third from Kathmandu to Rameshwaram. The processions covered an area of 85000 km connecting all the major Hindu religious centers, consisted of 60 millions participants and "taped religious music was played, prayers were said, and speeches were given by VHP-affiliated religious

145 Nadadur, "The Muslim Threat," 93.

146 Sikand, Yoginder, "Islamist Assertion in Contemporary India: the Case of the Students Islamic Movement of India," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (2003) 23.

147 Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 225.

148 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1999), 154.

leaders on the dangers of Hinduism.¹⁴⁹ The campaign used the Hindu ritual repertoire like the mother goddess, the sacredness of Ganges water and lord Rama to communicate the message of Hindu unity. VHP made it clear that those who did not participate in this Hindu ritual couldn't be seen as a part of the nation.¹⁵⁰

The "Sacrifice for Unity" lead by VHP strengthened the legitimacy of uniting Hindus and laid the groundwork for the ritual procession for making a Hindu temple at the site of Babri Mosque.¹⁵¹ In 1984, the VHP and the RSS together organized a liberation movement named "Sacrifice to liberate" the birthplace of lord Rama.¹⁵² The movement was played upon two themes. The first and foremost was to unite Hindus of India, and the second was to own the land of Babri Mosque for a Hindu temple. The movement started with a procession. Statue of lord Rama and his wife in a truck under the banner with the slogan "Bharat Mata Ki Jaya" (Hail to mother India) was performed from Sitamari to Ayodhya.¹⁵³ On the public meeting in Ayodhya, October 6 1984, VHP leader Mahanta A vaidyanath and former Indian National Congress Minister D. Khanna spoke about the need to unite Hindus all over the country. Although India had got independent in 1947, Hindus were still second-grade citizens who did not have access to their sacred place. The meeting also asked the public repeatedly to give their vote only to those parties who explicitly promised to give the Hindus their sacred place back¹⁵⁴.

The "Sacrifice for liberation" movement was planned before the parliamentary election to attain the political favor. To some extent, the VHP and the RSS were able to garner the political favor in their goal of uniting Hindus of India and making a Hindu temple. But the political environment prior to the 1984 parliamentary election changed because of the assassination of Indian National Congress president Indira Gandhi. Still the VHP and RSS got some political support from Indian National Congress especially when Rajiv Gandhi, the then president of Indian National Congress, claimed to support the RSS and VHP's goal of Hindu unity.¹⁵⁵ Indian National Congress participated in the parliamentary election of 1984 with two agendas: national unity and the need to save the country from internal and external enemies.

149 Plavoet, Jan. "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict" p. 204

150 Veer, P, Van der. "Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity" p. 662.

151 Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, 358.

152 Veer, P, Van der. "God Must be Liberated! Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya," *Modern Asian Studies* (Vol. 21, No. 2, 1987) 291.

153 Veer, P, "God Must be Liberated! Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya," 291.

154 Veer, P, "God Must be Liberated! Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya" 293.

155 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, p 329-30. Also in Hasan, Zoya. "Communal Mobilization and Changing Majority in Uttar Pradesh," 91.

Rajiv Gandhi's slogan in the election "Not Kashmir Desham, not Assam Desham, Not Telugu Desham but Bharat Desham" explicitly appealed the Hindu votes ¹⁵⁶. According to Zoya Hasan, congress for the first time tried to distance from Muslims. The appeal of congress for the "national unity" was suitable for the VHP and RSS to support Indian National Congress in the election. The support of RSS and the VHP turned Congress to adopt 'soft Hindutva' in Rajiv Gandhi Regime.¹⁵⁷ But the Congress party's 'soft Hindutva' interpreted as a political strategy to extent its support among the majority community. The Congress party's strategy of 'soft Hindutva' provided a massive win, 404 seats out of 514 in the 1984 election and Bharatiya Janata Party was reduced in two seats.

The heavy defeat of the BJP in 1984 election is important to discuss for two reasons. First, the defeat in the election changed its leadership, second, the ideological transformation into integral humanism and Hindu Nationalism. In the leadership of Atal Vihari Bajpayee, the BJP was promoting democracy, positive secularism and protecting the religious rights of all the minorities. Although, the BJP had close tie with the RSS, in terms of leadership and more importantly the formation of the party was an attempt of the RSS to spread its ideology of Hindu nationalism politically. Vajpayee's mainstream opposition line to RSS had proven fruitless at a time when Congress was extraordinarily powerful, aggressive and majoritarian and when RSS proved reluctant to support the party. BJP, under the leadership of Vajpayee tried distance with the RSS ideologies of Hindu Nationalism ¹⁵⁸. BJP supporters and party members accused leadership and the ideologies for the huge defeat in the parliamentary election of 1984. Thus, the BJP borrowed integral humanism and Hindu Nationalism from the RSS as the basic ideologies in the new leadership of L.K. Advani. Hereafter, the BJP was an important member of Sangh Parivar, the RSS and the VHP are also the vital members of Sangh Parivar. Still the BJP was not entered into the Ayodhya issue.

The Vishva Hindu Parisad undertook yet another campaign in 1989 to liberate their deity Rama from the Muslim imprison of Babri Mosque. The campaign was started in the early January named as bhumi puja (worship of sacred land) and Ram Silan Puja (blessing of the bricks for Rama temple). In June 1989, from the National executive meeting of Palampur, the Ayodhya issue became the official ideological inventory of BJP. According to Hansen "however the Ayodhya issue was not a front issue in the first place, but quoted as one

156 Pioneer, December 18, 1984 citation found in Hasan, Zoya, "Communal Mobilization and Changing Majority in Uttar Pradesh," 91.

157 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s with a New Afterword*, 329-30.

158 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 159.

of several examples of congress's lingering weakness and subservience to Muslim pressure."¹⁵⁹ In its Palampur National Executive Committee, the BJP resolved:

The national Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party regards the current debate on the Ram Jnana Bhumi issue as one which has dramatically highlighted the callous unconcern which the Congress party in particular, and the other parties in general, betray towards the sentiments of the overwhelming majority in this country and Hindus...The sentiments of the people must be respected and the Rama Janmasthan handed over to the Hindus¹⁶⁰

The launching of Ram Shila Pujan marked the beginning of new series, the BJP's leaders were appointed to the central committee of the RSS, and high-level co-ordination between the BJP and the RSS leadership was then fully formalized.¹⁶¹ Like "The Sacrifice for Unity" the design of Ram Shila Pujan aimed to replace the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya with a newly constructed temple to god Rama. During the procession the leaders from the RSS, the VHP and the BJP reached out to thousands of villages and towns with their mobilizing rituals to of bricks to build a temple. Village elders or local priests consecrated the bricks and at the same time leaders approached the local peoples for financial help to build a temple. The bricks were worshipped for several days and then wrapped in saffron clothes, started to arrive Ayodhya. An article in *Indian Express* mention that almost 300000 pujas were performed and more than 100 millions of people attended the processions.¹⁶² Richard H. Davis states "no Hindu temple has ever been built with such a heterogeneous assortment of building materials, nor has the sponsor of temple ever so explicitly involved the public as a large in the building scheme."¹⁶³ The movement begins to gather momentum for building a temple and intellectual attention for upcoming parliamentary election scheduled at the end of the year.

BJP entered into the parliamentary election campaign of 1989 mainly with two strategies. First, BJP started exposing Indian National Congress weakness like bofors¹⁶⁴ scandal, pseudo-secularist position, and, last but not least, its objective of a Hindu temple in Ayodhya.¹⁶⁵ Second, the systematic promotion of VHP and Bajrang ¹⁶⁶Dal leaders as for the

159 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 160.

160 Basu, Amrita, "The Dialectics of Hindu nationalism," in *The Success of India's Democracy*, ed Kohli, Atul. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 169.

161 *India Today*, 31 March 1990 cf found in Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 16

162 *Indian Express*, 11 October 1989 citation found in Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 16.

163 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 41.

164 Bofors scandal was one of the major corruption scandal in India in 1980s and 1990s. For detail study Sanghvi, Vijay, *The Congress: Indira to Sonia Gandhi*, (Delhi: Kalpaz Publication, 2006)

165 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 163.

166 Bajranga Dal is a sister-wing of the VHP. It was banned by the government of India after the demolition of Babri Mosque because of its militant activity.

BJP's candidate for the 1989 election.¹⁶⁷ But, it still remains doubtful whether one can establish any straightforward casual relationship between the mass attendance at the Ram Silan Pujan and the subsequent increase in votes for the BJP. The widespread theme of "Hindu Nationalism" from the RSS and the election campaign led by the VHP activist and the VHP sadhus enabled the BJP leadership to remain relatively moderate to Ayodhya issue.

The Congress party on the other side was already alarmed with the BJP's strategies. Intense accusation of corruption from opposition and opinion polls had indicated that the Congress party would fall short of a majority by a hundred seat, these calculations are enough to frustrate the Congress¹⁶⁸. In an attempt to counter the rising support of BJP, the Congress party entered into an agreement with the VHP to allow foundation ceremony for a temple at Ayodhya instead of Supreme Court's ruling stay order the status quo of the Babri Mosque. The Congress party attempted to appeal Hindus by securing the foundation ceremony for VHP on the adjacent land (distance of 60 meters from the front gate of Babri Mosque) to the Babri Mosque that was not in dispute.¹⁶⁹ Rajiv Gandhi proceeds to the election campaign with his appeal to the people that they vote for congress if they wish to bring the "Ram Rajya".¹⁷⁰ In 9th of November 1989, Rajiv Gandhi himself performed stone foundation ceremony. To celebrate this, Hindu supporters marched through the streets of north-India chanting "that Hindus whose blood does not boil has water in his vein, youth that does not serve Ramjanmabhumi is youth lived in vain."¹⁷¹ This was a huge victory for the RSS and the VHP because their goal of making a Hindu temple in Ayodhya came to the stage where political parties like the BJP and the Congress party correspond to the issue.

The strategy of Congress party to attract the Hindu votes couldn't succeed in the election of 1989. It suffered a major defeats, it had won 412 seats five years before reduced to 192 seats out of 537. This defeat of Congress was an event of historic significance because Congress had ruled continuously since 1947 except for 1977-1979, securing less than 200 seats is more remarkable for barely five years back the Party had secured more than two-third majority in the parliament. "The Ayodhya strategy" of party was the winning political gamble in 1984 election, could not flourished in 1989.

167 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 163

168 Sanghvi, Vijay, *The Congress: Indira to Sonia Gandhi*, (Delhi: Kalpaz Publication, 2006), 165.

169 Plavoet, Jan, "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict," 209.

170 Rama Rajya is an ideal state ruled by Rama. The concept of Rama Rajya was brought in Indian politics by Mahatma Gandhi. It is often called that the state of Rama was perfect, so Indian politics brought the perfect concept of Rama Raja. It is often compared with Platonic Ideal State. For further reading Rajagopal, Arvind, *Politics After Television: Religious Nationalism and Reshaping of the Indian Public*,

171 Plavoet, Jan, "Ritual As Confrontation: The Ayodhya Conflict," 209

The BJP emerged as the third biggest political party with 89 seats in the parliament. Five years before the party had suffered a humiliating defeat, and result in 1989 marked a decisive breakthrough in the history of the party. Does this victory have any connection with the "Ayodhya strategy"? As soon as the BJP entered into the Ayodhya issue in 1989 from its Palampur meeting, the party was the important part of Ram Silan Pujan along with VHP and RSS. The strategy to promote the VHP leader and Hindu nationalist leaders as BJP's candidate in the election is an approach to cash the success of Rama Silan Punaj into votes. The BJP won 56 seats out of 89 from the routes of the Ram silan puja, that is to say the party was successful in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. In Gujarat, the BJP had 12 candidates, all those 12 candidates won the election, and in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, where it won respectively 13 seats out of 25, 3 out of 4 and 27 out of 40 candidates¹⁷². So it is very logical to claim that BJP had cashed the Ram Silan Pujan in votes.

The BJP deliberately put up a majority of its candidate from the ranks of Hindu Nationalist activists. Lokendra Singh won the election from Madhya Pradesh. He was a patronage of the VHP in his district. Prahald Singh Patel was the general secretary of the Bajrang Dal (youth wing of the VHP) won the election from Seoni. The majority of the BJP's victorious candidates were the RSS members among them the veterans such as P. Khadelwal, S. Jatiya, P.C Verma, L.N. Pandey, Baburao Puranjpe, R. L. Savala, and Sukhendra Singh.¹⁷³

The BJP's participation in the temple movement and the surprising election result inspired the party and the top leadership to use the Ayodhya issue to lead the party. The attempt of making a Hindu temple and implementing Hindu Nationalism is yet not accomplished for the VHP and the RSS, but the success in nationalizing the Ayodhya issue allow them to plan a much larger, more dramatic movement to Ayodhya.

In September 25, 1990 Sangh Parivar started 10000 kilometers 'Ram Rath Yatra' (chariot procession) from Somanath to Ayodhya. Literally, the chariot procession is a Toyota van carrying the statue of Ram, redecorated as a strange looking chariot travelled to the different parts of the country. The Rama's chariot looked like the chariot of Rama in the popular television serial Ramayana. The religious symbols were widely used like the symbols of 'Saffron flag'¹⁷⁴ and the BJP's 'Lotus flower'¹⁷⁵. The participants of the procession were

172 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to 1990s*, 405.

173 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to 1990s*, 405

174 Saffron flag is the flag of RSS, It is a flag of Hindu religion which symbolizes the sense of sacrifice for the sake of religion

175 Lotus flower is the BJP's election symbol.

chanting the slogans for building a Hindu temple. To quote Richard H. Davis "intellectually the chariot procession looks like Toyota Hinduism".¹⁷⁶ Rhetorically the Rama Chariot has greater significance. The movement was organized to conduct a mass contact, and to continue the moral pressure to the government authorities for the legal claim of a temple in Ayodhya.¹⁷⁷

The route and date of the procession was well designed by the BJP and the RSS for political benefits. The procession would pass through the maximum number of north Indian states where the BJP was electorally powerful in 1989 election and it would also pass through the southern India Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh where the BJP was not powerful. According to Davis the geographical journey of Rama's procession tried to cover the primary electoral target of BJP campaigning.¹⁷⁸ The Sangh Pariwar deliberately took Somnath as the starting point of the procession, Panikkar states¹⁷⁹. Somnath, was the site of the most famous episode of temple destruction in India in 1026 A.D. Muslim rulers. The ruined temple of Somnath was rebuilt in 1950. This symbolizes the supremacy of Hindu culture in the state of Gujarat. The BJP's leader Advani portrayed that reconstruction of Hindu religious center in Somnath was the first chapter in the journey to preserve old symbols of unity, communal amity, and cultural oneness, and the liberation of Ramjanmabhumi would be the second.¹⁸⁰ According to the schedule, the Rama's procession would depart from Somnath during the major Hindu festival of Navaratri (nine nights) and would arrive in Ayodhya on Debothan Ekadasi (holy day in Hindu religion).¹⁸¹ On these auspicious days several hundred thousands of Hindu people used to come to the religious centers. So, procession was targeting to show the big mass participation to the government authorities. The BJP would reach to its goal of addressing larger audience and to assure its commitment for a Hindu temple in Ayodhya.

Rama's procession demonstrated the mixture of two different characters: religious character of the VHP and the political character of the BJP. VHP as a Hindu organization was religious, militant, and anti-Muslim.¹⁸² The VHP members were wearing the saffron-colored cap, chanting the name of Rama, carrying the banners "protect women, temples and religion from the irreligious". They were holding the primitive weapons like 'bows' and 'tridents', shouting the anti-Muslim slogans like "Babar ke santar Pakistan Jao" (Muslims go to Pakistan), "Ram Mandir Wahi Banayenge"(Construction of a temple only at the Birthplace of

176 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 29.

177 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 29.

178 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 43.

179 Panikkar N.K, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization," 49.

180 Vijapukar 1990, 29. Citation found in Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 43.

181 Davis, Richard H "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 44.

182 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 42.

Rama). The VHP followers looked like the monkey army of lord Rama marched for the religious war. But the BJP, on the other side is very political, disciplined and inclusive in nature. Advani was leading the chariot procession and his every speech delivered the same message, a temple in Ayodhya for the cultural unity and communal harmony. The party also publicly scolded the VHP for overzealousness and urged them to put away their militant nature. Unlike the VHP, Advani was aware that the success of the procession lies on reaching larger audience with moderate political message. The BJP leadership tried to distance from the widespread demonizing of Muslims by practicing more inclusive policy. The driver of the procession was a Muslim, and the procession stopped in the Muslim holy cites where Advani showed his aggression to the "politics of appeasement".¹⁸³ Although, the movement was demanding the legal claim of Babri Mosque, present-day Indian Muslims are not responsible for the fanatics and mass murderers of the past. *Times of India* reported that Prime Minister V.P Singh believed that the BJP had hijacked the procession and removed all the threatening aspects and utilized the procession for optimal political benefits.¹⁸⁴

Ayodhya movement became the key strategy of the BJP again in 1991 election. The election strategy of the BJP is almost the continuation of the previous election. Most notably, the BJP started the election campaign with the mobilization of religious community invoking their religious identity and selecting the religious leaders for election candidate. Swami

Chinmayanand became popular in the Ayodhya movement, stood in the election from Badayun, Uttar Pradesh as a BJP candidate, which was Congress dominated constituency.¹⁸⁵ The religious leader who stood as a candidate from the BJP appealed the Hindus to vote for Rama. As Pannikar says, the main purpose of these candidates is to cash the devotion of Rama into votes.¹⁸⁶ The strategy of the BJP to translate the devotion of Rama into votes is relatively successful, eight religious leaders entered into the parliament from the BJP in 1991 election. Swami Sakshiji from Mathura and Farrukbad, Swami Sureshanand from Jaleswar, Vishwanath Das Shastri from Sultanpur, Yogendra Saraswati from Bhind, Swami Ram Vilas Vedhanti from Pratapgarh are some of the religious leaders elected as the member of parliament from the BJP.¹⁸⁷

183 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 42.

184 *Times of India* citation found in Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 42.

185 B.N., Sinha, "Swami Campaign in India Election," available from <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=837> Internet, accessed 12 February 2013.

186 Panikkar N.K, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization," 52.

187 B.N., Sinha, "Swami Campaign in India Election,"

Hindu nationalist movement yet not achieved its goal from the RSS and the VHP's angle but movement placed the BJP as a major political force in Indian politics. One of the factor in the quick transformation of the BJP as a major political force is the route of the Rama's chariot procession. The BJP's vote increased to 15.90% in 1991 election from 11.70% of 1989 election in the state of Bihar. In Gujrat, Krnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh the BJP's vote increased respectively 50.40% from 30.4%, 28.8 from 26%, 41.9% from 39.7%, 29.6% from 25%, 40.9% from 29.6%, 32.8% from 7.6% of total votes. In all India the BJP won 120 seats in the parliament increasing its votes to 20% from 11.4 %.

For the several years, the Congress party had used the Ayodhya issue for the political benefits. For example in 1984 it was the Congress party who secured two third majority in the parliament. There might be some other reasons behind the massive victory of Congress but it is argued that one of the reasons is "Ayodhya Strategy" backed from the Hindu nationalists and manifested in the slogan of 'national unity'. Five years later, Congress didn't stood behind allowing the VHP for stone foundation ceremony, and forwarding the model of "Rama Rajya". Although, the result in 1989 was pretty disappointing for the party, but there is no doubt that for the Congress party, Ayodhya strategy was to hold the electoral power. After 1989, Ayodhya movement reached into its peak, the BJP came into frontline through the Rama's chariot procession. The RSS and the VHP were looking more strong words from the Congress party. "Soft Hindutva" in not enough to please Hindu nationalist movement to approve the Hindu votes. Congress activities to hold both Muslims and Hindus took away the party from Ayodhya movement. What congress could do is attract the Hindu votes and criticize the chariot procession.

The Congress party criticizes the BJP for misleading the procession to political form. The BJP's election symbol "lotus" in the Rama's chariot was the matter of political debate. Congress party ironically accused the BJP "when did Rama move with the election symbol?" Congress filed a case in the Election Commission for the use of election symbol for the religious purpose.¹⁸⁸

The electoral success of the Hindu religious leader in earlier election also influenced the Congress party to counter the BJP. So, in 1991 parliamentary election the Congress party too, promoted Hindu religious leader as a candidate. Swami Pawan Diwan as a Hindu nationalist leader tried to appeal Hindu votes in favor of Congress party.¹⁸⁹ As a Congress

188 Davis, Richard H, "The Iconography of Rama's Chariot," 33

189 B.N., Sinha, "Swami Campaign in India Election,"

candidate from Mahasamund, Madhya Pradesh, Diwan criticized the BJP and the VHP's temple movement as communal design.¹⁹⁰ Another important Hindu nationalist leader, Shankarachariya Swaroopananda galvanized the wide support in favor of Indian National Congress. He repeatedly claimed that it is Rahul Gandhi who is destined to build the Rama temple. Shankarachariya also accused VHP and BJP for not working seriously in Ayodhya issue.¹⁹¹

Congress party's policy to grab the support from both Hindu and Muslim communities will be discussed later.

4.3 Politics of Secularism and Pseudo-secularism:

The attempt of making a Hindu temple at Ayodhya brought a debate of secularism and pseudo-secularism. In other words, all political parties- starting from the Congress party to Communists, Muslim leagues to the BJP tried to admit the secular character, no matter how they practiced the politics.¹⁹² First, I will describe what is secularism and pseudo-secularism in Indian context. Second, I will illustrate the secular and pseudo-secular perspective of Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party. And at last I will show how this became the political strategy in the assertion of temple movement.

Secularism, according to Srikanth "calls for complete separation of political and religious spheres by making religion as a personal preference of the individual concerned. While guaranteeing individual's right to religion, these secular states decline to support any religion as the state religion."¹⁹³ That is to say, secularism denotes the religious neutrality that state should treat all the religions equally. Indian political scientist, Subhash, has mentioned that the implementation of secularism prevails in various ways: First, the pluralist view where state supports all religions equally, second, the western view asserts state's absolute independent from religious confessions and the third is nationalist view in which state support the development of a superordinate "civil religion". Although these concepts are time competing, at least in theory the second one prevails in India, he further expressed.¹⁹⁴

190 B.N., Sinha, "Swami Campaign in India Election,"

191 B.N., Sinha, "Swami Campaign in India Election,"

192 Srikanth. H, "Secularism Versus Pseudo-secularism: An Indian Debate," available from <http://dspace.nehu.ac.in/handle/1/4651> Internet, accessed, 12 March, 2013, 23.

193 Srikanth. H, "Secularism Versus Pseudo-secularism: An Indian Debate," 22.

194 Subhas, Manju, *Rights of Religious Minorities in India*, (New Delhi: National Books organization, 1988), 141. Citation found in Schwalke, Johannes, "Secularism for the State and Religion for the People? Consideration on the Intertwinement of Religion, Law and Politics in India and Europe," *Asian Journal of Public Affairs*, (Vol. 4, No. 2, 2012), 15.

Secularism in India contradicts to the idea of state's absolute independent from religious confessions because of the contested of uniform civil code and religious/personal civil code.¹⁹⁵ Article 44 of constitution of India "state shall endeavor to secure the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India."¹⁹⁶ 'Uniform civil code of India' is a term refers to the civil law code, which administers the set of secular law for all people irrespective of their religion caste and tribe. The areas covered by the Uniform civil code are laws related to acquisition and property, marriage, divorce and adoption. In India, personal laws govern religious groups, according to the religious tenets. And huge varieties of codices co-exist. The Hindu marriage Act (1956), the Hindu Succession Act (1956), the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956) regulate the Hindu family law. The Hindu Acts also apply to the Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains as well since they are regarded as "offshoots of Hindu religion and philosophy". In the case of Muslims, the Muslim Personal (Shariat) Application Act (1937) based on the sharia applied. For Parsis, the Parsi Marriage Act (1936) and for Christians, Indian Christian Marriage Act (1872) is functioned.¹⁹⁷ These personal laws are comprehensive and have to be used in ordinary courts through out the country for all adherents to the respective religious groups.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, with regard to Article 44 of the constitution, these various personal laws steady source of inequality in a democratic and secular state.

Bipin Chandra points out, the term 'pseudo-secularism' implies that those who profess to be secular are really not so but anti-religious or pro-religious.¹⁹⁹ Pseudo-secular form of secularism is hideous and hypocritical in character, while professing to be a secular, pseudo-secular state favors certain religion above others.

The BJP Party criticizes the for dividing the nation by continuous harping on "minority protection". According to Advani, India is not a theocratic state, the religious rights and identities of the various faith based communities should be protected but notion of 'majority' and 'minority' should have no place in the politics and statecraft.²⁰⁰ The Congress party was found protecting the religious rights and the identities of minorities in the "Shah Banu Case". Shah Banu, 62 years old Indian Muslim woman was divorced by her husband and denied for the alimony according to the Article 25 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Shah

195 Schwalke, "Secularism," 16.

196 "The Constitution of India," 23.

197 Schwalke, "Secularism," 17.

198 Diwan, Paras, "Family Law," in *The Indian Legal System*, ed Joseph Minattur (New York: Oceana Publication, 1979), 634.

199 Citatin found in Aiyar, Mani Shankar, *Confession of a Secular Fundamentalist*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd., 2006), 25.

200 Advani, Lal Krishna, "Secularism vs Pseudo-Secularism," available from <http://www.lkadvani.in/eng/content/view/381/349/> Internet, accessed 1 March, 2013.

Banu filed a case in the Supreme Court of India claiming she was the victim of sharia (Islamic rule) and demanded her rights for alimony. Supreme Court applied the appeal to secular law and granted the extended alimony from her husband. The decision of Supreme Court contested with the Muslim Personal Law, that is Sharia law. The Muslim Personal Law allows the alimony only for three months after the divorce. The decision of Supreme Court became the huge matter of discussion among the Muslim communities of India and they were dissatisfied with the decision.

Indian Parliament in 1986 nullified the Supreme Court's ruling with the establishment of Muslim Women (Protection of Rights of Divorce) Act.²⁰¹ The BJP's matter of concern was the step taken from the Congress party to nullify the ruling of the court. The BJP also blamed that the Congress party's decision to appease the Muslim and to secure the votes. Here, the Congress party seems pro-religious supporting particular religious community, which is the pseudo-secular nature according to the BJP.

The BJP leader Advani has expressed that the assertion of making a Hindu temple is a cultural movement to unite the Hindus asserting the emancipation of Hindu culture from the onslaught of medieval vandals and pseudo-secular and pseudo-intellectual elements.²⁰² The Congress's pseudo-secular position was also interpreted as anti-Hindu. Muslims are only the captive voters of pseudo-secular political party. It is because of dual nature of secularism Muslims and other minorities had the sense of insecurity and the feelings of separateness. The BJP also appeals the Muslim communities and Hindus of India to come under the cultural nationalism of the party who regards Hindus and Muslim as the equal citizen.²⁰³

According to Indian National Congress, BJP's model of secularism came to be equated with the allegory of Hinduism. The BJP's definition of Hinduism does not mean the religion but the cultural identity, is not other than the "Hindu Jihad" for the Congress party leader Mani Sankar Aiyar. Aiyar further criticizes the BJP's secularism for its exclusive nature. The BJP wanted to give a 'consciousness of being Bharatiya (Indian-ness) to the Hindus of India but it is not concerned providing the same 'Bharatiya' to the minorities of India.²⁰⁴ The BJP's effort of maintaining secularism and democracy on the support of Hindu majority is classified as "pseudo-secularism" or even "anti-secularism". The BJP has no commitment to freedom of

201 Schwalke, "Secularism," 18.

202 Advani, Lal Krishna, "Secularism vs Pseudo- Secularism,"

203 Bharatiya Janata Party, "White Paper on Ayodhya Debate and Rama Temple Movement," 114.

204 Aiyar, Mani Shankar, "Confession of a Secular Fundamentalist," 17-37.

religion in fact they aspire for a Hindu state with all legal implications like cow protection and a “saffronization of culture”.²⁰⁵

The BJP does not seek to eliminate Muslims of India but it wants them to accept basically Hindu flavor of India. The BJP’s secularism defines a Muslim, a Christian and a Sikh as a Hindu-Muslim, a Hindu-Christian, a Hindu-Sikh. The BJP, according to the Congress does not understand the desperate need of the minorities to adhere and assert their identity. Instead the BJP sees the Congress act of sensitivity to minority concerns as ‘appeasement’ and every assertion by the minorities of their respective ways of life as a denial of justice to the majority.²⁰⁶

The Congress decisions of unlocking the gate of Babri Mosque, allowing the foundation stones of the proposed temple to be laid near the disputed area, launching the party’s 1991 electoral campaign from Faizabad, a town near Ayodhya, were aimed at arousing the sentiment for electoral proposes, but had the effect of compromising the secular principle of separation of religion and politics. The pure religious issue was nationalized from the Congress party to appease the majority community who were unhappy with the Congress decision to overturn the Shah Bano court verdict. The congress policy in appealing both Hindu and Muslim community through different political strategies encouraged the BJP to intensify its campaign of “Ayodhya Movement”.

205 Aiyar, Mani Shankar. “Confession of a Secular Fundamentalist,” 17-37.

206 Aiyar, Mani Shankar, “Confession of a Secular Fundamentalist.” P. 17-37.

4.4 Politics of Ramjanmabhumi or Babri Mosque:

The attempt of a Hindu temple at the site of Babri Mosque is a political struggle for legal claim of the land of Babri Mosque. In wider level, it is a political struggle of Hindu nationalist party to unite the Hindus of India constituting a Hindu consciousness for holding the power. The BJP leaders repeatedly claimed that the reason behind the struggle for Ayodhya is to unite among the Hindus for the self-respect of Hindus.²⁰⁷ For uniting Hindus, Hindu nationalist party, the BJP came with the strategy of 'Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Mosque' debate. The political strategy of the Hindu nationalist party to anchor the Mosque-temple debate in the religious faith of Hindus and encouraged them to participate in the religious obligation.²⁰⁸ The Mosque-temple controversy was firmly anchored in the religious faith and projected as a religious obligation of Hindus of India. According to Panikkar, a believing Hindu could not easily dissociate himself from his religious obligation, that is to say, he involves in his religious duty directly or indirectly.²⁰⁹

The mythic history of temple-mosque controversy derived a sacred duty and inherited obligation to the Hindus of India.²¹⁰ There are several mythic histories about Ayodhya as a birthplace of Rama like the myth of ancient Ayodhya, the myth of loss and its rediscovery, the myth of the destruction of the temple and construction of the mosque, the myth for the popular movement for the recovery of the birthplace and etc. The assertion of a Hindu temple at Ayodhya flows from these mythic history. The politics of these mythic histories is that it presents the Muslim rulers as the forces of evil like tyrannical, destructive and repressive and Hindus as archetypal hero who fought for the justice and order to liberate the birthplace of Rama from the Muslim zealots.²¹¹ Mythic histories of Ayodhya also criticized the Muslim rulers for the decline of India from the age of civilization to the age of barbarism.²¹² At last, but not least, mythic history of Ayodhya intruded the sense of humiliation in the Hindu psyche. Babri Mosque stands as a shame to the honor and prestige of the Hindus.²¹³

Rajmata Scindia, the BJP leader, told that Hindus have been fighting for the recovery of the Rama's birthplace for centuries. Thousands of Hindus perished in an attempt to liberate

207 Bhattacharya, Neeldari, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhumi," in *Anatomy Of A Confrontation: Ayodhya and the Rise of Communal Politics in India*, ed. Gopal, Sarvepalli (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1991), 126.

208 Panikkar N.K, "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization," 53-54

209 Panikkar N.K. "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization," 54

210 Bhattacharya, Neeldari, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhumi," 135.

211 Bhattacharya, Neeldari, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhumi," 133.

212 Bhattacharya, Neeldari, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhumi," 133

213 Puniyani, Ram, "Abode of Ram or House of Allah-Babri Masjid Ram Janambhumi Dispute," 4

the birthplace.²¹⁴ This is an attempt to appeal the emotions of the people and play with their religious feelings. The BJP's efforts to describe the long and unfinished struggle for a Hindu temple imposed a religious obligation to the Hindus of India.

The assertion of building a Hindu temple at the site of Babri Mosque strengthens with the broadcasting of TV-serial 'Ramayana' in the national television channel Doordarshan in 1987. Tele-serial 'Ramayana' is a story about Rama, the king of Ayodhya, and his goodness. The broadcasting of a television serial 'Ramayana' is analyzed from two perspectives: how the serial assists on the unity of Hindus and how it generated the religious obligations on Hindus for the Ayodhya movement. And the political strategy in broadcasting the 'Ramayana' will be discussed.

The serial 'Ramayana' was made in 78 weekly episodes and the total viewers of the serial were 40-80 millions per week.²¹⁵ More importantly, watching 'Ramayana' has become a religious ritual. Televisions were decorated like a god, youngsters were admonish to take bathe before the show and housewives put off serving meals so that the family is purified and fasting before the show.²¹⁶ Lutgendrof describes the popularity of the serial:

Visible manifestations of the serial's popularity included [...] cancellation of Sunday morning shows in cinema halls for lack of audiences, the delaying of weddings and funerals to allow participants to view the serials, and the eerily quite look of many cities and towns during screenings [...]. Bazaars, streets and wholesale markets became so deserted they appeared to be under curfew [...] trains were delayed when passengers refused to leave the platform until a broadcast was over.²¹⁷

The tele-serial gave the Hindus great pride in their Hindu identity. It also evoked a strong nostalgia among the Hindus for a glorious past in which state was benevolent and the rulers were honest.²¹⁸ Every episode of the serial began with a disclaimer claiming that its narrative was derived from several regional versions. This disclaimer, according to Purnima, imposed a master narrative of a unified Hindu community emphasizing that commonalities among the different versions of Rama is possible then why not among Hindu communities?²¹⁹

Most importantly, the 'Ramayana' supported the Hindu nationalist faith by showing the lord Rama's birthplace in the ancient city of Ayodhya. As soon as the 'Ramayana'

214 Organiser, 6 July 1986. Citation found in Bhattacharya, Neeldari, "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhumi," 135.

215 Rajagopal, Arvind, *Politics After Television: Religious Nationalism and Reshaping of the Indian Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 84.

216 Lutgendrof P, "Ramayan: The video," *The Drama Review*, (34. 2 1990), 136.

217 Lutgendrof P, "Ramayan: The video" 136-137.

218 Mankekar, Purnima, "Epic Contests: Television and Religion Identity in India," in *Media Words: Anthropology on New Terrain*, eds. Ginsburg, Faye D, Lala Abu- Lugdod and Brian Larkin (Los Angeles: University of California, 2002), 144-145.

219 Mankekar, Purnima, "Epic Contests: Television and Religion Identity in India," 145.

portrayed the Hindu culture as a national culture, Hindu nationalist's attempt of building a Hindu temple strengthened. For Hindus, the temple in Ayodhya became an admiration. More essentially, Ayodhya movement got the prestige, visual symbols and a language to express itself from the tele-serial 'Ramayana'. Rajagopal reports "in launching of one procession from Delhi to Ayodhya, volunteers looked like the television version of Rama and his brother Lakshman, with their bows strung, posed for photographers in front of bricks intended for the proposed Rama temple".²²⁰ Not only the volunteers influenced from the 'Ramayana', the participants were also influenced from 'Ramayana'. Most of the participants of the Ayodhya movement were religiously obliged. The procession was hyped like the lord Rama itself and disobeying the chariot procession is equal to disobeying the Rama.²²¹

The broadcasting of the 'Ramayana' is an attempt of Indian National Congress to address the Hindus of India. The Congress party was in desperate pressure from the result of the Shah Bano Case. Although, the Muslims of India were very much pleased with the decision, Hindu nationalist started to advertise the Congress party's decision as anti-Hindu and pseudo-secularist. So, the Congress party wanted to identify not as anti-Hindu. The party broadcasted the 'Ramayana' thinking that it would help to widen the support-base, identifying itself with the glories of mythical kingdom.²²² S.S Gill, the Congress minister of Information and Broadcasting in Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet, had encountered considerable resistance from the other members of the television but he claimed that broadcasting of the serial has a larger plan of strengthening the national integration.²²³ Broadcasting the 'Ramayana' was not the part of Hindu Nationalists and the BJP. Although the party has identified with Hindu symbols before, it has officially adopted the ideology of Hindu nationalism in 1989 then participated in the 'Ayodhya movement'. But the BJP has used popularity of the serial for the 'Ayodhya movement' and made use of it in uniting Hindus and electoral support. The 'Ramayana' helped in awakening the common Hindus and the BJP mobilized the religiously obliged mass for the reconstruction of Hindu temple in Ayodhya.

The archaeological findings in the excavation of the site of Babri Mosque supported the BJP's claim of Ayodhya as Rama's birthplace. There are equally debatable archaeological findings from the site of Babri Mosque. The archeologists are divided into three groups: the first claimed that there is archeological evidences which mark the site of Babri Mosque as a

220 Rajagopal, Arvind, *Politics After Television: Religious Nationalism and Reshaping of the Indian Public*, 30.

221 Mankekar, Purnima, "Epic Contests: Television and Religion Identity in India," 140

222 Rajagopal, Arvind, *Politics After Television: Religious Nationalism and Reshaping of the Indian Public*, 278

223 Mankekar, Purnima, "Epic Contests: Television and Religion Identity in India," 143.

birthplace of Rama and his temple and it was destroyed so that mosque could be erected, the second group claimed that archeological findings have no such evidence to claim the site as the birthplace of Rama and his temple, and the third is the neutral group who claimed that their professions should have no role in the politics²²⁴. The role of neutral archeologists may be very important in resolving the mosque-temple issue which is still pending in the Supreme Court of India. But, here I will deal only those archeologists who claimed that a site belongs to god Rama and his temple, and how they tried to legitimize the temple-mosque debate in the favor of Hindu Nationalists.

The *Indian Archaeology 1976-77: A Review* reports that Prof. B.B. Lal makes no mention of traces of any temple in the archeological findings from the Babri Mosque.²²⁵ But in 1990, fifteen years later when the temple-mosque debate was at the peak, Prof. Lal himself and professional archaeologists ASI director Dr. Y.D Sharma and K.M. Shrivastava claimed that the perceived errors about the archaeological findings of former times should be correct. They claimed that the inner boundary of the disputed site might have belonged to an earlier temple.²²⁶ Prof. Lal, after retiring from ASI, came with evidences supporting the existence of a temple in the debated area of the Mosque in a Hindu nationalist Publication *Manthan*, arguments goes on, why former ASI officer decided to publish the evidence in a Hindu nationalist publication instead of official ASI journal?²²⁷

In 1992 ASI involved in the excavation of the debated site of the mosque to find the evidences whether there is the traces of temple or not. Dr. Y.D Sharma and Dr. K.M Shrivastava who conducted the excavation claimed that the site might belong to an earlier temple. Kristine M. Romey claimed that these two members are appointed from the BJP's minister M.M. Joshi who was the Minister of Human Resources Development This shows the involvement of the Bharatiya Janata Party in its attempt for a temple and unite Hindus.²²⁸ The question of producing the credible archaeological evidences for the temple-mosque debate is linked to a political exploitation to strengthen the Hindu nationalist attempt of building a temple.

224 Ratnagar, Shereen, "Archaeology at the heart of a Political Confrontation: The case of Ayodhya," *Current Anthropology* (Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 2004): 239-259.

225 *Indian Archaeology 1976-77: A Review*

226 Ratnagar, "Archaeology," 239-259

227 Kristin M. Romey, "Flashpoint Ayodhya," in *Archaeological Ethics*, eds. Vitelli Karen D. and Chip Colwell-Chanlhaponh, (Oxford: Alta Mira Press, 2006), 105.

228 Kristin M. Romey, "Flashpoint Ayodhya," 112.

4.5 Communal Violence: Outcome of the attempt of a Hindu temple in Ayodhya:

In simple words, communal violence refers to the violence perpetrated across ethnic lines. The temple assertion movement from its early days brought the disturbance among the ethnic groups of India resulted into the death of thousands of people and often rated as the worst religious riots in the history of India since independence. Here I will describe some of the communal violence that has been occurred in 1980s and 1990s. My other task is to show the connection between temple movement and the communal violence.

The first major riot recorded in the Meerut, Uttar Pradesh in 1987 between Hindus and Muslims. Muslim communities were dissatisfied with the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's decision to open the lock of the Babri Mosque. They set fire to Hindus shops leading to a small scale of riot. What happened then is more disastrous. Hindus activists attacked the Muslims on their festival Ramadan. More than 100 peoples were dead. The violence was the product of the Hindu nationalist assertion of a temple at Ayodhya but the Congress party's appeasement policy has equally important role in triggering the riots. It's decision to open the lock is nothing other than to please the Hindus who were dissatisfy with the Congress after the Shah Bano case.²²⁹ The local police and Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) were found guilty in helping Hindu activist for intensifying the riots. Muslims activists were arrested protesting against the government carried in a truck and shot one by one from police and PAC. Congress party was in²³⁰ government in the state of Uttar Pradesh, so the party was also morally responsible for the illicit activities of administration.

The assertion for a Rama temple at Ayodhya created a communal tension throughout the state of Bihar in October 1989, more pervasive incident was seen in Bhagalpur, state of Bihar. The Bhagalpur riot occurred when the Rama silan procession passed through the Muslim majority area. The state government allowed the local Hindus to perform the processions in the Muslim majority areas ignoring the sensitiveness of the religious processions. The Congress party's federal government hesitated to stop the Rama silan procession fearing the loss of Hindu votes in the upcoming 1989 election even knowing the fact that procession passing through the Muslim areas might create the tensions.²³¹ According to Ashgar Ali Engineer 896 Muslims and 50 Hindus were dead and 106 people were still

229 Graff, Violette "Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots in India" in *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*. Available from http://www.massviolence.org/IMG/article_PDF/Hindu-Muslim-Communal-Riots-in.pdf Internet, accessed 12 February 2013 p. 3

230 Graff, Violette, "Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots in India II (1986-2011)," in *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, available from PDF version: http://www.massviolence.org/PdfVersion?id_article=591; Internet, accessed, 10 March 2013, 8-45

231 Jaffrelot, Christophe. "The Hindu Nationalist Movement," 369-400.

missing in the Bhagalpur riots.²³² Only after one week of the outbreak of Bhagalpur riots Rajiv Gandhi's government decided to stop the Rama silan procession. The state of had received a letter from the local administration requesting the replacement of the superintendent of police in Bhagalpur for his inability to reduce the violence but Rajiv Gandhi directly interfere in the issue and canceled the replacement. It is also said that this decision had the effect of instigating the violence.²³³ The Bhagalpur riots wouldn't have happened without the BJP's Rama silan procession but Indian National Congress is equally responsible for the instigating the riots for the political benefits.

Bharatiya Janata Party's Rama's chariot procession was often named as the 'chariot of fire'²³⁴ by the Indian media due to the tensions it created among Hindus and Muslims. In Gujarat, when the chariot procession passed through the Muslim areas, crowd went on anti-Muslim slogans. They even went on rampage looting of Muslim shops. In Uttar Pradesh, the Muslim threw stones and petrol bombs on a public meeting of Rama's Chariot procession. More than 50 people killed in the Hindu-Muslim violence in Karnataka. The communal harmony among Hindus and Muslims went on so miserable that the Chariot procession had to halt for a moment. Between 1 September to 20 November, more than hundred communal riots occurred all over the country in which more than 500 people were killed. Such a widespread communal violence was the result of non other than the hatred generated among Hindus and Muslims by the chariot procession.²³⁵

Communal riots occurred in the post Babri demolition periods in almost every parts of the country. It was the result of spontaneous reaction of Muslim mob who were wretched by the demolition of the place of worship, Babri Mosque. The Bharatiya Janata party itself described the hideous nature of the communal violence in the post Babri demolition era. The destruction of the place of worship in India didn't remain only the national issue. In a reaction, Hindus were attacked and their sacred places and cultural centers were damaged in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and United Kingdom.²³⁶ Justice Srikrishna Commission reported that the next phase of the riot occurred in Mumbai later month because of the communal propaganda disseminated by Hindu Nationalist organizations including BJP.²³⁷ It

232 Engineer, Asghar Ali, "Grim Tragedy of Bhagalpur Riots: Role of Police-Criminal Nexus," *Economic and Political Weekly* (Vol. 25, No. 6, Feb. 10 1990) p. 1

233 Graff, Violette, "Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots in India," 7.

234 Panikkar N.K. "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization" p. 51

235 Panikkar N.K. "Religious Symbols and Political Mobilization" p. 51

236 Bharatiya Janata Party, "White Paper on Ayodhya Debate and Rama Temple Movement," 43.

237 Srikrishna Commission or Justice B.N. Srikrishna Commission of Inquiry was constituted by the government of Maharashtra under Justice Srikrishna for investigating the causes of Mumbai riots. Citation found in Graff, Violette, "Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots in India," 19.

was a Hindu nationalists political strategy to divide and polarize the Hindus and Muslims politically to gain the electoral advantages. In Mumbai riots more than 1000 people were killed and an estimated \$3.6 billions of loss is recorded in property including production, sales and tax revenues. On the one side, the communal violence was the result of the assertion of temple in the site of Babri Mosque where as on the other side violence reached in its cruel level because of the Congress party's decision to remain silent in the violence²³⁸ for obtaining the Hindu favor.

4.6 Conclusion:

The Ayodhya movement that has started against the rising Islamic fundamentalism in India came to the stage of a religious extremism in terms of the mass violence and the division it created among the common Hindus and Muslims of India. Indian National Congress's strategy to bring Ayodhya issue can be analyzed as the strategy to win the election. The Congress party is the biggest promoter of secularism in India, but in some cases like a temple movement in Ayodhya, Saha Bano Case the party has somewhat different stand. The majority and minority politics of the Congress party and its nature to remain silent in the violence are the concerns of intellectuals. Bharatiya Janata Party marched in a temple movement for the cultural unity, communal amity and cultural oneness. But at the end its objective of a temple movement turned different. It has been committed to the assertion of a Hindu temple for the political benefits. Instead of communal amity, the assertion of a temple brought a huge discord among the religious communities of India.

²³⁸ Reheman, Asad Ur, "Hate Crimes in India: A Historical perspective," in *Hate Crime: The Global Politics of Polarization*, eds. Kelly, Robert J. and Jess Maghan (USA: Illinois University press, 1998), 130.

5. THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND POLITICS IN INDIA IN 1980S AND 1990S AND THE FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter will analyze the textual data examined in previous chapters with the theory of communalism. The main focus is given to analyze Ayodhya Movement in relation to religion and politics. The Indian politics of 1980s and 1990s has distinguished the society in regard with religion for the political benefits. The common people were the victim of the unified strategy of Hindu nationalist movement. A religious consciousness has been distributed to the common mass was ultimately turned into a false consciousness.

A separate analysis of all participants in a temple campaign will be done to see each participant from different perspectives, how they are related in spreading communalism. The future of Indian communalism and a solution is also a part of this section.

5.2 Ayodhya Movement as a mixture of religion and politics:

Communalism asserts that religious difference is fundamental distinction of the communities. The religious difference overrides social, political and economical differences of communities. One of the peculiar features of Ayodhya movement is a distinction of Indian community in terms of religion. It is often called that the conversion of lower caste Hindus in the southern part of India was the social issue. They converted into Islam to create a new social identity and to eradicate evils of caste system.²³⁹ Caste system in India is socially constructed and deeply rooted problem. 'Lasker-e-Taiba', a terrorist group protesting for an independent Kashmir was a political problem of the country.²⁴⁰ Associating the whole religious communities in a movement because of a group is a wrong attempt of Hindu nationalist organizations. So, Hindu nationalist organizations perceived the Indian community in terms of religion.

239 Jaffrelot, Christophe, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics*, 340-342.

240 Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 225.

Religious division of Indian society disregarding social and political distinction is also an important strategy of the BJP. The BJP's attempt to present Muslims rulers as a force of evil, repressive and extremist where as Hindus as the freedom fighter, peacemaker is the distinction of Indian society in terms of religion²⁴¹. A question could be raised to this argument. If Muslims were ruler and exploiter and the Hindus were ruled and exploited, it could be a class conflict between a ruler and the ruled. So, the Marxist analysis of class phenomenon of the Indian antiquity has equally important status like a religious analysis. The temple agitation interpreted the social and class conflict in terms of ideological way.

The BJP, on the one side claimed that India has always remained Hindu, whether the state was controlled by Mughals²⁴² Portuguese, French, or English. On the other side, it blamed Muslims rulers for the destruction of more than 300 temples in medieval period. The BJP's vision is to see destruction of temples only from the religious perspective. If Muslims had invaded India, there might be lots of physical and infrastructural damage. Temples also could be a part of destruction. The military ethics like 'Just War Theory'²⁴³ might not be a part of those days. So, interpretation of temples destruction of medieval period is a ideological analysis of the BJP.

The BJP's interpretation of minority community in terms of religion also draws an attention. The concept of minority connotes something lesser in number and status that can be based on culture, ethnicity, nationality and religion²⁴⁴. Based on this argument, "Minority appeasement" and "minority protection" is equally a social and political phenomenon. So, the ideological distinction of Indian society is a part of a temple-mosque debate.

Once the society started to build up from the religious differences, the religious communities are manipulated to choose their leader from their own religious background. One of the distinct features of communalism is it assures the religious communities that their leader will work for the improvement of the religious society. The entire Ayodhya movement revolves into the same notion of communalism. However, the democratic survey in 1984 has a smaller amount of this feature but the 1989 and 1991 election used the very characteristic in explicit manner. Hindu nationalist organizations started to manipulate the Hindu communities

241 Bhattacharya, Neeldari. "Myth, History and the Politics of Ramjanmabhumi," P. 133.

242 Bharatiya Janata Party. "White Paper on Ayodhya Debate and Rama Temple Movememnt."

243 Just War Theory is a military ethics of war. It basic attempt is to conceive of how the use of arms might be restrained, made more humane, and ultimately directed towards the aim of establishing lasting peace and justice. Further reading. Lackey, Douglas P, *Principles and Nueclear Weapons*, USA: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1984.

244 Rajendra, Pandey, *Minorities in India: Protection and Welfare*, (New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation, 2001), 4-5.

to unite under the authority of Hindu nationalism. "Hindu Unity" and "a temple at Ayodhya" were the requirements of the VHP, RSS and the Hindu communities. The general election of 1984 can be analyzed from two perspectives. First, the Congress party's approval of "soft Hindutva" and "national unity" fulfilled the partial condition of the Hindu nationalists and Hindu communities. Second, the Congress party's victory is also a victory of Hindu Communities because they are supposed to favor the Congress party.

The promotion of religious leaders as the election candidate from both the BJP's and the Congress party was one of the strategies that strongly relates to the above feature of communalism. Hindu communities were deliberately asked to place their support to "Hindu Unity" and "a temple at Ayodhya". Who could be a best option for a Hindu temple and Hindu unity than the Hindu religious leaders? The highly successful election in the favor of religious leader resembles that the Ayodhya movement is a give and take process, give me a vote, and protect your rights, between religious communities and their leaders. Politicians, no matter who they are, should not be able to manipulate the public on a single issue like a religion. The Indian politics in 1980s and 1990s revolves on the issue of religion and manipulation, which is a strong feature of communalism, and of course, it is a manipulation of secular, democratic statecraft.

The other equally important aspect of communalism is the systematic promotion of religious differences result into incompatible relationship between two religious communities. When religious community elected their leader, leader also assured the community to work for them. This process posed a threat to a minority religious groups that elected leader from different religious group is a domination of their religious community. The relationship between two religious communities deteriorates. The Ayodhya movement brought disturbance in the Indian politics ensued the religious riots and took away the thousands lives. The evils of such riots went on continuously, it helped to polarize the society in terms of religion.

What is found in religious riots is the small scale of violence turns into disastrous because of the counter attack of the opponent religious group. The Meerut riot in 1987 triggered because of Rajiv Gandhi's decision to open the lock of the Babri Mosque for Hindu worshippers. Rajiv was an elected prime minister from 1984, also favored from Hindu Nationalists. Opening the lock of the mosque posed a threat to a Muslim religious group, they came into confrontation against the opponent and threw a bomb in a public meeting of Hindu Community, and the massive tragic occurred when the Hindus came into counter attacked and killed hundreds of Muslims in a holy day of Ramadan (Ramadan in one of the commonly

celebrated Muslims festivals). Under communalism, electing a leader to protect the religious rights not only seized the same rights but also the common human rights are threatened.

5.3 Ayodhya movement as an explicit use of history and myth:

Communal interpretation of myth and history is another important aspects of communalism. Communal interpretation, here, means the attempt to separate the communities in terms of religion and religious ideologies. Indian politics, especially the modern period of 1980 and 1990s, incorporated some aspects of past ideology and historical background to form a new political discourse. The discourse of secularism, mythic history, history of Ayodhya and Ramayana are some of the notable antiquity in national political arena.

The debate of secularism started from the Congress party's policy of minority welfare. The anti-congress organizations like the VHP, the RSS and the BJP, argued the reliability of the Congress party's model of secularism relating it as a western concept and originated centuries ago as a reaction against the theocratic rule of Pope. The Congress party's model of secularism became a new political discourse when it was accused with "minority appeasement", "pseudo-secularist" and even the cause of discrimination restricting millions of faiths in a place of worship. The BJP's model of secularism also accused with the allegory of Hinduism, an oldest religious ideology, aspiring Hindu nation through the implications of cow protection, and 'saffronization' of culture. Noteworthy, both model of secularism is interpreted to influence religious communities attributing the communal flavor of past ideologies. The debate of secularism in India, according to Paul Brass, is a polemical framing of religious community, brought the antagonism, riots, pogroms, massacres and even genocidal attacks.²⁴⁵

The use of mythic history, broadcasting of Ramayana, and the history of Ayodhya in Indian politics in 1980s and 1990s is an important factor in dividing the religious community. The intensive use of ancient history in a temple agitation shaped a new political discourse of national consciousness. According to Thomas Hasen Bloom, national consciousness is deliberately constructed when Indian politics highlighted positive aspect of Hinduism, and negative feature of Islamic ideology.²⁴⁶ A clear demarcation between the two religions is drawn. The politics of mythic history, Ramayana, and history of Ayodhya, generated hierarchical division among the religious community. Repeatedly spoken religious

245 Brass, Paul R, "The Secularism in Practice," in *Indian Journal of Secularism* (Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan-March 2006), 115-116

246 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 174.

significance of Ayodhya obliged Hindu community to lament over the glories of Hindu culture. Ayodhya became a metaphor of a 'lack' among the Hindus and Babri Mosque a traumatic wound in the nation and Hindu civilization. A 'lack' that could be healed through removal of Babri Mosque and construction of Rama temple.²⁴⁷

Ideological interpretation of myth and history is also a part of communalism. Ayodhya movement not only did a communal interpretation of myth and history but also distorted to some extent. The alteration of tele-serial Ramayana and the archaeology of Ayodhya are some of them. There are more than 300 versions of Ramayana written in different languages and different cultural settings²⁴⁸. Yes, it's true that the Ramayana was an attempt to influence broader audience in economical and cultural aspect through homogenization of different narratives into a grand narrative *The Ramayana*, but a possible doubt is, can homogenize protect cultural and religious characteristics of all versions? One of the probable of answer is, there might be irretrievably submerged or marginalized some cultural and religious features²⁴⁹. It might be a reason S.S. Gill, the Broadcasting minister of the Congress party faced considerable resistance in the time of broadcasting a tele-serial. The tele-serial only presented decent qualities of Rama and his people in unifying Hindus and to improve the deteriorating relationship of the Congress party with Hindu community.

The archeological history of Ayodhya's excavation is the controversial findings in regard with the interpretation of different scholarly writings. The archeological finding goes both ways: it might be a mosque had replaced temple or there might be no temple before. Regarding millions of faiths and a part of the archaeological survey, a medieval temple in Ayodhya might be a half-truth. So, Hindu Nationalists claim of Ayodhya is an ideological interpretation. Ayodhya movement is based on the ideological interpretation and alteration of myth and history of the Congress party and the BJP.

Communalism asserts that history myth and socio-political conflict are given communal flavor not from the participant but by the observer, the official and the journalist. The role of politicians, media, archeologists, and the scholars in Indian politics in 1980s and 1990s is significant in providing a communal explanation. The increasing population of Islam was assigned to the rising fundamentalism by Indian media. It was often called that Islamic population in India would reach to majority in few centuries. A research shows that cultural,

247 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 173.

248 Ramanujan, A.K., "Three Hundred *Ramayanas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts On Translation," in *Many Ramayanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, ed. Richman, Paula (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 22-25.

249 Ramanujan, A.K., "Three Hundred *Ramayanas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts On Translation," 22-25

economical and social factors were equally important as religious factor for the rising Islamic population of India.²⁵⁰ So, every factor should be considered, emphasizing religious factor of demography is a communal explanation of Indian Media.

The political recruitment in public administrations is an important topic that relates with the former explanation. The BJP had utilized the political power to some extent employing the administrative in its favor. What is seen in Ayodhya movement is that those administrators addressed exactly the same ideologies the BJP wanted. Administrators were also one of the mouthpieces of the BJP in temple agitation.

5.4 Temple agitation as an expression of false consciousness:

The Ayodhya movement had distributed wide range vision of a temple at the site of Babri Mosque for the unity and religious harmony. To quote, a front-runner of a temple campaign, L.K Advani "The liberation of Ramajanmabhumi is to preserve the old symbols of unity, communal amity, and cultural oneness"²⁵¹ A temple campaign also clearly identified the opponent, pseudo-secularist who practice the politics of appeasement. Hindu nationalism as a replacement of Indian nationalism is the goal of the BJP, constantly expressed in Ayodhya movement. It is true that a temple is not yet constructed but where is the BJP's agendas? What happened to the party's goal?

The general election of 1996 was providential for the BJP, it turned into a biggest political party and formed a coalition government in the leadership of A. B. Vajpayee. But soon the party compromised most of the issues that has been the heart of its campaign for more than a decade. According to Thomas Blom Hansen, the party compromised on the imposition of Uniform Civil Code, the Kashmir agenda (Article 370 of Indian constitution), and the construction of Rama temple in Ayodhya.²⁵² The entire Ayodhya movement was fought with the slogan of "a temple in Ayodhya", came to a stage of bargaining only to hold the coalition government. National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP published the agenda of the government "National Agenda for Governance" where not even a single vision of Ayodhya campaign was addressed.²⁵³ In fact, the agendas of coalition government addressed sincere and covenant policy for the peace, prosperous and democratic nationhood.

250 Kothari, Devendra, "Growing Population in India and Islam: Some Facts," available from <http://kotharionindia.blogspot.no/2011/09/growing-population-in-india-and-islam.html> Internet, accessed 10 May 2013.

251 Advani, L.K. Quotation found in Vijapukar, Mahes. "To Ayodhya" in *Frontline* (1990, October 13-16), 26.

252 Hansen, Thomas Blom, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 218.

253 "National Agenda For Governance, BJP And Alliance Partners, April 1998". Citation found in Kumar, Sunil. *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics* p. 241-42.

The BJP was forced from coalition partner to change its vision of nationalism. In the pressure of alliance parties, the BJP's Hindu nationalism changed into "Cultural Nationalism"²⁵⁴. The ideology of Hindu nationalism where the party stood for a decade, fought Ayodhya Campaign, and won the democratic battle to become India's biggest political party, in terms parliamentary representatives, changed its philosophy to cultural nationalism. In other words, the BJP started a new political race departing from Hindu unity to cultural unity of India.

A decade long consciousness was sacked when the BJP itself was in the government. The huge Ayodhya centered mass mobilization was actually held to pressurize the government for the legal implication of BJP's agendas. If the Hindu Nationalism is a solution, a temple in Ayodhya is a need of the nation, and model of Indian secularism is a cause of discrimination, why the party chose a departure? If the party's agendas were really true, the departure disobeyed the millions of common people, the nation and, of course, it disrespected its own character. And, if the BJP had chosen right decision by dropping its Ayodhya agendas, the party had distributed a false concept for a decade to manipulate the Indian society.

The very characteristic of the BJP, anticipates the notion of communalism explained by Bipin Chandra. The BJP's temple agitation is not a narrow in a sense that it represented only a Hindu community. It is a narrow in the sense that it did not represent even Hindu community. The BJP's Ayodhya movement not only failed to represent the national interest, it did not even represent the interest of the community what it promised to represent. So, Ayodhya campaign is an expression of false consciousness. It is an expression of communalism.

Ayodhya movement was based on the religious difference but does it has a religious solution? According to Bipin Chandra, Communalism is based on religious difference, but it has no religious solution. What is a solution of Ayodhya? Does a temple solve the Ayodhya debate? Or does a mosque? Can both a temple and a mosque a right solution? Giving Ayodhya to Hindus considering millions of faiths can please some Hindu organizations but it gives birth to a complex problem creating a dissatisfied groups. Rebuilding a mosque creates more complexity. Where more than 1 billion of Hindu resides, who can assure that it will not give birth to another BJP.

Allahabad high court decided to divide the disputed land of Babri Mosque into three parts equally distributing to Hindu community, Muslim community, and to neutral group. The court verdict is indeed a good example of religious harmony. But both Hindu and Muslim

254 Kumar, Sunil. *Communalism and Secularism in Indian Politics* p. 241-42

community challenged the Allahabad high court and filed a case to the Supreme Court of India. It seems that both religious community don't want to compromise in dividing the place. The Supreme Court of India has allowed the status quo in the disputed site. Nobody knows when the court will decide the Ayodhya debate. BBC had reported that Ayodhya dispute is the longest legal matter in terms of Indian jurisdiction²⁵⁵. Indian political parties although agreed to respect the verdict of Supreme Court, considering the complexity of the matter, court might want a political solution of Ayodhya debate.

5.5 Ayodhya Movement as a mixture of Communal nationalism, liberal communalism and Extreme Communalism:

The Ayodhya movement is the unified attempt of the Congress party, the BJP and the RSS and the VHP. Up to now, the writing was mainly focused on the overall analysis of a temple-mosque debate in terms of religion, politics and division, consciousness and false consciousness. The political parties were mostly observed indeed the Hindu nationalist organizations also remained in the analysis. But now, effort is given to a separate analysis of participants in temple-mosque controversy. The logic behind a separate examination is that the participants of the movement do not equally share the same feature of communalism. That is to say, the participants have different expressions of communalism.

The BJP comes under a feature of communal nationalism. The communal nationalism operates within the broad framework of nationalism. The BJP's 'Hindu Nationalism' can be described from two perspectives. First, the party itself claimed that Hindu Nationalism is not a Hindu theocracy but it derived its principles from Hindu religious scriptures. Second, Hindu nationalism believes in the homogenization of all communities of India like Hindu-Muslims, Hindu-Sikh and Hindu-Christians. The main argument of Hindu nationalism is that India has always remained Hindu in terms of faith, worship, culture and history. So, Hindu nationalism is a justice to India in regard with the BJP.

The BJP's notion of nationalism contradicts because, on the one side, it believes in the community and religious interest, on the other side it asserts in homogenization of all religious communities into broader nationalism, that is Hindu Nationalism. According to Mani Sankar Aiyar, Hindu Nationalism is a mere word play. He further says that it is nothing other than implementation of Hindu religion in a secular country disregarding the voice of

255 Q&A: The Ayodhya Dispute, available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11435240>; Internet, accessed, 10 May 2013.

minority community.²⁵⁶ Because of this vague nature of nationalism the BJP had to make its ideology precise and clear for holding a coalition government in 1998. According to Bipin Chandra, unclearly and imprecisely defined nationalism is a communal nationalism. So, a decade long expression of Hindu nationalism of temple agitation is an expression of communal nationalism.

Regarding the theory of communalism, the Congress party in Ayodhya movement remains under liberal communalism. One of the strongest features of liberal communalism is that it is a believer and practitioner of communalism. The Ayodhya movement had shown that the Congress party always believed in the religious votes. The role of Rajiv Gandhi in attracting the Hindu and Muslim votes might be a challenging to the secular policy of the country and party's itself, but it is true that Rajiv Gandhi time and again raised the religious issues, like opening the lock of the mosque disobeying the supreme court decision, nullification of the Supreme Court's decision in Saha Bano case. The party's decision to favor minority resulted into larger dissatisfied community. Party's good relation with one community frustrates the other. It seems a continuous process. This shows that even a liberal communalism could give birth to the enormous communal situation.

The liberal communalist sustains certain liberal, democratic humanist and nationalist values. With this aspect, a glance of the Congress party's ideologies proved that the party griped the national unity, secularism and minority welfare continuously. Asghar Ali compared the political parties and reached into a conclusion:

Ideologically speaking, the congress is committed to secularism and secular values in politics, and even today its commitment stands. But in practice, the congress has not been able to redeem its image. Also, because it has to compete with the BJP for votes, its actions are often determined by consideration of Hindu votes. BJP is quite aggressive in its communal politics, but congress is not in its secular politics.²⁵⁷

The party on the one side believed in national integration, secular polity and the promotion of the weaker section of society but on the other side practiced the religious differences. Hence, the Congress party's political performance is a liberal communalism.

Ayodhya movement is largely a manifestation of extreme communalism because of fear and hatred it created to Indian society. It is also an expression of extremist communalism because of its violence and terror as weapon against opponent. The VHP and the RSS comes under the categorization of extremist communalist because of the two reasons. First, they

256 Aiyar, Mani Sankar. "Confession of Secular Fundametalist" p. 17-37

257 Engineer, Asghar Ali. "Secularism in India- A Minority Perspectives" in Siam-Heng, Michael Heng and Ten Chin Liew (eds.). *State and Secularism: Perspectives From Asia*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., 2010, p 178

openly identified Muslims as the enemy. Their attempt to perform Ayodhya centered religious rituals triggered the large number of violence. Their military attitude in the Rama's chariot procession was nothing other than a religious war. The provocative slogans against Muslims community like "Muslims go to Pakistan", arms parade like "bows" and "tridents" are the evidence of their religious war. Second, they were guided by the religious ideologies and they are one sided on their beliefs. "Hindu nation for the foreign onslaught of Christianity and Islam", "Rejuvenation of India through Hindu Religion" are some of the ideological aspects of the VHP and the RSS that espoused the religiousness of their belief. Also because of this nature of communalism, temple-mosque debate has a least solution. When people are guided by religiosity, a protection of a place of worship becomes a fundamental issue. The ethics of compromise becomes a sense of humiliation. It is a common human nature that nobody wants to humiliate.

5.6 The future of communalism:

The BJP's landing of Hindu nationalism into a cultural nationalism, implementation of sincere and potential policy for peace, prosperous and democratic nationhood in coalition government gives a enormous hope that India moved since the furies of communalism but at the same time the BJP's nature to escalate a temple-mosque debate in the election manifesto of 1998²⁵⁸ and 2009²⁵⁹ puts doubt on the very nature of communalism. Whether India moved on?

The temple-mosque debate is still alive. It is still not sure whether the party is truly committed to the assertion or it is only a political strategy to manipulate the Hindu religious communities like in 1980s and 1990s. Indian politics had already passed from large number of religious massacre because of the extensive nature of religious polarization but still the religion is prioritized. So, it can be said that religious polarization of Indian society for the sake of vote politics is a work on progress.

5.7 Are there any solutions of communalism?

This paper does not have any concrete solution of the temple-mosque debate. But the research attempts to find a solution of communalism.

258 "Bharatiya Janata Party, "Election Manifesto: Lok Sabha Election, 1998" Available from http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=140:chapter2&catid=75&Itemid=501 Internet, accessed 11 May 2013

259 "Bharatiya Janata Party, "Election Manifesto: Lok Sabha Election, 2009" Available from http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=137:manifesto-lok-sabha-election-2009&catid=50:election-manifestos&Itemid=549 Internet, accessed 11 May 2013

The individual of religious community are fair until they are not a part of politico-religious polarization. So education can narrow the gap between religious communities. The wisdom of harmony is the ultimate solution of the communal furies. Every effort should be given to spread the notion of brotherhood from the socio-political sectors like public administration, peace communities, NGOs. Prejudice outlook to different religious community is often because of illiteracy and ignorance. What is seen at Mumbai riots, the violence went deeper into the slum areas where most of the people were poor, uneducated, and even didn't perceive the reality. So, educating a weaker section of the society can reduce the communalism. Ayodhya movement has shown that communal situation deteriorates because of the half-truth, unscientific truth, distorted myths and history. So the fair interpretation of myths and history should be a part of education from secondary level. One with the knowledge of communalism will not be a part of the religious mass mobilization like Hindu Nationalist movement. One will not allow the support in election for the religious agendas.

Nationalism, communalism and secularism are the most researched area in India in the field of social science. Political scientists and many researchers are still working to find the solution of the communal politics. The solutions, I presented are fairly simple answers in the attempt to reduce the communalism. It might not be the entire solution, but still it cannot be ignored that the simple answers play significant role to resolve fair complications.

5.8 Conclusion:

The Ayodhya movement gave the Indian society, history and myth an ideological analysis disregarding the socio-political perspectives to create a false consciousness. The Ayodhya centered mass mobilization was not held from the Congress party, but the party's policy to attract Hindu intensified the Hindu nationalist's attempt. The party also departed from its ideological perspective. Its ideology of broader nationalism, secularism, democratic norms and values are sacked in regard with Ayodhya's unpleasant result. Indian political parties concerned only for the power and supremacy. The BJP also took an ideological departure. But the possibility of religious polarization of Indian society can not be denied.

6. CONCLUSION

I had started my research with a hypothesis. The role of the BJP and Congress party's in Hindu nationalist's attempt of a temple at the site of Babri Mosque is an expression of communalism.

The temple-mosque debate in Indian politics in 1980s and 1990s was a debate of two religious societies: Hindus and Muslims. The ideological interpretation of socio-political and cultural varieties of Indian community was a feature of the temple-mosque debate. A religious issue became a basic distinction finally challenged the notion of secular democracy and the fundamental rights. This is a feature of communalism.

The Congress party's political strategy of 'national unity' and 'soft hindutva' was an electoral campaign. But when it assigned with the religious slogan of a temple and Hindu unity, political campaign and religious issue united. The Hindu nationalist's bidding of the Hindu votes formulated into the Congress party, this formulation slowly transformed into the BJP and finally it was seen in the form of religious distinction of Indian community. This is a feature of communalism.

The Congress party's ideology of secularism and nationalism and its political performance like opening of lock of the Babri Mosque to please the Hindu supporters, the 'stone foundation ceremony' in Ayodhya for religious support, authorization of the tele-serial *The Ramayana* for Hindu unity, are two different perspectives, that is to say, a believer in religious distinction and assertion for secular democratic state. This is also a feature of communalism

The BJP approval of the religious nationalism to mobilize the nation and its landing of religious nationalism into cultural nationalism are two different perspectives of the BJP. The party identified its vision of a temple and Hindu unity for the cultural amity and communal harmony. It gave a consciousness that a temple can erase the diversity Indian society. But to form a coalition government it sacked the vision of nationalism, the Ayodhya agendas were rejected, a decade long consciousness the BJP shared with the country ultimately turned into false consciousness. It is a strong feature of communalism. It is also a systematic manipulation community and nation.

The ideological interpretation of myth and history was a part of the BJP's politics. It considerably practiced the temple-mosque issue for the religious polarization of the Indian community. The religiously divided society manifested in the form of communal violence. It is a feature of communalism.

6.1 Critical Analysis

Some critics often called that the BJP and the Congress party from the temple-mosque debate won the election and formed the government, which is a goal of politics. But, the ultimate goal of politics should be for the improvement of the people, society and the nation. Who will lead the country if the politicians ponder only for the vote and rule? There is a slightest prediction that religiously divided community will lead the nation. A hatred, which politics sowed between Hindu and Muslim in Ayodhya movement, will take centuries to erase. The Congress party and the BJP not only divided the nation in terms of religion but also contaminated the religion. Religion had never taught about violence, division, and destruction. It has always spread sense of spirituality, harmony and amity. In Ayodhya context, political parties gave the ideological interpretation of religious ideologies. The purpose was to win the election.

Religion should be for the people and politics for the state. The mixture of these two different ideologies discovered a problem between the nation and people. It was the evidence of Hindu nationalist attempt of a temple, a political mobilization of a god. It is better, if these two ideologies function distinctly. Can BJP and the Congress party return those lost lives of the Ayodhya dispute? A temple and Hindu unity would not be a justice for those common participants. The participants were misguided when religious ideologies and political agendas united. The nation had realized the danger of mixing religion and politics. It is not yet sure whether political parties perceived the risk of fraternizing religion and politics. If they had, they should maintain a distance with religious ideology. They should stop mentioning religious issues as a political campaign.

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