Hindu Nationalism

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*This article is about various Hindu nationalist mobilizations in the last two centuries. For present day Hindu nationalism, see*[*Hindutva*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva)*.*

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**Hindu nationalism** has been collectively referred to as the expression of social and political thought, based on the native spiritual and cultural traditions of the [Indian subcontinent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_subcontinent). Defenders of Hindu nationalism have tried to avoid the label "nationalism" by arguing that the use of the term "Hindu nationalism" to refer to *Hindū rāṣṭravāda* is a simplistic translation and is better described by the term "Hindu polity".

The native thought streams became highly relevant in Indian history when they helped form a distinctive identity in relation to the Indian polity and provided a basis for questioning colonialism. They inspired the independence movements against the [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) based on armed struggle, coercive politics, and non-violent protests. They also influenced social reform movements and economic thinking in India.

[Hindutva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva) (meaning "Hinduness"), a term popularized by Hindu nationalist [Vinayak Damodar Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinayak_Damodar_Savarkar) in 1923, is the predominant form of Hindu nationalism in India. Hindutva is championed by right-wing Hindu nationalist volunteer organization [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) (RSS), widely regarded as the ruling [Bharatiya Janata Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Janata_Party)'s parent organization, along with its affiliate organizations, notably the [Vishva Hindu Parishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishva_Hindu_Parishad).



Evolution of ideological terminology

In first half of 20th century, factions of [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) continued to remain getting identified with "Hindu politics" and ideas of a [Hindu nation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_nationalism#Hindutva_and_Hindu_Rashtra). The word "Hindu", throughout history, had been used as an inclusive description which lacked a definition and was used to refer to the native traditions and people of India. It was only in the late eighteenth century that the word "Hindu" came to be used extensively with religious connotation, while still being used as a [synecdoche](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synecdoche) describing the indigenous traditions. Hindu nationalist ideologies and political languages were very diverse both linguistically and socially. Since Hinduism does not represent an identifiable religious group, the terms such as 'Hindu nationalism', 'Hindu', are considered problematic in the case of religious and nationalism discourse. As Hindus were identifiable as a homogeneous community, some individual Congress leaders were able to induce a symbolism with "Hindu" meaning inside the general stance of a [secular nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism).

The diversity of Indian cultural groups and moderate positions of Hindu nationalism have sometimes made it regarded as [cultural nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_nationalism) than a religious one.

Medieval and early modern times



Portrait of [Shivaji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shivaji), the founder of [Maratha Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire).

**Vijayanagar Empire**

Historian [Baij Nath Puri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baij_Nath_Puri) writes that [Vijayanagar empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vijayanagar_empire) (1336 - 1646) "was the result of the Hindu nationalist movement against Muslim intrusion and domination of the south". The empire also administered on the basis of Hindu dharmasastras, and Vedas were the major sources of the prevailing law.

**Maratha Empire**

[Shivaji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shivaji) with his quests is noted to have founded a firm footing for Hindu nationalism in with the foundation of [Maratha Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire). Shivaji was also an inspiration for Hindu nationalist activists such as [Bal Gangadhar Tilak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bal_Gangadhar_Tilak). [Vinayak Damodar Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinayak_Damodar_Savarkar) writes that Shivaji had 'electrified' minds of Hindus all over India by defeating the forces of [Aurangzeb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurangzeb).

Gorkhali Hindu nationalism and practices



[Maharajadhiraja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharajadhiraja) [Prithvi Narayan Shah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prithvi_Narayan_Shah) (1723-1775), [King of Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_of_Nepal), he propagated the ideals of Hindu text Dharmashastra as ruling ideology

**Hinduisation policy of Gorkhali monarch**

Maharajadhiraja Prithvi Narayan Shah self-proclaimed the newly unified [Kingdom of Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nepal) as ***Asal***[***Hindustan***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindustan) ("Real Land of Hindus") due to North India being ruled by the [Islamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic) [Mughal rulers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire). The self-proclamation was done to enforce Hindu social code [Dharmaśāstra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma%C5%9B%C4%81stra) over his reign and refer to his country as being inhabitable for [Hindus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindus). He also referred to the rest of Northern India as *Mughlan* (Country of [Mughals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire)) and called the region infiltrated by Muslim foreigners. After the Gorkhali conquest of the [Kathmandu valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathmandu_valley), King [Prithvi Narayan Shah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prithvi_Narayan_Shah) expelled the Christian Capuchin missionaries from [Patan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patan%2C_Nepal) and renamed Nepal as *Asali*[*Hindustan*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindustan) (real land of [Hindus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindus)). The [Tagadharis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagadhari) enjoyed a privileged status in the Nepalese capital and greater access to the authorities following these events. Subsequently, Hinduisation became the main policy of the [Kingdom of Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nepal). Prof. [Harka Gurung](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harka_Gurung) speculates that the presence of Islamic [Mughal rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire) and Christian [British rule in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) compelled the foundation of [Brahmin Orthodoxy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahminism) in Nepal for the purpose building a haven for Hindus in the [Kingdom of Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nepal).

**Ideals of Bharadari government**



[Damodar Pande](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damodar_Pande), Mulkaji of Nepal from aristocratic [Pande family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pande_family) (1799-1804)



[Bhimsen Thapa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhimsen_Thapa), Mukhtiyar of Nepal from aristocratic [Thapa family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thapa_family) (1806-1837)

The policies of the old Bharadari governments of Gorkha Kingdom were derived from ancient [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) texts as [Dharmashastra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharmashastra) and [Manusmriti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manusmriti). The King was considered as an incarnation of Lord [Vishnu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishnu) and was the chief authority over legislative, judiciary and executive functions. The judiciary functions were decided on the principles of Hindu Dharma codes of conduct. The king had full rights to expel any person who offended the country and also pardon the offenders and grant return to the country. The government on practicality was not an [absolute monarchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_monarchy) due to the dominance of [Nepalese political clans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Nepali_political_clans) such as [Pande family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pande_family) and [Thapa family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thapa_family), making the [Shah monarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah_dynasty) a puppet ruler. These basic Hindu templates provide the evidence that Nepal was administered as a [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) state.

**Hindu civil code and legal regulations**



[Jung Bahadur Kunwar Rana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jung_Bahadur_Kunwar_Rana) commissioned the first civil code *Muluki Ain* in 1854 A.D. based on traditional Hindu law and prioritized [Tagadhari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagadhari) castes before Matwalis and Dalits

The Nepali [civil code](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_code), [*Muluki Ain*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste_system_in_Nepal#Muluki_Ain_(1854)), was commissioned by [Jung Bahadur Rana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jung_Bahadur_Rana) after his European tour and enacted in 1854. It was rooted in traditional [Hindu Law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_Law) and codified social practices for several centuries in Nepal. The law also comprised [*Prāyaścitta*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pr%C4%81ya%C5%9Bcitta)(avoidance and removal of sin) and [*Ācāra*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80c%C4%81ra) (the customary law of different castes and communities). It was an attempt to include the entire Hindu as well as the non-Hindu population of Nepal of that time into a single hierarchic civic code from the perspective of the [Khas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khas) rulers. The Nepalese *jati* arrangement in terms of [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) [varna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna) takes the Tagadhari to be the highest in the hierarchy. The ethnolinguistic group of people of [Tamang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamang), [Sherpa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherpa_people) and [Tharu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tharu_people) origin were tagged under the title *Matwali* ("Liquor Drinkers"), while those of [Khas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khas_people), [Newari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newar_people) and [Terai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terai) origin were termed *Tagadhari* ("Wearers of the Sacred Thread"). The Tagadhari castes could not be enslaved following any criminal punishment unless they had been expelled from the caste. The main broad caste categories in Nepal are *Tagadharis* (sacred thread bearers), *Matwalis* (liquor drinkers) and [*Dalits*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalit) (or untouchables).

Modern age and the Hindu Renaissance in the 19th Century

Many Hindu reform movements originated in the nineteenth century. These movements led to the fresh interpretations of the ancient scriptures of Upanishads and [Vedanta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedanta) and also emphasized on social reform. The marked feature of these movements was that they countered the notion of western superiority and white supremacy propounded by the British colonizers as a justification for the UK's colonialism in India. This led to the upsurge of patriotic ideas that formed the cultural and an ideological basis for the independence movement in India.

**Brahmo Samaj**

The [Brahmo Samaj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahmo_Samaj) was started by a Bengali scholar, [Ram Mohan Roy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram_Mohan_Roy) in 1828. Ram Mohan Roy endeavored to create from the ancient [Upanishadic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishadic) texts, a vision of rationalist 'modern' India. Socially, he criticized the ongoing superstitions, and believed in a monotheistic Vedic religion. His major emphasis was social reform. He fought against [Caste discrimination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination#Caste) and advocated [equal rights for women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_rights_for_women). Although the Brahmos found favorable response from the [British Government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Government) and the Westernized Indians, they were largely isolated from the larger Hindu society due to their intellectual Vedantic and Unitarian views. But their efforts to systematize Hindu spirituality based on rational and logical interpretation of the ancient Indian texts would be carried forward by other movements in Bengal and across India.

**Arya Samaj**



[Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swami_Dayananda_Saraswati), founder of the [Arya Samaj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arya_Samaj), on a 1962 stamp of India.

[Arya Samaj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arya_Samaj) is considered one of the overarching Hindu renaissance movements of the late nineteenth century. [Swami Dayananda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dayanand_Saraswati), the founder of Arya Samaj, rejected idolatry, caste restriction and untouchability, child marriage and advocated equal status and opportunities for women. He opposed "Brahmanism" (which he believed had led to the corruption of the knowledge of Vedas) as much as he opposed Christianity and Islam. Although Arya Samaj was often considered as a social movement, many revolutionaries and political leaders of the [Indian Independence movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Independence_movement) like [Ramprasad Bismil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramprasad_Bismil), [Bhagat Singh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagat_Singh), [Shyamji Krishnavarma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shyamji_Krishnavarma), [Bhai Paramanand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhai_Paramanand) and [Lala Lajpat Rai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lala_Lajpat_Rai) were to be inspired by it.

**Swami Vivekananda**



[Swami Vivekananda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swami_Vivekananda) on the Platform of the [Parliament of the World's Religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_World%27s_Religions).

Another 19th-century Hindu reformer was [Swami Vivekananda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swami_Vivekananda). Vivekananda as a student was educated in contemporary [Western thought](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_thought). He joined Brahmo Samaj briefly before meeting [Ramakrishna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramakrishna), who was a priest in the temple of the goddess [Kali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kali) in Calcutta and who was to become his guru. Under the influence of [Orientalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orientalism), [Perennialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial_philosophy) and [Universalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universalism), Vivekananda re-interpreted [Advaita Vedanta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advaita_Vedanta), presenting it as the essence of Hindu spirituality, and the development of human's religiosity. This project started with [Ram Mohan Roy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram_Mohan_Roy) of Brahmo Samaj, who collaborated with the [Unitarian Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarianism), and propagated a strict monotheism This reinterpretation produced [neo-Vedanta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Vedanta), in which Advaita Vedanta was combined with disciplines such as [yoga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga) and the concept of social service to attain perfection from the ascetic traditions in what Vivekananda called the "practical Vedanta". The practical side essentially included participation in social reform.

He made Hindu spirituality, intellectually available to the Westernized audience. His famous speech at the [Parliament of the World's Religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_World%27s_Religions) at Chicago on 11 September 1893, followed huge reception of his thought in the West and made him a well-known figure in the West and subsequently in India too. His influence can still be recognized in popular western [spirituality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality), such as [nondualism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nondualism), [New Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age) and the veneration of [Ramana Maharshi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramana_Maharshi).

A major element of Vivekananda's message was nationalist. He saw his effort very much in terms of a revitalization of the Hindu nation, which carried Hindu spirituality and which could counter Western materialism. The notions of white supremacy and Western superiority, strongly believed by the British colonizers, were to be questioned based on Hindu spirituality. It also became a main inspiration for Hindu nationalism today. One of the most revered leaders of the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) (RSS), [Babasaheb Apte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babasaheb_Apte)'s lifelong pet sentence was "Vivekananda is like Gita for the RSS." Some historians have observed that this helped the nascent Independence movement with a distinct national identity and kept it from being the simple derivative function of European nationalisms.

Shaping of Hindu Polity & Nationalism in the 20th century

**Sri Aurobindo**



[Sri Aurobindo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Aurobindo) was an Indian philosopher, [yogi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yogi), [guru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru), poet, and nationalist.

[Sri Aurobindo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Aurobindo) was a nationalist and one of the first to embrace the idea of complete political independence for India. He was inspired by the writings of Swami Vivekananda and the novels of [Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bankim_Chandra_Chattopadhyay). He "based his claim for freedom for India on the inherent right to freedom, not on any charge of misgovernment or oppression". He believed that the primary requisite for national progress, national reform, is the free habit of free and healthy national thought and action and that it was impossible in a state of servitude. He was part of the revolutionary group [Anushilan Samiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anushilan_Samiti) and was involved in armed struggle against the British. In his brief political career spanning only four years, he led a delegation from Bengal to the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) session of 1907 and contributed to the revolutionary newspaper [Bande Mataram](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bande_Mataram_%28publication%29).

In his famous *Uttarpara Speech*, he outlined the essence and the goal of India's nationalist movement thus:

*"I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatan Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatan Dharma, with it, it moves and with it, it grows. When the Sanatan Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatan Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatan Dharma it would perish."*

In the same speech, he also gave a comprehensive perspective of Hinduism, which is at variance with the geocentric view developed by the later day Hindu nationalist ideologues such as Veer Savarkar and Deendayal Upadhyay:

*"But what is the Hindu religion? What is this religion which we call Sanatan, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this Peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages.*

*But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly and forever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy."*

In 1910, he withdrew from political life and spent his remaining life doing spiritual exercises and writing. But his works kept inspiring revolutionaries and struggles for independence, including the famous [Chittagong Uprising](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chittagong_armoury_raid). Both Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo are credited with having founded the basis for a vision of freedom and glory for India in the spirituality and heritage of Hinduism.

Independence movement

The influence of the Hindu renaissance movements was such that by the turn of the 20th century, there was a confluence of ideas of the Hindu cultural nationalism with the ideas of [Indian nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_nationalism). Both could be spoken synonymous even by tendencies that were seemingly opposed to sectarian communalism and Hindu majoritism. The Hindu renaissance movements held considerable influence over the revolutionary movements against the British rule and formed the philosophical basis for the struggles and political movements that originated in the first decade of the twentieth century.

**Revolutionary movements**

**Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar**

[Anushilan Samiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anushilan_Samiti) was one of the prominent revolutionary movements in India in the early part of the twentieth century. It was started as a cultural society in 1902, by Aurobindo and the followers of Bankim Chandra to propagate the teachings of the [Bhagavad Gita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita). But soon the Samiti had its goal to overthrow the British rule in India. Various branches of the Samiti sprung across India in the guise of suburban fitness clubs but secretly imparted arms training to its members with the implicit aim of using them against the British administration.

On 30 April 1908 at [Muzaffarpur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzaffarpur), two revolutionaries, [Khudiram Bose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khudiram_Bose) and Prafulla Chaki, threw bombs at a British convoy aimed at British officer Kingsford. Both were arrested trying to flee. Aurobindo was also arrested on 2 May 1908 and sent to [Alipore Jail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alipore_Jail). The report sent from [Andrew Fraser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Henderson_Leith_Fraser), the then Lt Governor of Bengal to Lord Minto in England declared that although Sri Aurobindo came to Calcutta in 1906 as a Professor at the National College, "he has ever since been the principal advisor of the revolutionary party. It is of utmost importance to arrest his potential for mischief, for he is the prime mover and can easily set tools, one to replace another". But charges against Aurobindo were never proved and he was acquitted. Many members of the group faced charges and were transported and imprisoned for life. Others went into hiding.

In 1910, when, Aurobindo withdrew from political life and decided to live a life of renunciate, the [Anushilan Samiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anushilan_Samiti) declined. One of the revolutionaries, [Bagha Jatin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bagha_Jatin), who managed to escape the trial started a group which would be called [Jugantar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jugantar). Jugantar continued with its armed struggle with the British, but the arrests of its key members and subsequent trials weakened its influence. Many of its members were imprisoned for life in the notorious Andaman Cellular jail.

**India House**

A revolutionary movement was started by [Shyamji Krishnavarma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shyamji_Krishnavarma), a Sanskritist and an Arya Samajist, in London, under the name of [India House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_House) in 1905. The brain behind this movement was said to be [V D Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinayak_Damodar_Savarkar). Krishnaverma also published a monthly "*Indian Sociologist*", where the idea of an armed struggle against the British was openly espoused. The movement had become well known for its activities in the Indian expatriates in London. When Gandhi visited London in 1909, he shared a platform with the revolutionaries where both the parties politely agreed to disagree, on the question of violent struggle against British and whether [Ramayana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramayana) justified such violence. Gandhi, while admiring the "patriotism" of the young revolutionaries, had "dissented vociferously" from their "violent blueprints" for social change. In turn, the revolutionaries disliked his adherence to [constitutionalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutionalism) and his close contacts with moderate leaders of Indian National Congress. Moreover, they considered his method of "passive resistance" effeminate and humiliating.

The India House had soon to face closure following the assassination of [William Hutt Curzon Wyllie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hutt_Curzon_Wyllie) by the revolutionary [Madan Lal Dhingra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madan_Lal_Dhingra), who was close to [India House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_House). [Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savarkar) also faced charges and was transported. [Shyamji Krishna Varma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shyamji_Krishna_Varma) fled to Paris. India House gave formative support to ideas that were later formulated by Savarkar in his book named '[Hindutva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva)'. Hindutva was to gain relevance in the run-up to the Indian Independence and form the core ideology of the political party [Hindu Mahasabha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_Mahasabha), of which Savarkar became president in 1937. It also formed the key ideology, under the euphemistic relabeling *Rashtriyatva* (nationalism), for the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) founded in 1925, and of the [Bharatiya Jana Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Jana_Sangh) (the present-day ruling [Bharatiya Janata Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Janata_Party)) under another euphemistic relabeling *Bharatiyata* (Indianness).

**Indian National Congress**

**"Lal-Bal-Pal"**



A rare photograph of [Lala Lajpat Rai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lala_Lajpat_Rai) of [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_Province_%28British_India%29), [Bal Gangadhar Tilak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bal_Gangadhar_Tilak) of [Maharashtra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharashtra), and [Bipin Chandra Pal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bipin_Chandra_Pal) of [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal), the triumvirate were popularly known as [Lal Bal Pal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lal_Bal_Pal), who changed the political discourse of the Indian independence movement.

"[Lal-Bal-Pal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lal-Bal-Pal)" is the phrase that is used to refer to the three nationalist leaders Lala Lajpat Rai, [Bal Gangadhar Tilak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bal_Gangadhar_Tilak) and [Bipin Chandra Pal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bipin_Chandra_Pal) who held the sway over the Indian Nationalist movement and the independence struggle in the early parts of twentieth century.

[Lala Lajpat Rai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lala_Lajpat_Rai) belonged to the northern province of Punjab. He was influenced greatly by the Arya Samaj and was part of the Hindu reform movement. He joined the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) in 1888 and became a prominent figure in the Indian Independence Movement. He started numerous educational institutions. The National College at [Lahore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahore) started by him became the center for revolutionary ideas and was the college where revolutionaries like [Bhagat Singh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagat_Singh) studied. While leading a procession against the [Simon Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Commission), he was fatally injured in the lathi charge by the British police. His death led the revolutionaries like [Chandrashekar Azad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandrashekar_Azad) and Bhagat Singh to kill the British officer [J. P. Saunders](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=J._P._Saunders&action=edit&redlink=1), who they believed was responsible for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

[Bal Gangadhar Tilak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bal_Gangadhar_Tilak) was a nationalist leader from the Central Indian province of Maharashtra. He has been widely acclaimed the "Father of Indian unrest" who used the press and Hindu occasions like [Ganesh Chaturthi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganesh_Chaturthi) and symbols like the Cow to create unrest against the British administration in India. Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1890. Under the influence of such leaders, the political discourse of the Congress moved from polite accusation that imperial rule was "un-British" to the forthright claim of Tilak that "Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it".

[Bipin Chandra Pal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bipin_Chandra_Pal) of Bengal was another prominent figure of the Indian nationalist movement, who is considered a modern Hindu reformer, who stood for Hindu cultural nationalism and was opposed to sectarian communalism and Hindu majoritism. He joined the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) in 1886 and was also one of the key members of revolutionary [India House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_House).

**Gandhi and Ramarajya**



[Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) never called himself a Hindu nationalist, but preached Hindu [Dharma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma).

Though [Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) never called himself a "Hindu nationalist"; he believed in and propagated concepts like [Dharma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma) and "Rama Rajya" (Rule of [Lord Rama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Rama)) as part of his social and political philosophy. Gandhi said "By political independence I do not mean an imitation to the British House of commons, or the soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as Ramarajya i.e., sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority." He emphasized that "Rama Rajya" to him meant peace and justice. "Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure". He also emphasized that it meant respect for all religions: "My Hinduism teaches me to respect all religions. In this lies the secret of Ramarajya".

**Madan Mohan Malviya**

[Madan Mohan Malviya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madan_Mohan_Malviya), an educationist and a politician with the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) was also a vociferous proponent of the philosophy of *Bhagavad Gita*. He was the president of the Indian National Congress in the year 1909 and 1918. He was seen as a 'moderate' in the Congress and was also considered very close to Gandhi. He popularized the Sanskrit phrase "[Satyameva Jayate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyameva_Jayate)" (Truth alone triumphs), from the [Mundaka Upanishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mundaka_Upanishad), which today is the national motto of the Republic of India. He founded the [Benaras Hindu University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benaras_Hindu_University) in 1919 and became its first Vice-Chancellor.

**Subhas Chandra Bose**



[Subhas Chandra Bose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhas_Chandra_Bose) was one of the most prominent leaders and highly respected [independence fighters from Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_fighters_of_India#Leaders_from_Bengal_and_Northeastern_India) in the [Indian independence movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement) against the [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj).

Apart from Gandhi, revolutionary leader Netaji [Subhas Chandra Bose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhas_Chandra_Bose) referred to Vedanta and the *Bhagavad Gita* as sources of inspiration for the struggle against the British. Swami Vivekananda's teachings on universalism, his nationalist thoughts and his emphasis on social service and reform had all inspired Subhas Chandra Bose from his very young days. The fresh interpretation of India's ancient scriptures appealed immensely to Subhas. Hindu spirituality formed the essential part of his political and social thought through his adult life, although there was no sense of bigotry or orthodoxy in it. Subhas who called himself a socialist, believed that socialism in India owed its origins to Swami Vivekananda. As historian Leonard Gordan explains "Inner religious explorations continued to be a part of his adult life. This set him apart from the slowly growing number of atheistic socialists and communists who dotted the Indian landscape." "Hinduism was an essential part of his Indianness". His strategy against the British also included the use of Hindu symbols and festivals. In 1925, while in Mandalay jail, he went on a hunger strike when [Durga puja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durga_puja) was not supported by prison authorities.

**Keshav Baliram Hedgewar**



[Keshav Baliram Hedgewar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._B._Hedgewar), the founding [*Sarsanghachalak*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarsanghachalak) (or "Supreme Executive") of the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh).

Another leader of prime importance in the ascent of Hindu nationalism was [Keshav Baliram Hedgewar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._B._Hedgewar) of [Nagpur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagpur). Hedgewar as a medical student in Calcutta had been part of the revolutionary activities of the Hindu Mahasabha, Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar. He was charged with sedition in 1921 by the British Administration and served a year in prison. He was briefly a member of Indian National Congress. In 1925, he left the Congress to form the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) (RSS) with the help of Hindu Mahasabha Leader [B. S. Moonje](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._S._Moonje), Bapuji Soni, Gatate Ji etc., which would become the focal point of Hindu movements in Independent India. After the formation of the RSS too, Hedgewar was to take part in the Indian National Congress-led movements against the British rule. He joined the Jungle Satyagraha agitation in 1931 and served a second term in prison. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh started by him became one of the most prominent Hindu organization with its influence ranging in the social and political spheres of India. The RSS portrayed itself as a social movement rather than a political party, and did not play central role many of the [Indian independence movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement). However, the RSS emphatically rejected the Congress policy of cooperation with the Muslims. Subsequently, in 1934, the Congress banned its members from joining RSS, Hindu Mahasabha or Muslim League. He died in 1940.

After [M. S. Golwalkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._S._Golwalkar) became head of RSS in 1940. RSS didn't take part in many anti-British activities, as Golwalkar did not want to give the British any excuse to ban the RSS. After the Muslim League passed the [Lahore Resolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahore_Resolution) demanding a separate Pakistan, the RSS campaigned for a Hindu nation, but stayed away from the independence struggle. When the British Government banned military drills and use of uniforms in non-official organizations, Golwalkar terminated the RSS military department. A number of RSS members had joined the [Quit India Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quit_India_Movement) but not the [naval revolt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Indian_Navy_mutiny).

Partition of India

*Main article:*[*Partition of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_India)

The [Partition of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_India) outraged many majority Hindu nationalist politicians and social groups. [Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savarkar) and members of the [Hindu Mahasabha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_Mahasabha) were extremely critical of [Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi)'s leadership. They accused him of appeasing the Muslims. Some Hindu nationalists also blamed Gandhi for conceding [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) to the [Muslim League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-India_Muslim_League) via appeasement. Also, they were further inflamed when Gandhi conducted a fast-unto-death for the Indian government to give Rs. 550 million which were due to the Pakistan government, but were being held back due to the [Indo-Pakistani War of 1947](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_War_of_1947).

After the [assassination of Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_Mahatma_Gandhi) by [Nathuram Godse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathuram_Godse), the Sangh Parivar was plunged into distress when the RSS was accused of involvement in his murder. Along with the conspirators and the assassin, [Vinayak Damodar Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinayak_Damodar_Savarkar) was also arrested. The court acquitted Savarkar, and the RSS was found be to completely unlinked with the conspirators. The [Hindu Mahasabha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_Mahasabha), of which Godse was a member, lost membership and popularity. The effects of public outrage had a permanent effect on the Hindu Mahasabha, which is now a defunct Hindutva party.

**Bengali Hindu Homeland Movement**

*Main article:*[*Bengali Hindu Homeland Movement*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_Hindu_Homeland_Movement)

The **Bengali Hindu Homeland Movement** refers to the movement of the [Bengali Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_Hindu) people for the Partition of Bengal in 1947 to create a homeland for themselves within India, in the wake of [Muslim League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-India_Muslim_League)'s proposal and campaign to include the entire province of [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal) within Pakistan, which was to be a homeland for the [Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) of [British India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_India). The movement began in late 1946, especially after the [Great Calcutta Killing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Calcutta_Killing) and [Noakhali genocide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noakhali_genocide), gained significant momentum in April, 1947 and in the end met with success on 20 June 1947 when the legislators from the Hindu majority areas returned their verdict in favor of Partition and Bengal province was divided into [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal) and [East Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Pakistan).

Post-independence movements

**Somnath temple movement**

[**Somnath Temple Reconstruction**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somnath_temple#Reconstruction_during_1950%E2%80%931951)



K.M. Munshi with archaeologists and engineers of the Government of India, Bombay, and Saurashtra, with the ruins of Somnath Temple in the background, July 1950.



Somnath temple ruins, 1869.



[Sardar Patel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sardar_Patel) ordered [Somnath temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somnath_temple) reconstructed in 1948.

The [Somnath temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somnath_temple) is an ancient temple at [Prabhas Patan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prabhas_Patan) in the coastal Indian province of [Gujarat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarat), which had been destroyed several times by the foreign invaders, starting with [Mahmud Ghaznavi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmud_Ghaznavi) in 1025 AD. The last of such destructions took place in 1706 AD when Prince Mohammad Azam carried out the orders of Mughal ruler [Aurangzeb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurangzeb) to destroy the temple of Somnath beyond possible repair. A small mosque was put in its place.

Before Independence, [Prabhas Patan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prabhas_Patan) where Somnath is located was part of the [Junagadh State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junagadh_State), ruled by the [Nawab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nawab) of Junagadh. On the eve of Independence, the Nawab announced the accession of Junagadh, which had over 80% Hindu population, to [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan). The people of Junagadh rose in revolt and set up a parallel government under Gandhian leader and independence fighter, [Samaldas Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaldas_Gandhi). The Nawab, unable to resist the popular pressure, bowed out and escaped to Pakistan. The provincial government under Samaldas Gandhi formally asked Government of India to take over. The Deputy Prime Minister of India, [Sardar Patel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sardar_Patel) came to Junagadh on 12 November 1947 to direct the occupation of the state by the Indian army and at the same time ordered the reconstruction of the Somnath temple.

When Sardar Patel, [K. M. Munshi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._M._Munshi) and other leaders of the Congress went to Gandhiji with the proposal of reconstructing the Somnath temple, Gandhiji blessed the move, but suggested that the funds for the construction should be collected from the public and the temple should not be funded by the state. He expressed that he was proud to associate himself to the project of renovation of the temple But soon both Gandhiji and Sardar Patel died and the task of reconstruction of the temple was now continued under the leadership of K. M. Munshi, who was the Minister for Food and Civil, supplies in the Nehru Government.

The ruins were pulled down in October 1950 and the mosque was moved to a different location. In May 1951, [Rajendra Prasad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajendra_Prasad), the first President of the Republic of India, invited by K. M. Munshi, performed the installation ceremony for the temple. Rajendra Prasad said in his address, "It is my view that the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple will be complete on that day when not only a magnificent edifice will arise on this foundation, but the mansion of India's prosperity will be really that prosperity of which the ancient temple of Somnath was a symbol." He added: "The Somnath temple signifies that the power of reconstruction is always greater than the power of destruction."

This episode created a rift between the President and the then Prime Minister [Jawaharlal Nehru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawaharlal_Nehru), who was afraid that the reconstruction of the temple might be an attempt at "Hindu revivalism", a claim that was spread by a "whispering campaign" at that time. Nehru was not in favor of the president Rajendra Prasad and Union Minister K. M. Munshi attending the ceremony, as he felt that a secular state must not associate itself with religious rituals.

**The emergence of the Sangh Parivar**

*Main article:*[*Sangh Parivar*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangh_Parivar)

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which was started in 1925, had grown as a huge organization by the end of British rule in India. But the assassination of Gandhi and a subsequent ban on the organization plunged it into distress. The ban was revoked when it was absolved of the charges and it led to the resumption of its activities.

The 1960s saw the volunteers of the RSS join the different social and political movements. Movements that saw a large presence of volunteers included the [Bhoodan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhoodan), a land reform movement led by prominent Gandhian [Vinoba Bhave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinoba_Bhave) and the [Sarvodaya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarvodaya) led by another Gandhian [Jayaprakash Narayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jayaprakash_Narayan). RSS supported trade union, the [Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Mazdoor_Sangh) and political party [Bharatiya Jana Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Jana_Sangh) also grew into considerable prominence by the end of the decade.

Another prominent development was the formation of the [Vishwa Hindu Parishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishwa_Hindu_Parishad) (VHP), an organization of Hindu religious leaders, supported by the RSS, with the aim of uniting the various Hindu religious denominations and to usher social reform. The first VHP meeting at Mumbai was attended among others by all the Shankaracharyas, Jain leaders, Sikh leader Master [Tara Singh Malhotra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tara_Singh_Malhotra), the [Dalai Lama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalai_Lama) and contemporary Hindu leaders like [Swami Chinmayananda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swami_Chinmayananda). From its initial years, the VHP led a concerted attack on the social evils of untouchability and casteism while launching social welfare programs in the areas of education and health care, especially for the Scheduled Castes, backward classes, and the tribals.

The organizations started and supported by the RSS volunteers came to be known collectively as the [Sangh Parivar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangh_Parivar). Next few decades saw a steady growth of the influence of the Sangh Parivar in the social and political space of India.

**Ayodhya dispute**

*Main article:*[*Ayodhya dispute*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayodhya_dispute)

The **Ayodhya dispute** ([Hindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi_language): अयोध्या विवाद, , [Bengali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_language): অযোধ্যা বিবাদ) is a political, historical and socio-religious debate in [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), centered on a plot of land in the city of [Ayodhya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayodhya), located in [Ayodhya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayodhya) district, [Uttar Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh). The main issues revolve around access to a site traditionally regarded as the birthplace of the [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) deity [Rama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rama), the history and location of the [Babri Mosque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babri_Mosque) at the site, and whether a previous Hindu temple was demolished or modified to create the mosque.

**Bengali Hindu homeland**

*Main article:*[*Bangabhumi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangabhumi)

[Bengali Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_Hindu) homeland, commonly referred as Bangabhumi ([Bengali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_language): বঙ্গভূমি, meaning the land of Bengal) and **Bir Bango** ([Bengali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_language): বীর বঙ্গ), is a separatist movement to create a [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) country using southwestern [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh), envisioned by [Banga Sena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banga_Sena) of Bangladesh.

**Panun Kashmir**

*Main article:*[*Panun Kashmir*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panun_Kashmir)

*See also:*[*Exodus of Kashmiri Hindus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exodus_of_Kashmiri_Hindus)

Panun Kashmir (Kashmiri: पनुन कश्मीर (Devanagari), پَنُن کَشمیٖر (Nastaleeq)) is an organization of displaced Kashmiri Hindus founded in December 1990 in Jammu, in order to demand that a separate homeland for Kashmir's Hindu population be carved out of the overwhelmingly Muslim Valley of Kashmir. Almost the entire Hindu population was expelled from Kashmir in 1990 by separatist militants for their religion.

**Ghar Wapsi**

*Main article:*[*Ghar Wapsi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghar_Wapsi)

[Ghar Wapsi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghar_Wapsi) ([Hindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi_language): घर वापसी, meaning "Home Coming") is a series of re-conversion exercises organized by [Vishva Hindu Parishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishva_Hindu_Parishad) and [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) to re-convert non-Hindus to Hinduism. The [*Indian Express*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Express) reported that Scheduled Caste Manjhi families demanded better facilities along with education and healthcare before they reconverted.

**Bahu Lao, Beti Bachao**

*Main article:*[*Bahu Lao, Beti Bachao*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahu_Lao%2C_Beti_Bachao)

Bahu Lao, Beti Bachao is a campaign by [Bajrang Dal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bajrang_Dal) to encourage young Hindu men to marry non-Hindu girls and to create awareness among Hindu girls about [Love Jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Jihad). The movement has been successful in West Bengal.

Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra

*Main article:*[*Hindutva*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva)

**Savarkar**

*Main article:*[*Vinayak Damodar Savarkar*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinayak_Damodar_Savarkar)



Veer Savarkar, formulator of the [Hindutva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva) philosophy, on a 1970 stamp of India.

Savarkar was one of the first in the twentieth century to attempt a definitive description of the term "Hindu" in terms of what he called *Hindutva* meaning Hinduness. The coinage of the term "Hindutva" was an attempt by Savarkar who was an atheist and a rationalist, to de-link it from any religious connotations that had become attached to it. He defined the word Hindu as: "He who considers India as both his Fatherland and Holyland". He thus defined Hindutva ("Hindu-ness") or Hindu as different from Hinduism. This definition kept the [Abrahamic religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrahamic_religions) (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) outside its ambit and considered only [native religious denominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_religion) as Hindu.

This distinction was emphasized on the basis of territorial loyalty rather than on religious practices. In this book that was written in the backdrop of the [Khilafat Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khilafat_Movement) and the subsequent [Malabar Rebellion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malabar_Rebellion), Savarkar wrote "Their [Muslims' and Christians'] holy land is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently, their names and their outlook smack of foreign origin. Their love is divided".

Savarkar, also defined the concept of Hindu Rashtra (translated as "Hindu polity"). The concept of Hindu Polity called for the protection of Hindu people and their culture and emphasized that political and economic systems should be based on native thought rather than on the concepts borrowed from the West.

**Mookerjee**

*Main article:*[*Syama Prasad Mookerjee*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syama_Prasad_Mookerjee)



Syama Prasad Mukherjee, who founded Hindu nationalist [Bharatiya Jana Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Jana_Sangh), on a 1978 stamp of India.

Mookerjee was the founder of the Nationalist [Bharatiya Jana Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Jana_Sangh) party, the precursor of the [Bharatiya Janata Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Janata_Party). Mookerjee was firmly against Nehru's invitation to the Pakistani PM, and their joint pact to establish minority commissions and guarantee minority rights in both countries. He wanted to hold Pakistan directly responsible for the terrible influx of millions of Hindu refugees from [East Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Pakistan), who had left the state fearing religious suppression and violence aided by the state.

After consultation with Shri Golwalkar Guruji of RSS, Mookerjee founded Bharatiya Jana Sangh on 21 Oct. 1951 at Delhi and he became the first President of it. The BJS was ideologically close to the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) and widely considered the political arm of [Hindu Nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_Nationalism). It was opposed to appeasement of India's Muslims. The BJS also favored a [uniform civil code](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniform_civil_code_of_India) governing personal law matters for both Hindus and Muslims, wanted to ban cow slaughter and end the special status given to the Muslim-majority state of [Jammu and Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jammu_and_Kashmir_%28state%29). The BJS founded the [Hindutva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva) agenda which became the wider political expression of India's Hindu majority.

Mookerjee opposed the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress)'s decision to grant [Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashmir) a special status with its own flag and Prime Minister. According to Congress's decision, no one, including the [President of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_India) could enter into [Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashmir) without the permission of Kashmir's [Prime Minister](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Jammu_and_Kashmir#Prime_Ministers_of_Jammu_and_Kashmir). In opposition to this decision, he entered Kashmir on 11 May 1953. Thereafter, he was arrested and jailed in a dilapidated house. Syama Prasad had suffered from dry pleurisy and coronary troubles, and was taken to hospital one and a half months after his arrest due to complications arising from the same. He was administered penicillin despite having informed the doctor-in-charge of his allergy to penicillin, and he died on 23 June 1953. Mookherjee's death later compelled Nehru to remove Permit system, post of *Sadar-e-Riayasat* and of Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir.

Along with [Vinayak Damodar Savarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinayak_Damodar_Savarkar), Mukherjee is considered the godfather of Hindu nationalism in India, especially the [Hindutva movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva). Though Mukherjee was not associated with RSS, he is widely revered by members and supporters of the RSS and the [Vishwa Hindu Parishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishwa_Hindu_Parishad).

**Golwalkar**



Portrait of [Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhav_Sadashiv_Golwalkar), the second [*Sarsanghchalak*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarsanghchalak) (or, "Supreme Leader") of the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh).

[M. S. Golwalkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhav_Sadashiv_Golwalkar), the second head of the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Swayamsevak_Sangh) (RSS), was to further this non-religious, territorial loyalty based definition of "Hindu" in his book *Bunch of Thoughts*. Hindutva and Hindu Rashtra would form the basis of Golwalkar's ideology and that of the RSS.

While emphasizing on [religious pluralism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_pluralism), Golwalkar believed that Semitic monotheism and exclusivism were incompatible with and against the native Hindu culture. He wrote:

"Those creeds (Islam and Christianity) have but one prophet, one scripture and one God, other than whom there is no path of salvation for the human soul. It requires no great intelligence to see the absurdity of such a proposition."

He added:

"As far as the national tradition of this land is concerned, it never considers that with a change in the method of worship, an individual ceases to be the son of the soil and should be treated as an alien. Here, in this land, there can be no objection to God being called by any name whatever. Ingrained in this soil is love and respect for all faiths and religious beliefs. He cannot be a son of this soil at all who is intolerant of other faiths."

He further would echo the views of Savarkar on territorial loyalty, but with a degree of inclusiveness, when he wrote "So, all that is expected of our Muslim and Christian co-citizens is the shedding of the notions of their being 'religious minorities' as also their foreign mental complexion and merging themselves in the common national stream of this soil."

Golwalkar nominated for the post of General Secretary in the General Election of Hindu Mahasabha in 1939, but Golwalkar faced defeat and he left Hindu Mahasabha with quick decision, he decided to maintain distance from Hindu Mahasabha.

1940-1946 Golwalkar maintained distance with Hindu Mahasabha and boycotted every meeting and events in which Hindu Mahasabha was participating. Golwalkar instructed Swayam Sewaks not to join Politics, but suddenly in 1946, Golwalkar issued a statement to Swayam Sewaks and urged to participate in the National Elections from Hindu Mahasabha. Later, Savarkar distributed most of the election ticket to RSS's Swayam Sewaks. Everything was going fine, but on the very next day of ending nomination date, Golwalkar issued new statement that "We had a successful talk with Gandhi Ji, Gandhi Ji assured us that partition would not happen. So we will not oppose Gandhi Ji and Congress, we will not participate in the Elections." All the Swayam Sewaks were asked to surrender their nominations, as all were nominated from Hindu Mahasabha. Due to this biggest back-step by the chief of RSS, Hindu Mahasabha was unable to participate in the National Elections on the major level.

Later, in the Parliament of 1946, the Proposal of Partition of India was passed with 157 votes of Congress, Muslim League and Communist Party of India. Hindu Mahasabha won 13 seats and [Ram Rajya Parishad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhil_Bharatiya_Ram_Rajya_Parishad) won 4 seats, were not sufficient to oppose the Bill of Partition of India.

After the assassination of Gandhi, Golwalkar and Hindu Mahasabha's senior leaders such as Shyama Prasad Mukharji founded a new political party as Jan-Sangh, many of Hindu Mahasabha members joined Jan-Sangh.

**Deendayal Upadhyaya**

[Deendayal Upadhyaya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deendayal_Upadhyaya), another RSS ideologue, presented the [Integral Humanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_humanism_%28India%29) as the political philosophy of the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh in the form of four lectures delivered in [Bombay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombay) on 22–25 April 1965 as an attempt to offer a third way, rejecting both communism and capitalism as the means for socio-economic emancipation.

**Contemporary descriptions**

Later thinkers of the RSS, like H. V. Sheshadri and K. S. Rao, were to emphasize on the non-theocratic nature of the word "Hindu Rashtra", which they believed was often inadequately translated, ill interpreted and wrongly stereotyped as a theocratic state. In a book, [H. V. Sheshadri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._V._Sheshadri), the senior leader of the RSS writes "As [Hindu Rashtra](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hindu_Rashtraahah&action=edit&redlink=1) is not a religious concept, it is also not a political concept. It is generally misinterpreted as a theocratic state or a religious Hindu state. Nation (Rashtra) and State (Rajya) are entirely different and should never be mixed up. The state is purely a political concept. The State changes as the political authority shifts from person to person or party to party. But the people in the Nation remain the same. They would maintain that the concept of Hindu Rashtra is in complete agreement with the principles of secularism and democracy.

The concept of "'Hindutva" is continued to be espoused by the organizations like the RSS and political parties like the [Bharatiya Janata Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Janata_Party) (BJP). But the definition does not have the same rigidity with respect to the concept of "holy land" laid down by Savarkar, and stresses on inclusivism and patriotism. BJP leader and the then leader of opposition, [Atal Bihari Vajpayee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atal_Bihari_Vajpayee), in 1998, articulated the concept of "holy land" in Hindutva as follows: "Mecca can continue to be holy for the Muslims but India should be holier than the holy for them. You can go to a mosque and offer namaz, you can keep the [*roza*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramadan). We have no problem. But if you have to choose between Mecca or Islam and India you must choose India. All the Muslims should have this feeling: we will live and die only for this country."

In a 1995 landmark judgment, the [Supreme Court of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_India) observed that "Ordinarily, Hindutva is understood as a way of life or a state of mind and is not to be equated with or understood as religious [Hindu fundamentalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_fundamentalism). A Hindu may embrace a non-Hindu religion without ceasing to be a Hindu and since the Hindu is disposed to think synthetically and to regard other forms of worship, strange gods and divergent doctrines as inadequate rather than wrong or objectionable, he tends to believe that the highest divine powers complement each other for the well-being of the world and mankind."