The forthcoming elections to the Indian Parliament are very crucial as the major political parties are in some sort of disarray and the other electoral outfits do not look to be strong enough to take up the challenge of spearheading the electoral process. They are also fragmented and not in a position to come to power on their own. While these equations are going on, despite not being in the best of health BJP at times shows signs of gearing up to take the centre stage, especially through the projection of Narendra Modi, who is a sort of darling of the big industrialists and a hero of sections of middle class, the IT-MBA class, and other communalized sections of society. BJP is the political arm of RSS, the organization trying to push the country towards Hindu Rashtra through its agenda of Hindutva. It has been out of power from 2004, after being in power on its own in 1996 for 13 days and later from 1998 to 2004 with a small interlude. Its electoral percentage has constantly and marginally declined in last three parliamentary elections; despite that it is in the reckoning for power. The projection of Narendra Modi is a double-edged weapon, inspiring a section and putting off other sections of the society. So which way will it go at the hustings remains to be seen.

BJP is part of the RSS combine (RC), what is popularly called the Sangh Parivar. It is the electoral wing of RSS and does at the electoral level what should help RSS march towards its goal of abolishing democracy and bringing in a Hindu nation. RSS has the ideology of Hindutva, a word different from Hinduism but still very confusing as it gives the impression of having something to do with the word Hindu or religion Hinduism.

**Hinduism: Hindu nationalism: Hindutva**

Currently there are many communal streams in India. Two of these which have major impact on socio-political life are Muslims communalism and Hindu communalism. Amongst the two the dominant communal stream is Hindu communalism. Hindu communalism has Hindutva as its ideology, which derives its identity from Hindu religion. Hindutva is a brew of Brahminical Hinduism with nationalism.
“Hinduism has many religious streams like Tantra, Bhakti, Nath, Siddha, Shaiva, Vaishnav etc. From beginning of 19th century only Brahmin is being projected and asserted as Hinduism.” (Thapar, 1985)

Savarkar is the major ideologue of Hindutva. He outlined his ideas in his book, "Who is a Hindu?" According to him a Hindu is one who regards this land spread from river Sindhu to the seas as his fatherland and holy land. So patriotism of all 'non-Hindus’, whose holy land is not in India, is inferior in status. He asserts that Hindutva is reverence for common culture and common civilization. “Hindutva projected Ram as a symbol of national identity. Savarkar put forward the idea of ‘Hindutva' as the basis for politics, which stood for nationalism based on Hinduism.’ (Puniyani, 2000, 51)

**Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh**

The very formation of RSS was for building a Hindu nation, and not India. This was in contrast to the approach of the Indian National Congress and its foremost leader Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi had a secular approach in mobilising all sectors of society against the British. This caused dissatisfaction among a large number of upper castes, Brahmins in particular. RSS was founded in 1925. It was founded in the backdrop which needs to be understood in detail. In 1920, with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi into the political arena, the dynamics of the anti-British movement got tremendously galvanized. He brought into the struggle, women and men, of all religions, castes, and creed. With this, Brahminical domination in the Congress started declining. At this time the upper castes and the Brahmins, supported by Zamindari elements and banias, in order to reassert their hegemony on the political and social scene, came up with the idea of a religion-based national organization, the RSS.

At that time the non-Brahmin movement was peaking itself and was threatening to shake the very social power of the Zamindar-Brahmin nexus. At international level the race-based nationalism of Nazis (Germany) and Fascists (Italy) was on the ascendance. This was the main inspiration for the ideas ‘nationalism’ of RSS. "German national pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic races -- the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown to the world how well nigh impossible it is for races
and cultures having differences going to the roots to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in India to learn and profit by." (Golwalkar, 1938, 27)

Marzia Casolari, an Italian researcher who has done work on the roots of Hindu nationalism concludes that "(a) the main historical organizations and leaders of Hindu nationalism had a distinctive and sustained interest in fascism and Nazism; (b) fascist ideological influences on Hindu nationalism were present and relevant; (c) to a certain extent, these influences were channelled through direct contacts between Hindu nationalists and members of the Italian fascist state." (Casolari, 2000, 37). RSS decided to keep aloof from day-to-day political struggles and began to train young boys into the doctrine of Hindu Rashtra. As per this core ideology of RSS "Hindus, and Hindus alone, constitute the Indian Nation, since they are the original inhabitants and sole creators of its society and culture. Hinduism is uniquely catholic and tolerant and hence superior to other faiths, ....The subsequent entry and take-over by foreigners created an illusion that India was a land of many different and equal cultures....Only a 'truly secular' Hindu Rashtra will afford protection to non- Hindus" (Basu, 1993, 37).

**RSS: Organization**

RSS is a male organization based on principles of 'supreme dictator', Sarsanghchalak. In Shakha’s Bauddhik a distorted version of history is instilled into young minds. RSS formation was influenced and inspired by examples of Nazis and Hitler. Hindu Mahasabha was formed by kings and landlords (Rajas, Nawabs). Initial support for RSS came from rich landlords, traders and bureaucrats (Brahmin, banias). RSS ideology projects Muslims as the main enemy of Hindus. Lately it has targeted Christians also as aliens. Golwalkar went on to say that Muslims, Christians and Communists are enemies of the Hindu nation. RSS regarded Gandhi's goal of composite nationalism as futile. Its ideology glorifies past Hindu kings and it indulges in mythification of history to communalize the society, which is its major activity.

The RSS chief is Sarsanghchalak (supreme dictator), who is nominated for life, and nominates his successor. So far most of them have been Maharashtrian high caste Brahmin, barring one. RSS kept aloof from the freedom struggle but was very visible in all activities around communal riots. It was nowhere around when the country was seriously engaged in anti–British struggles like to civil Disobedience Movement of 1940-41, Quit India movement 1942, activities of Azad
Hind Fauz, and upsurges around INA trials and the Bombay Naval Mutiny. It never confronted the British, and was not a target of British war-time repression. Some people call it Rumour Spreading Society because of its expertise in effective use of rumours, especially before and during communal riots.
RSS: Freedom Movement

RSS did not play any role in the freedom struggle; it denounced ‘Quit India’ movement and asked its followers to stick to its jobs during the period. Nevertheless it claims to have contributed substantially in the process of ‘nation building’. History text books introduced in schools wherever BJP governments have come to power deal at great length with the contribution of their ideologues in the national movement claiming that Hedgewar was imprisoned during the freedom struggle. As a matter of fact, Hedgewar joined the satyagraha movement only briefly and was imprisoned for a short while, but overall the struggles leading to national independence were non-events for RSS.

Hedgewar dissociated himself from the national movement in 1931, then onwards his ideological break-up with the national movement was complete and he abstained from the freedom movement. This non-participation was ideologically formulated by M.S. Golwalkar, according to whom fighting against the British was reactionary and he accused the Congress for reducing the national struggle to a ‘mere’ anti-British movement. Golwalkar writes, “Being anti-British was equated with patriotism and nationalism. This reactionary view had disastrous effect upon the entire course of the independence struggle, its leaders and the common people” (Golwalkar, 1966). Obviously, with this ideological formulation the Sangh Parivar did not and could not fight against the British. The RSS equated its nationalism with being against Muslims and hence its constant harps against the national leadership for ‘appeasement of Muslims’. The Hindu Mahasabha and RSS kept aloof even from the naval revolt because they (mutineers) used guns against the British and the RSS considered fighting against the British as “disastrous” and “reactionary”. (Lajatpat Rai, 1994)

Anderson and Damle (Brotherhood in Saffron) point out, “Golwalkar believed that the British not be given any excuse to ban the RSS. On April 29, 1943 Golwalkar distributed a circular that ‘We discontinue practice included in the government’s order on military drill and uniforms to keep our work clearly within bounds of law, as every law-abiding institution should …” (Quoted in Noorani, 1995). RSS, in a nutshell, was not only consciously absent as far as the freedom movement was concerned, it was acting from the opposite angle by opposing various
movements (especially Quit India Movement) and also by being active as a communal body. It played the role of boosting the impact of Muslim communalism and participating in the process of mutual supplementation of Hindu and Muslim communalism.

**RSS progeny**

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is its political wing, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), is the organization translating Hindutva political agenda on the emotive, religious ground, Bajrang Dal is a group of youth, who are active on the streets. Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram is engaged in promoting ‘Hindu norms’ amongst Adivasis and Rashtrasevika Samiti is its women’s wing. In addition there are other organizations like Saraswati Shishu Mandirs, which inculcate the young minds with its social, cultural and political understanding. These all are collectively called the Sangh Parivar, RSS-Combine (RC).

The initial concern of the Hindutva movement (RSS and Hindu Mahasabha) was to counter the politics of the Muslim League and to influence the Congress in the pro-Hindu direction. RSS was mainly focusing on Shakhas (branches), training volunteers for the Hindutva movement and Hindu Mahasabha was taking part in electoral politics. After Independence the number of cadres of RSS increased, Hindu Mahasabha gradually went into the oblivion. One of the RSS-trained pracharak of RSS, Nathuram Godse, murdered Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, following which RSS was banned for some time. Meanwhile RSS volunteers kept on infiltrating the army, bureaucracy, media and educational institutions. The number of RSS volunteers went on increasing and multiple RSS-controlled organizations started coming up.

RSS undertook mainly the campaigns of ban-cow slaughter in the earlier period (1960s) but the response was lukewarm. It became very visible with its anti-Communist noises during India-China war and it projected 'nationalist, patriotic' fervour. Its political wing, Jan Sangh, undertook the campaign 'Indianise Muslims' (late 1960s). Meanwhile the ideology spread by RSS and the increasing urbanization process were the key factors in the increasing intensity of communal violence.

**Hindutva: Decade of eighties**

6
RSS gained higher respectability with Jayaprakash Narayan’s, popularly called the JP movement (1974). Its political wing Jan Sangh joined the Janata Party formed after the Emergency was lifted, and came to power, got vital ministries (External Affairs, Information and Broadcasting etc.) and used the opportunity to further infiltrate in the bureaucracy and media. Later it left the Janata Party on the issue of dual membership. There was a demand from other components of the Janata Party that former members of Jan Sangh leave the RSS, either they should leave RSS or the Janata Party. The Jan Sangh component did not want to leave the RSS; Janata Party broke up and Jan Sangh reemerged as Bharatiya Janata Party on the plank of ‘Gandhian Socialism’.

The period of early 80’s saw great turmoil in the society. Initially the event of conversion of some Dalits to Islam was projected as a threat of Islam engulfing India. In 1984, Operation Blue Star, Indian army entering the Golden Temple to evacuate the temple from the occupation of Khalistani militants, was followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her body-guards. This was followed by massive anti-Sikh pogrom in which many a Congress workers led the assaulting mobs. During this pogrom one RSS ideologue wrote a document subtly supporting Rajiv Gandhi’s turning blind eye to the ongoing anti-Sikh pogroms (Nanaji Deshmukh, 1984). Later to appease the Muslim fundamentalists Rajiv Gandhi got a bill passed in the Lok Sabha to reverse the Shah Bano verdict granting maintenance to her by the Supreme Court. In the same superficial style he went on to get the locks of Babri masjid opened. Both the fundamentalist streams, Hindu and Muslim, were on the ascendance. The opening of the locks emboldened the Hindu fundamentalists and now the sections of Muslim leadership started feeling insecure on the Babri masjid issue. Opening of the locks of Babri masjid gave a fillip to the RSS Combine (RC) and BJP decided to take up the Ram Janambhumi issue.

In 1990 due to his own compulsions vis-à-vis the politics of Devi Lal, V.P. Singh cleaned the dust of Mandal Commission report and decided to implement it. This implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations intensified the backlash of upper castes, which rallied around RC in a big way and the Rath Yatra got a tremendous response from these sections of society. With the Kar Seva of December 6, 1992 the RC combine’s political wing became politically more powerful getting more seats in the Lok Sabha and also coming to power in various state assemblies in due course.
Post demolition: Upswing of RSS politics:

The BJP governments which were ruling in five northern states were dismissed by the Centre government in the aftermath of the Babri demolition. It was probably too late, as due to the demolition the RSS consolidation became deeper. Its roots became strong and it successfully co-opted sections of Dalits and Adivasis in its fold. Its social and political presence became heavily noticed in the society. Immediately after the Babri demolition the RSS associates went on the rampage, celebrating it as the ‘victory’ of Hindutva. It was celebrated by teasing Muslims. In Mumbai most ghastly riots took place coordinated and led by the Shiv Sena, BJP’s political ally. This pogrom resulted in massive loss of human lives and property, more so of the Muslim minority. Similar carnage broke out in many cities in the country, Bhopal and Surat being the major ones. In Surat the atrocities on Muslim women went on to the worst possible levels, making a ground for future brutality on this community.

The general elections of 1996 gave a fractured verdict. BJP now emerged as the single largest party in the Lok Sabha. Due to that it was invited to form a government at the centre. It knew it was in a minority, it knew it cannot hold power; still it formed the government, which fell in 13 days. It started wooing the opportunist elements, large sections of ‘socialists’ and regional forces in the form of alliance which later staked its claim in the power game. The trajectory of power-seeking political outfits was best exemplified by George Fernandes, ex fiery trade union leader and a socialist, who spoke strongly against the communal politics in the earlier decades. He went on to emerge as the chief protector, promoter and spokesman of the politics of BJP.

After a brief interlude BJP returned to power in 1998, leading a coalition of parties, the National Democratic Alliance. From 1996 the RSS combine stepped up its campaign against Christian minorities as well. On 23rd January 1999, Dara Singh of Bajrang Dal, an affiliate of RSS, went on to burn Pastor Graham Steward Stains along with his two innocent sons. The pretext was that the pastor was doing conversion work and was a threat to Hinduism. The Wadhava Commission appointed by the NDA government concluded that Pastor Stains was doing no such thing. During this tenure of BJP-led NDA, it went on to create national hysteria by exploding a nuclear bomb in Pokhran. This initiated a nuclear arms race in South Asia as Pakistan followed suit converting
this region into a potential hotbed of nuclear conflict. It also set up a commission to review the Constitution on the plea that it needs serious revisions.

**Terrorism**

After the 9/11 event in the US in 2001 when globally the phenomenon of terrorism started going up, RSS intensified its campaign of demonization of Muslims saying that all terrorists are Muslims. At the same time Bal Thackeray, an associate of RSS, gave the call for formation of suicide squads. The acts of terror were so presented by the media and in particular by RSS propaganda that it started being felt that Muslims are responsible for acts of terror. With this, RSS affiliates and those inspired by ideology of RSS, went on to make bombs and some of them started participating in the bomb blasts, especially the ones occurring in front of mosques and other places where the concentration of Muslims is higher. The first such act came to light after the blasts in Parbhani, Aurnagabad and Jalana in Maharashtra. Around this time in April 2006 two Bajrang Dal workers got killed while making bombs in Nanded. The Maharashtra ATS did bring this fact to light but it was not pursued, and other blasts in Kanpur (August 2008) and Kannur in Kerala also came to light.

With the Malegaon blast of 2006, concrete evidence against RSS affiliate ABVP’s (an RSS affiliate) member Pragya Singh Thakur came to light. It was her motor cycle which was used in the blast, which brought the matters to surface. It led to other RSS workers associated with Sadhvi. The roles of a serving military officer Lt Col Prasad Shrikant Purohit, Swami Dyanand Pande and Ret Major Upadhyay in the blasts were being pursued doggedly by Hemant Karkare, the chief of Maharashtra ATS, before the 26/11 2008 terror attack took place on Mumbai.

Most of the links of these blasts led to those who were indoctrinated in the ideology of Hindu Rashtra by one or the other affiliates of RSS. The Abhinav Bharat and Hindu Jagran Samiti, near Thane-Mumbai, is also under cloud for such acts. This organization is inspired by Hindu Mahasabha and RSS leaders and believes that Hindus, the Devs (Gods), are facing the Danav (demons) in the form of Muslims and Christians in the Kali Yug so such acts of terror should be engineered to teach these communities a lesson.

**Anti-Christian violence**
The sporadic, scattered anti-Christian violence was stepped up in Adivasi areas of Gujarat, MP and Odisha in particular. Later the Karnataka coastal belt, the Mangalore region, also saw intensified violence against Christian minorities. The worst of this was to be witnessed in Kandhamal in August 2008. In this violence nearly 400 Christians were killed, and thousands were displaced and many churches were destroyed. In the regions where this violence took place, the Adivasis were lured and pressurized to come to the Hindu fold in the name of Ghar Vapasi. In the same areas, the cultural manipulation in the form of promoting Lord Hanuman and Shabri were popularized as ideals for the Adivasis. A type of scare was created by organizing Hindu Sangams (congregations) at a massive scale.
**Hindutva today**

During the last two decades Hindutva politics has adopted multiple strategies to enhance its infiltration. This has been the period when due to the central NDA regime and BJP governments in different states, ruling on their own or in collaboration gave a lot of space to BJP affiliates to step up their activities, which were going on any way. The rule of the BJP facilitates their ascendance in a big way. Already from the first Janata Party regime, when BJP’s previous Avatar Jan Sangh was part of the government, a lot of infiltration took place in the media. With the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram’s entry into Adivasi areas, a combination of social engineering and intimidation took place to bring Adivasis to the Hindutva fold as foot soldiers of Hindutva politics.

In urban and rural Dalit areas RSS has floated Samajik Samrasta Manch (Platform for social Harmony). This is to lure Dalits into the fold of RSS Hindutva. Their ideology operates through Sanskritization, where the Dalits ape the upper caste and come into the fold of Hindutva. Through social engineering the Dalits are also mobilized as foot soldiers for Hindutva politics. This deeper manipulation of society is the fulcrum around which Hindutva politics is marching currently. At another level it is affecting the religio-cultural arena. The number of Godmen who have mushroomed have been soothing the tensed nerves of the people and also dishing out variants of the values of Manusmriti, the caste and gender hierarchy in a modified form in modern language.

Infiltration in police and bureaucracy by RSS Swayamsevaks has been going on for quite some time and this gets reflected in the attitude of police towards the religious minorities and other weaker sections of society. The strategy of BJP in the electoral arena is shaped by these considerations. The divisive communal politics has been polarizing the communities along religious lines. As such, due to the subtle creeping in of Hindutva, there are various degrees of deprivations suffered by religious minorities directly and by Dalits and Adivasis in a subtle manner.

**BJP-ruled states**
Gujarat is the most affected by the politics of Hindutva. Here, while there is propaganda about development, the state is deeply polarized along religious lines. The Muslim minorities are living like second class citizens. The process of justice for victims of violence is hard to come by; many obstacles are put in the path of the same. The facilities for their growth, bank loans are not available, scholarships for Muslim students under Centre schemes are returned by the state government. The process of cooption of Adivasis and Dalits is very much there and the atmosphere conducive for the big industrialists has been created. In Madhya Pradesh, there has been another pattern altogether. Here the state is introducing schemes as per the Hindu practices. The state institution is operating on the lines which adopt Hindu norms in its pattern. In schools, the Hindu rituals of Surya Namskar and yoga are promoted; Gita and Hanuman Chalisa are encouraged. The schemes related to social welfare are all named in the pattern of Hindu culture, e.g. the support for marriage of girls is called Kanyadan, the nutritional supplement schemes for infants is called Annaprashan, cow product shops are flourishing and the cultural intimidation of Muslim minorities is very much there. In Chhattisgarh also a similar pattern is going on. In the brief stint of BJP rule in Karnataka, violence against Christian minorities was fully unleashed. In all these states, the school text books are much communalized.

**Strategy of Hindutva**

Hindutva has three major strategies. One is to polarize religious communities through communal violence. In this, after the decade of eighties when the communal violence took a big leap, the decade of nineties saw the massive violence in Mumbai and then the beginning of the violence against Christians. In 2002, the Gujarat carnage was more of an anti-Muslim pogrom and later Kandhamal in Odisha was the one to intimidate the Christian minorities on a bigger scale. Since then violence against Muslims is also taking place in a sporadic way, not the huge spectacle like Mumbai or Gujarat but like the ones in UP. It is low scale and continuous. In non-BJP states the violence is being kept alive. At places the changing nature of the violence becomes clear as in Dhule, where the Muslims were killed not by the Hindu mobs but by targeted firing by the police. The foundation of this is the “hate other” based on misconceptions about the ‘other’ communities. This negative ‘social common sense’ about other communities has by now become widely prevalent.
During the last couple of years Hindutva strategy has also been to create disillusion about the parliamentary system of democracy. This was witnessed when they cleverly infiltrated and shaped the ‘anti-corruption movement’ of Anna Hazare, Arvind Kejriwal and Baba Ramdev. Government mishandling apart, RSS did everything to prop up these agitations and to take them to the limit of discrediting the present parliamentary system and the UPA II. The fact of the matter is that corruption is a problem related to the system, lack of answerability of elected representative and gross inequality in the society. By restricting it to the honesty of individuals of one party alone, in a way, this movement distracts the attention from the deeper problems related to the system. Hindutva continues with its infiltration method, infiltration in state machinery, media and education. This process becomes facilitated wherever BJP is ruling in the states. Also it is trying to influence religio-cultural mechanisms.

Other electoral formations:

There is confusion about the nature of BJP vis-à-vis other electoral parties. Many regard BJP and the Congress as two sides of the same coin. It is wrong to compare any other party with BJP, as BJP is the electoral face of RSS. Aijaz Ahmad in ‘In the Eye of The Storm: The Left chooses’, EPW June 1, 1996, points out that the communalism of these parties is not comparable as the communalism of the Congress is pragmatic and that of BJP is programmatic. Puniyani in The ‘Looming Saffron threat and electoral choices’ points out, “Just because there is a dearth of parties with better secular and democratic credentials does not mean that one ends up supporting a party, whose fascist potential exists without any shadow of doubt. What if the Congress which time and again has used communalism to fulfill its ambitions of power, benefits from it? Surely it is an evil whose magnitude is many times lower than the dangers of BJP being in power.” (EPW June 19, 1999)

Elaborating this, one can say that the Congress began as a secular party with the inclusion of people of all religions, and their continued association with this party during the freedom movement. At the same time many communalists formed part of its leadership like Madan Mohan Malaviya and Dr. Moonje. Even the founder of RSS, K.B. Hedgewar, was associated with it till 1934. At medium and grassroot levels many Hindu communalists remained and are part of this party. It is this which made Nehru warn that the Congress should be cautious of those
members who sound secular but are communal in the real sense. At the level of policies the Congress took quite a principled secular path till the demise of Pundit Nehru, after which it has compromised regularly. The problem became apparent with Indira Gandhi’s election speeches in Jammu, Rajiv Gandhi’s ‘when a big tree falls’; ‘Shah Bano issue’, ‘Shilaynyas’, and Narsimha Rao’s afternoon siesta when the Babri masjid was being razed to the ground. Many riots took place during its regime when the ruling government either stood as silent witness or colluded with the rioters.

While evaluating riots it has to be kept in mind that they take place due to three major factors. The instigator and conductor, which according to inquiry commissions, (Jagmohan Reddy, Justice Madon, Vithayathil, Shrikrishna and Venugopal) mostly has been some organizations which are an offshoot of RSS. The second factor is those who are supposed to control riots, the political leadership. In this case, the Congress when in power has been weak and ineffectual at places and actively colluding at others. Mostly it has been lacking the political will to control riots. The third force is the police and bureaucracy, which has been regularly communalized and has been an umbrella to the rioters or been an active participant in the execution of the pogroms. Communalism is not the programme of the Congress, but its execution of secular values has been lacking in will power.

The secularism of the left has come in this arena of discussion after Nandigram in particular, when in order to execute the global economic agenda, they used their cadres to settle scores by ‘paying its opponents back in the same coin.’ Its programme remains essentially secular, while the proactive will to counter the communal issues is not visible at all, be it the plight of minorities or the worsening ‘hate’ against minorities in the states ruled by the left parties. The communalism prevalent in the minds has not been tackled at all.

BJP is the political child of RSS, which has the agenda of a Hindu nation, so it is communal through and through. We can classify the electoral formations and individuals into four broad categories on the scale of secularism. The first category belongs to the party/individual who proactively strives to bring in caste and gender equality and affirmative action for minorities in a substantive way. A synthesis of values of Bhagat Singh, Gandhi and Ambedkar can best describe this group, which today is not there as a strong voice.
The formations like left are genuinely secular but they have ignored the proactive measures to pursue this. The Congress is mired by too many power seekers to be able to stand firmly to oppose the communal elements and lands up being the accomplice, in part or in full, of the phenomenon of communalism at times. BJP, as a part of the RSS combine, is the aggressive, intimidating opponent of pluralism, democracy and secularism, whatever be its contingent language. It along with other members of Sangh Parivar is effectively using the electoral space to do away with democratic values. It is the Indian face of fascism.

The anti-Sikh violence was a sort of ‘one go’ phenomenon, which had more to do with the ethno-regional factors. The Nandigram carnage was more of an economic massacre, while the BJP-led pogroms are targeted at the minorities as minorities, to consolidate their political hegemony of BJP. To be sure, none of the violence can be condoned. The subtleties of these differences point out that while we do not have a real good choice in the electoral arena, we will have to keep putting civic pressure for bringing in better and better political policies through the grassroot campaigns. All the same to compare BJP with other electoral formations will be undermining the threat of the agenda of RSS, which seeks to abolish democratic space and build a society in the image of ‘glorious’ Hindu past.

**Electoral battle ahead: Elections 2014**

Despite these observations a section of the people do consider BJP as an electoral option that is the negation of the very concept of democracy. While BJP will try to put forward its democratic mask, it is imperative for us to see its real nature, to make sure that, in the electoral arena such parties cannot be considered at all as they are inherently opposed to democratic pluralism. The persona of Narendra Modi will be used in the forthcoming elections to consolidate sections of society, enamored by the propaganda of progress in Gujarat. The communal polarization will also help Modi play a bigger role. At the same time the minorities will get a clear signal that BJP is out to push through a hidden communal agenda and overt development propaganda. The obstacle to this path is the opposition to Modi from Other NDA allies, who fearing the loss of minority voters, may back out from allying with Modi-led BJP in the pre-poll alliance. After the elections one is not sure what scene would emerge and what position will be taken by these so-called opponents of Modi on the grounds of secularism.
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