

## Rise of BJP as a strong national alternative force

Priti Chahal

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, S.P.M. College University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

### Abstract

In the last many years, the Bhartiya Janta party (BJP) has undergone a massive transformation and is today the country's most alternative political force. The BJP's rise to power in the leadership of Narendra Modi can be attributed partly to Advani's organizational skills, as well as the party's return to Hindutva agenda while keeping the liberal image of Vajpayee alive in popular memory. What further helped the party was the fact that the electorate wanted a change from the long years of Congress rule. Slogans like "Party with a difference" and an appeal to the electorate to give the BJP a chance captured the confidence of the electorate.

**Keywords:** hindutva, electorate, organizational, congress rule, leadership, liberal

### Introduction

The Bharatiya Janata Party is a Right Wing Party with close ideological and Organizational links to the Hindu Traditionalist Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. The B.J.P. origin lies in the Bhartiya Jana Sangh formed in 1951 by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.

The Jana Sangh... was one of a number of non-congress parties endeavouring to attract various social groups whose material interests were being adversely affected by the Policies of Congress governments, both central and State. The Jana Sangh's manifestos reveal that the party had firm views about which sections of society would sympathize with its general approach to questions of social and community relations.

At the centre of its focus was a cluster of urban groups, chiefly small industrialists, traders and people on the lower rungs of the Professional and administrative hierarchies, but it also saw itself as a Party which could represent those sections of the working class employed in small enterprises and in the service industries. Within rural society, besides speaking for small traders, it was prepared to take the side of the Peasants against landlords and big farmers....

### Origin of Bhartiya Janata Party

The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) was founded in April 1980 after the Seventh General Elections, when the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS) constituent of the erstwhile Janta Party walked out of the latter. The leadership of the BJS gave a new name to their Party, i.e., the BJP. So far the BJS is concerned, it was founded on 21 October 1951 as an alternative to the Congress as well as the then existing opposition Parties – the CPI, the socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) led by Acharya Kripalani, a former president of the congress. The organisational backbone of the BJS and now the BJP has been the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (R.S.S.) founded by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925. It was from the highly disciplined RSS that the BJS drew most of its cadres. B.J.S. therefore, could not escape the ideological predilections and value preferences of the R.S.S.

Participation in JP Movement (1973-75) was significant experience for the R.S.S.–BJS.

The emergence of the Janta Party in 1977 implied the extinction of its various constituents, including the BJS. The R.S.S.

Connection controversy first rocked the Janata government in 1978-79 and then caused a major split in the Janta Party, resulting in the formation of the Bhartiya Janata Party in 1980.

The BJP thus inherited two different legacies; first, that of the erstwhile BJP and second, that of the Janata – the JP Movement of 1973-75 and anti-emerging struggle of 1975-77. Atal Bihari Vajpayee who was elected the president of the party in its first national convention held at Bombay in 1980, had linked the emergence of the BJP with Jaya Prakash Narayan's (JP) vision of a glorious India. He had then declared that JPs "dream, his labour his struggle, and his unflinching commitment to certain values are a party of invaluable legacy that we have inherited. The BJP is pledged to Pursuing his unfinished tasks."

The ideology formulated and articulated by BJP has five principles described as "Our five commitments" – these were – nationalism and national integration, commitment to democracy, Positive Secularism, "which means distillation of common moral values whether derived from different religions or from other historical and civilisation experiences and approach, which always remained integral to the Indian civilisation" and the Gandhian Socialism, Bread, freedom and employment are Gandhian first principles. BJP, would make these principles the central core of development strategy and try to make national consensus around them" fifth, "the BJP would strive to build up a value-based politics and thus seek to cleanse the filth abounding in Public life today."

D.L. Seth (2005), an eminent authority on Indian Politics and Political Parties, in his findings relate to the erstwhile Bhartiya Jan Sangh, But they apply to the BJP as well, though it has made significant inroads into new regions, sections and classes of people, giving it a wider Base. BJP's supporter mainly come from early middle-aged groups (26

to 45 years), from middle and highly educated urban dwellers and from white collar workers, Professionals, traders and businessman. Compared to all other Parties, it has the largest proportion of upper caste supporters, constituting half of its support Base. Economically relatively greater proportion of its supporters come from middle and high income groups and from among landowners with middle and large size land holdings. It is true that the erstwhile Bhartiya Jana Sangh had a relatively Poor Base among the illiterates, the rural people and the land less and among the working class in Urban Area.

But now a days BJP has made inroads into the Areas where the BJS was nearly non-existent. The BJP has substantially enlarged its support base among the Harijns and Tribals.

In additional there are numerous cells catering to the specific segments in the society, such as the Kissan Cell, the labour cell and the cultural cell to propogate the partys Programme among the farmers, organised labour and intelligientia. The discussion on the organisational base of the BJP will not be complete without mentioning its special relationship with the R.S.S. The R.S.S. inspired the ideology of the erstwhile Bhartiya Jana Sangh which was the forerunner of the contemporary BJP though R.S.S. Claims to be a socio-cultural organisation yet it provided BPP a strong base. Almost all, if not all members of the BJP are either the member of the R.S.S. or sympathesiers of it ideology.

### Organisation and structure

The BJP is the world's Largest Political Party by Primary membership having 100 million registered membership as of April 2016. The organisation of the BJP is strictly hierarchical, with the president being the highest authority in the party. Until 2012, the BJP constitution mandated that any qualified member could be national or state President for a single three year term. This was amended to a maximum of two consecutive terms. Below the President is the national executive, which contains a variable number of senior leaders from across the country. It is the higher decision making body of the Party, Its members are several vice-President, general- secretaries, Treasurers and secretaries, who-work directly with the President. An Identical structure, with an executive committee led by a president, exists at the state, regional, district and local level.

The BJP is a cadre-based Party. It has close connections with other organisations with similar ideology, such as the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The cadres of these groups often supplement the BJPs. Its lower members are largely derived from the R.S.S. and its affiliates, loosely known as the sangh parivar.

### The R.S.S and BJP has established number of fraternal organisations

- The Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (All India students Union), the Students wing of the RSS.
- The Bhartiya Kissan Sangh (Indian Farmers' Union), the farmer's division.
- The Bharitya Mazdoor Sangh (Indian Labourer's Union), the labour union associated with the RSS

The Party has subsidiary organisations of its own, such as:

- The BJP Mahila Morcha (BJP Women's front), its women's division.

- The Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (Indian People's Youth Front), its youth wing.
- The BJP Minority Morcha (BJP Minority Front) its minority division.

### Objectives and Policies

As Per the Party's constitution the objectives of the Party is explained as "the Party is Pledged to build up India as a strong and Prosperous Nation, which is modern, Progressive and enlightened in outlook and which Proudly draws inspiration from India's ancient culture and values and thus is able to emerge as a great World Power Playing an effective role in the comity of Nations for the establishments of world peace and a just international order.

The Party aims at establishing a democratic state which guarantees to all citizens irrespective of caste, Creed or sex, political social and economic justice, equality of opportunity and liberty of faith and expression.

The Party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the constitution of India as by law established and to the Principles of socialism, secularism and democracy and would uphold the sovereignty unity and integrity of India.

The core agenda of BJP is inspired chiefly by Hindu Nationalism. Though not in order of importance, the chief goals of BJP may be summarized as follows:

1. The Repeal of Article 370 constitution, which grants a special status of Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir and Prevents Non Kashmiris from owning property in the state, in an effort to protect its Muslim-majority.
2. The Promulgation of a Uniform Civil Code, which creates only one personal and civil law code of Hindus, Muslim and Christians, who enjoy the privilege of having law codes tailored to their religious culture over personal and family matters. In the minds of BJP supporters this system this system creates a sense of division in the country between religious communities.
3. A Ban on cow slaughter to honour the Hindu tradition of deeming cows and most cattle as sacred, and prohibiting the consumption of beef and Port.
4. The Ban on religious conversions The BJP argues that it has become virtually impossible to distinguish 'forcible' Incidents of conversions from personal choice.
5. The construction of the Ram Janambhoomi temple in Ayodhya.
6. To achieve the full territorial and Political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India. Presently over 40% of the Territory is under the control of Pakistan and China.

The BJP stands for strong national defense small government and free-market economic policies. But Hindutva has been its core philosophy and identity ever since its inception. The BJP stand on economic policies saw a sudden volte face in the mid-nineties from a support of swadeshi products to the embracing of free market ideas.

### Ideology

The BJP is a religious conservative Political organisation. It sees itself as rising to the defence of indigenouse culture and Indian religious system which include Hinduism Jainism and Buddhism. To many Hindu nationalists, Bharat is a Hindu Rashtra, literally a Hindu nation.

According to BJP, this definition does not exclude Muslims, Christians. Hindu Rashtra is portrayed as cultural

nationalism, all the peoples of India, their cultures and heritage are 'Hindu' which literally means "inhabitant of the river sindhu," the modern day Indus.

While the dray manifestation of the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (The organization that spawned the BJP) mentions the "Hindu Rashtra", the BJP has historically raised objections to this view. The Party's chief objective is the "building up of India as a modern, progressive and enlightened Nation which draws inspiration from India's ancient Hindu culture and values. The key theorist of the party. K. Upadhyay, authored the publication "integral Humanism" which laid down the foundations for this view. According to upadhyay, the so called "monarch" and "state" are the dharma and the chiti (genius) of society. He asserted that the very source of meaning in Indian, society is the concept of "National Identity". The BJP stresses the importance of Integrating the four ends of human life in accordance with Hindu scripture Kama (Gratification) Artha (wealth) dharma (faith) and moksha (spiritual release).

The life and work of the BJP is seen by many as strongly, influenced by the Partition of India in 1947. The partition was traumatic legacy for most religious committees in India. Millions Migrated to find safety in one of the two New States During the Chaos surrounding Partition over half a million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were killed in communal riots wake of horrendous carnage. The Trauma of Midnight evacuation of ancestrol homes and being forced to wade through murderous violence, chaos and confusion to despair and helpness in a different land which became their home, has struck deep in the veins of Hindu nationalists,

Another important factor in the ideological construction of the ideology of BJP is the ongoing territorial disputes over Jammu and Kashmir and the Wars of 1947-48, 1962, 1965 and 1971 and the Kargil War.

The BJP and its supporters feel India must remain vigilant against threats from Pakistan.

The BJP has often been accused of participation in religious violence and using religiously sensitive issues for political advantage. These accusations, largely a political smear campaign by opposite parties, have tarnished the image of BJP in the eyes of many Indians particularly Muslims. Many left wing Journalists and observers feel that BJP is a fascist organisation with a clear anti-muslim bias. This is inspite of the fact that the party has promoted a number of Muslims like Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi the late Sikandar Bakht and even had a prominent member of the Indian Jewish community, J.F.R. Jacob, among their ranks.

BJP has certain demands and actions that are explicitly controversial and give rise to charges of fomenting communal Tensions. Claims are made that Muslims invaders destroyed an ancient temple in the city of Ayodhya in medieval times, building Babri Mosque on its site.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad in the 1970s inaugurated an organized campaign to rebuild the Hindu Temple there because the site is considered the birth place of the Lord Rama.

For two decades, the protests were peaceful, but in the late 1980s the issues turned more controversial than ever. The VHP began to demand a direct demolition of the Mosque and the BJP embraced the issue as its own.

The Ram Temple having become a major demand of the BJP, its activists joined the rank of professors and many

major party rallies were held in Ayodhya the emotional power of this issue was a primary factor in the BJP winning the 1991 state assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India and shot the party to national prominence.

However on December 6, 1992, emotional manipulation turned to violence as a parade of protestors burst upon the mosque and tore it down with pick axes and shovels. The resulting country wide outburst of anger, murder, looting and burning resulted in over 1000 deaths. In the Aftermath of the communal violence many sectors felt that the secular fabric of India was threatened. The VHP was banned and Advani and the other leaders of the BJP were arrested. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi are two BJP leaders on a C.B.I. charge sheet for the destruction despite the arrests, the political power of BJP continued to grow rapidly.

### **BJP (1980—present)**

#### **Formation and early days**

Although the newly formed BJP was technically distinct from the Jana Sangh, the bulk of its rank and file were identical to its predecessor, with Vajpayee being its first president. Historian Ramachandra Guha writes that the early 1980s were marked by a wave of violence between Hindus and Muslims. The BJP initially moderated the Hindu nationalist stance of its predecessor the Jana Sangh to gain a wider appeal, emphasising its links to the Janata Party and the ideology of Gandhian Socialism. This was unsuccessful, as it won only two Lok Sabha seats in the elections of 1984. The assassination of Indira Gandhi a few months earlier resulted in a wave of support for the Congress which won a record tally of 403 seats, contributing to the low number for the BJP.

#### **Babri Masjid demolition and the Hindutva movement**

The failure of Vajpayee's moderate strategy led to a shift in the ideology of the party toward a policy of more hardline Hindu nationalism. In 1984, Advani was appointed president of the party, and under him it became the political voice of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. In the early 1980s, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) began a campaign for the construction of a temple dedicated to the Hindu deity Rama at the site of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. The mosque had been constructed by the Mughal Emperor Babur in 1527. There is a dispute about whether a temple once stood there. The agitation was on the basis of the belief that the site was the birthplace of Rama, and that a temple had been demolished to construct the mosque. The BJP threw its support behind this campaign, and made it a part of their election platform. It won 86 Lok Sabha seats in 1989, a tally which made its support crucial to the National Front government of V. P. Singh.

In September 1990, Advani began a rath yatra (chariot journey) to Ayodhya in support of the Ram temple movement. According to Guha, the imagery employed by the yatra was "religious, allusive, militant, masculine, and anti-Muslim", and the speeches delivered by Advani during the yatra accused the government of appeasing Muslims and practising "pseudo-secularism" that obstructed the legitimate aspirations of Hindus. Advani defended the yatra, stating that it had been free of incident from Somnath to Ayodhya, and that the English media were to blame for the violence that followed. Advani was placed under preventive detention on the orders of the then Bihar chief minister Lalu

Prasad Yadav. A large number of kar sevaks nonetheless converged on Ayodhya. On the orders of Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, 150,000 of them were detained, yet half as many managed to reach Ayodhya and some attacked the mosque. Three days of fighting with the paramilitary forces ended with the deaths of several kar sevaks. Hindus were urged by VHP to “take revenge” for these deaths, resulting in riots against Muslims across Uttar Pradesh. The BJP withdrew its support from the V.P. Singh government, leading to fresh general elections. It once again increased its tally, to 120 seats, and won a majority in the Uttar Pradesh assembly.

On 6 December 1992, the RSS and its affiliates organised a rally involving more than 100,000 VHP and BJP activists at the site of the mosque. Under circumstances that are not entirely clear, the rally developed into a frenzied attack that ended with the demolition of the mosque. Over the following weeks, waves of violence between Hindus and Muslims erupted all over the country, killing over 2,000 people. The government briefly banned the V.H.P. and many BJP leaders, including Advani were arrested for making inflammatory speeches provoking the demolition. Several historians have said that the demolition was the product of a conspiracy by the Sangh Parivar, and not a spontaneous act.

A 2009 report, authored by Justice Manmohan Singh Liberhan, found that 68 people were responsible for the demolition, mostly leaders from the BJP. Among those named were Vajpayee, Advani, and Murlī Manohar Joshi. The report also criticised Kalyan Singh, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh during the demolition. He was accused of posting bureaucrats and police officers who would stay silent during the demolition. Anju Gupta, an Indian Police Service officer in charge of Advani’s security, appeared as a prominent witness before the commission. She said that Advani and Joshi made provocative speeches that were a major factor in the mob’s behaviour.

In the parliamentary elections in 1996, the BJP capitalised on the communal polarisation that followed the demolition to win 161 Lok Sabha seats, making it the largest party in parliament. Vajpayee was sworn in as Prime Minister, but was unable to attain a majority in the Lok Sabha, forcing the government to resign after 13 days.

#### **NDA government (1998-2004)**

A coalition of regional parties formed the government in 1996, but this grouping was short lived, and mid-term polls were held in 1998. The BJP contested the elections leading a coalition called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which contained its existing allies like the Samata Party, the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Shiv Sena in addition to the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Biju Janata Dal. Among these regional parties, the Shiv Sena was the only one which had an ideology similar to the BJP; Amartya Sen, for example, called the coalition an “ad hoc” grouping. The NDA had a majority with outside support from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Vajpayee returned as prime minister.

However the coalition ruptured in May 1999 when the leader of AIADMK, Jayalalitha, withdrew her support and fresh elections were held again.

On 13 October 1999, the NDA, without the AIADMK. Won 303 seats in parliament and thus an outright majority. The BJP had its highest ever tally of 183. Vajpayee became

Prime Minister for the third time; Advani became Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. This NDA government lasted its full term of five years. Its policy agenda included a more aggressive stance than on defence and terror as well as neo-liberal economic policies.

In 2001, Bangaru Laxman, then the BJP president, was filmed accepting a bribe of Rs. 100,000 (equivalent to Rs. 280,000 or US\$4,100 in 2016) to recommend the purchase of hand-held thermal imagers for the Indian Army to the Defence Ministry, in a sting operation by Tehelka journalists. The BJP was forced to make him resign and he was subsequently prosecuted. In April 2012, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

#### **2002 Gujarat violence**

On 27 February 2002, a train carrying Hindu pilgrims was burned outside the town of Godhra, killing 59 people. The incident was seen as an attack upon Hindus, and sparked off massive anti-Muslim violence across the state of Gujarat that lasted several weeks. The death toll estimated was as high as 2000, while 150,000 were displaced. Rape, mutilation, and torture were also widespread. The then-Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and several high-ranking government officials were accused of initiating and condoning the violence, as were police officers who allegedly directed the rioters and gave them lists of Muslim-owned properties. In April 2009, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was appointed by the Supreme Court to investigate and expedite the Gujarat riots cases. In 2012, Modi was cleared of complicity in the violence by the SIT and BJP MLA Maya Kodnani, who later held a cabinet portfolio in the Modi government, was convicted of having orchestrated one of the riots and sentenced to 28 years imprisonment. Scholars such as Paul Brass, Martha Nussbaum and Dipankar Gupta have said that there was a high level of state complicity in the incidents.

#### **General election defeats**

Vajpayee called for elections in early 2004, six months ahead of schedule. The NDA’s campaign was based on the slogan “India Shining”, which sought to depict it as responsible for a rapid economic transformation of the country. However, the NDA unexpectedly suffered a heavy defeat, winning only a 186 seats in the Lok Sabha, compared to the 222 of the Congress and its allies. Manmohan Singh succeeded Vajpayee as Prime Minister as the head of the United Progressive Alliance. The NDA’s failure to reach out to rural Indians was provided as an explanation for its defeat, as was its divisive policy agenda. In May 2008, the BJP won the state elections in Karnataka. This was the first time that the party won assembly elections in any South Indian state: In the 2009 general elections, its strength in the Lok Sabha was reduced to 116 seats. It lost the next assembly election in 2013.

#### **General election victory, 2014**

In the 2014 Indian general election, the BJP won 282 seats, leading the NDA to a tally of 336 seats in the 543-seat Lok Sabha. The BJP parliamentary leader Narendra Modi was sworn in as the 15th Prime Minister of India on 26 May 2014.

The vote share of the BJP was 31% of all votes cast, a low figure relative to the number of seats it won. This was the first instance since 1984 of a single party achieving an outright majority in the Indian Parliament and the first time that it achieved a majority in the Lok Sabha on its own strength. Support for the BJP was concentrated in the Hindi-speaking belt in North-central India. The magnitude of the BJP victory was not predicted by most opinion and exit polls.

Political analysts have suggested several reasons for this victory, including the popularity of Narendra Modi, the prime-ministerial candidate of the BJP, and the loss of support for the Congress due to the corruption scandals in its previous term. The BJP was also able to expand its traditionally upper-caste, upper-class support base and received significant support from middle-class and Dalit people, as well as among Other Backward Classes. Its

support among Muslims remained low; only 8% of Muslim voters voted for the BJP. The BJP was also very successful at mobilising its supporters, and raising voter turnout among them.

**General election results**

The Bharatiya Janata Party was officially created in 1980, and the first general election it contested was - in 1984, in which it won only two Lok Sabha seats. Following the election in 1996, the BJP became the largest party in the Lok Sabha for the first time, but the government it formed was short-lived. In the elections of 1998 and 1999, it remained the largest party, and headed the ruling coalition on both - occasions. In the 2014 general election, it won an outright majority in parliament. From 1991 onwards, a BJP member has led the Opposition whenever the party was not in power.

**Table 1**

Year	General Election	Seats Won	Change in Seat	% of votes	votes swing
Indian general election, 1984	8th Lok Sabha	2	2 □	7.74	-
Indian general election, 1989	9th Lok Sabha	85	83 □	11.36	3.62 □
Indian general election, 1991	10th Lok Sabha	120	35 □	20.11	8.75 □
Indian general election, 1996	11th Lok Sabha	161	41 □	20.29	0.18 □
Indian general election, 1998	12th Lok Sabha	182	21 □	25.59	5.30 □
Indian general election, 1999	13th Lok Sabha	182	-0	23.75	1.84 □
Indian general election, 2004	14th Lok Sabha	138	44 □	22.16	1.69 □
Indian general election, 2009	15th Lok Sabha	116	22 □	18.80	3.36 □
Indian general election, 2014	16th Lok Sabha	282	166 □	31.34	12.54 □

**Ideology and political positions**

**Social policies and Hindutva**

The official philosophy of the BJP is “Integral humanism,” a philosophy first formulated by Deendayal Upadhyaya in 1965, who described it as advocating an “indigenous economic model that puts the human being at center stage.” It is committed to Hindutva, an ideology articulated by Indian independence activist Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. According to the party, Hindutva is cultural nationalism favouring Indian culture over westernisation, thus it extends to all Indians regardless of religion. However, scholars and political analysts have called their Hindutva ideology an attempt to redefine India and recast it as a Hindu country to the exclusion of other religions, making it a Hindu nationalist party in a general sense. The BJP has slightly moderated its stance after the NDA was formed in 1998, due to the presence of parties with a broader set of ideologies.

The BJP’s Hindutva ideology has been reflected in many of its government policies. It supports the construction of the Ram temple at the site of the Babri Mosque. This issue was its major poll plank in the 1991 general elections. However, the demolition of the mosque during a BJP rally in 1992 resulted in a backlash against it, leading to a decline of the temple's prominence in its agenda. The education policy of the NDA government reorganised the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and tasked it with extensively revising the textbooks used in Indian schools. Various scholars have stated that this revision, especially in the case of history textbooks, was a covert attempt to ‘saffronise’ Indian history. The NDA government introduced Vedic astrology as a subject in college curricula, despite opposition from several leading scientists.

Taking a position against what it calls the “pseudo-secularism” of the Congress party, BJP instead supports “positive secularism”. Vajpayee laid out the BJP interpretation of Mahatma Gandhi’s doctrine of Sarva Dharmu Samhhava and contrasted it with what he called European secularism. He had said that Indian secularism attempted to see all religions with equal respect, while European secularism was independent of religion. Thus making the former more “positive”. The BJP supports a uniform civil code, which would apply a common set of personal laws to every citizen regardless of their personal religion, replacing the existing laws which vary by religious community. According to historian Yogendra Malik, this ignores the differential procedures required to protect the cultural identity of the Muslim minority. The BJP favours the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which grants a greater degree of autonomy to the Jammu and Kashmir in recognition of the unusual circumstances surrounding its accession to the Indian union.

The BJP opposes illegal migration into India from Bangladesh. The party states that this migration, mostly in the states of Assam and West Bengal, threatens the security, economy and stability of the country. Academics have pointed out that the BJP refers to Hindu migrants from Bangladesh as refugees, and reserves the term “illegal” for Muslim migrants.

In 2013, the Supreme Court of India reinstated the controversial Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which, among other things, criminalises homosexuality. There was a popular outcry, although clerics, including Muslim religious leaders, stated that they supported the verdict. BJP president Rajnath Singh said that the party supported section 377, because it believed that homosexuality was unnatural,

though its stand has softened after its victory in the 2014 general elections.

### **Economic policies**

The BJP's economic policy has changed considerably since its founding. There is a significant range of economic ideologies within the party. In the 1980s, like the Jana Sangh, it reflected the thinking of the RSS and its affiliates. It supported swadeshi (the promotion of indigenous industries and products) and a protectionist export policy. However, it supported internal economic liberalisation, and opposed the state-driven industrialisation favoured by the Congress.

During the 1996 elections, the BJP shifted its stance away from protectionism and towards globalisation; its election manifesto recommended increasing foreign investment in priority sectors, while restricting it in others. When the party was in power in 1998, it shifted its policy even further in favour of globalisation. The tenure of the NDA saw an unprecedented influx of foreign companies in India. This was criticised by the left parties and the BJP's affiliates (the RSS and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch). The communist parties said that the BJP was attempting to appease the World Bank and the United States government through its neoliberal policies. Similarly, the RSS stated that the BJP was not being true to its swadeshi ideology.

The two NDA governments in the period 1998-2004 introduced significant deregulation and privatisation of government owned enterprises. It also introduced tariff-reducing measures. These reforms built off of the initial economic liberalisation introduced by the Congress government in the early 1990s. India's GDP growth increased substantially during the tenure of the NDA. The 2004 campaign slogan "India Shining" was based on the party's belief that the free market would bring prosperity to all sectors of society. After its unexpected defeat, commentators said that it was punished for neglecting the needs of the poor and focusing too much on its corporate allies.

As Prime Minister, Modi announced measures to speed up the efficiency of India's economy and reform the red tape that had traditionally hindered Indian business, streamlining the bureaucratic requirements on companies such as a complex permit and inspection system and numerous regulations, so as to make business easier. Modi also ordered reform among the bureaucrats of the Indian Administrative Service to ensure a more efficient government bureaucracy. The Planning Commission was abolished and replaced with a think tank called Niti Aayog. In October 2014, the Modi government deregulated diesel prices.

Modi's government also liberalised India's foreign direct investment policies, allowing more foreign investment in numerous industries. In May 2015, it was reported that foreign direct investment in India had risen 61% since the previous year. In September 2015, India was the world's top foreign direct investment destination, overtaking China and the United States. In November 2015, his government eased foreign investment regulations in 15 major sectors of the economy.

### **Defence and terrorism**

Compared to the Congress, the BJP takes a more aggressive and nationalistic position on defence policy and terrorism.

The NDA government carried out nuclear weapons tests, and enacted the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which later came under heavy criticism. It also deployed troops to evict infiltrators from Kargil, and supported the United States' War on Terror.

Although previous Congress governments developed the capability for a nuclear weapons test, the Vajpayee government broke India's historical strategy of avoiding it and authorised Pokhran-II, a series of five nuclear tests in 1998. The tests came soon after Pakistan tested a medium range ballistic missile. They were seen as an attempt to display India's military prowess to the world, and a reflection of anti-Pakistan sentiment within the BJP.

The Vajpayee government ordered the Indian armed forces to expel the Pakistani soldiers occupying Kashmir territory, later known as the Kargil War. Although the government was later criticised for the intelligence failures that did not detect Pakistani presence, it was successful in ousting them from the disputed territory. The Vajpayee administration also offered political support to the US War on Terror, in the hope of better addressing India's issues with terrorism and insurgency in Kashmir. This led to closer defence ties with the US, including negotiations for the sale of weapons.

After the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, the NDA government passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The aim of the act was to improve the government's ability to deal with terrorism. It initially failed to pass in the Rajya Sabha; therefore, the NDA took the extraordinary step of convening a joint session of the Parliament, where the numerical superior Lok Sabha allowed the bill to pass. The act was subsequently used to prosecute hundreds of people accused of terrorism. However, it was criticised by opposition parties and scholars for being an infringement upon civil liberties, and the National Human Rights Commission stated that it had been used to target Muslims. It was later repealed by the Congress-led UPA government in 2004.

### **Foreign policy**

The historical stance of the BJP towards foreign policy, like the Jana Sangh, was based on an aggressive Hindu nationalism combined with economic protectionism. The Jana Sangh was founded with the explicit aim of reversing the partition of India; as a result, its official position was that the existence of Pakistan was illegitimate. This antagonism toward Pakistan remains a significant influence on the BJP's ideology. The party and its affiliates have strongly opposed India's long standing policy of nonalignment, and instead advocate closeness to the United States.

The Vajpayee government's foreign policy in many ways represented a radical shift from BJP orthodoxy, while maintaining some aspects of it. Its policy also represented a significant change from the Nehruvian idealism of previous government, opting instead for realism. His party criticised him for adopting a much more moderate stance with Pakistan. In 1998, he made a landmark visit to Pakistan, and inaugurated the Delhi-Lahore Bus service. Vajpayee signed the Lahore Declaration, which was an attempt to improve Indo-Pakistani relations that deteriorated after the 1998 nuclear tests. However, the presence of Pakistani soldiers and militants in the disputed Kashmir territory was discovered a few months later, causing the 1999 Kargil War. The war ended a couple of months later, with the expulsion

of the infiltrators two months later, without any shift in the Line of Control that marked the de facto border between the two countries. Despite the war, Vajpayee continued to display a willingness to engage Pakistan in dialogue. This was not well received among the BJP cadre, who criticised the government for being "weak". This faction of the BJP asserted itself at the post-Kargil Agra summit, preventing any significant deal from being reached.

After the victory in 2014 Election BJP and his Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made Foreign Policy a Corner stone of his administration. Travelling frequently across the globe-Modi has visited 38 countries in two years. He has managed to infuse a personal enthusiasm into India's Foreign Diplomacy. In two-years He has met US President Barak Obama Seven Times, even making him Chief Guest at India's Republic Day Celebrations.

In the last 2 years Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Foreign Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj have said:

1. No discussion on Kashmir, until India's concern on terrorism are addressed.
2. We will take back that part of Kashmir which is under Pakistan's occupation.
3. Speaking to Pakistan in its language.

Recently in the 2016 Uri Attack was an attack by four heavily armed terrorists on 18 September 2016, near the town of Uri in the Indian Administrated State of Jammu and Kashmir. It was reported as "the deadliest attack on security force in Kashmir in two decades. No group has claimed responsibility for the Attack, though the Militant group Jaish-E-Muhammed is suspected of being involved in the planning and executive of the attack.

After Uri attack India changed its stand on the rules of engagement with Pakistan. Indian special forces crossed LOC (Line of Control) on 28 September destroyed 7 terrorist launch Pads in Pak- Occupied Kashmir. Action takes place 1-3 km inside Pak held Territory, inflicting heavy casualties two Indian Army soldiers injured during four hour operation.

### **Health and sanitation policies**

Modi's government developed a draft policy to introduce universal health care system, known as the National Health Assurance Mission. Under this plan, the government was to provide free drugs, diagnostic treatment, and insurance coverage for serious ailments, although budgetary concerns have delayed its implementation. In October 2014. Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ("Clean India") campaign, a national cleanliness drive to eliminate widespread open defecation prevalent in rural areas, as well as reduce widespread littering throughout the country, so as to improve India's poor sanitary conditions. As part of the programme, a public awareness campaign against littering was launched, and the Indian government stepped up construction of toilets in rural areas, as well as efforts to encourage people to use them. The Indian government also announced a series of projects to build new sewage treatment plants.

### **Defence policy**

Modi's government has increased defence spending to modernise and expand the Indian Armed Forces. In 2015, the military budget was raised by 11 %.

Modi's government also negotiated a peace agreement with National Socialist Council of Nagaland to end a Naga insurgency in northwest India that had been ongoing since the 1950s.

### **IT policy**

Modi also launched the Digital India programme, which aims to ensure that government services are available to Indians electronically so as to reduce the amount of paperwork, build infrastructure to ensure rural areas. get high-speed Internet access, boost manufacturing of electronic goods in the country and promote digital literacy, including among the poor. He launched Digital India Week on 1 July 2015 in Delhi. In September 2015, Modi visited Silicon Valley in USA to meet the likes of Mark Zuckerberg, Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella promoting the Digital India programme. Railway Stations across the country are being equipped with Wi-Fi technology.

### **Recent Programme of BJP Government and international Diplomacy**

In September 2014, Modi introduced the Make in India initiative to encourage foreign companies to manufacture products in India, with the goal of turning India into a global manufacturing hub.

Modi's government has increased infrastructure spending to massively expand the country's transportation infrastructure. Projects to improve and expand the country's road and railway networks were undertaken, with railway reform being among the government's top priorities. In November 2015, the Indian government signed major deals with General Electric and Alstom to supply India with 1,000 new diesel locomotives, which would be built in India as part of the "Make in India" scheme. In December 2015, Modi's government signed an agreement with Japan to jointly build a bullet train system linking Mumbai and Ahrnedabad. The Indian government also began a massive expansion of India's highway network, and is intent on building transport links to remote areas. In addition, an expansion of the country's water transport network was put forward, with a plan on converting 101 rivers into national waterways for the transport of goods and passengers.

Construction was started for new sea and river ports, and plans were drawn up for waterbus and hovercraft services. Modi launched a flagship scheme for developing 100 smart cities on 25 June 2015. In addition to the smart cities initiative, Modi unveiled the "smart villages" initiative, under which rural villages will be given Internet access, clean water, sanitation, and low-carbon energy, with Members of Parliament overseeing the programme's implementation in select villages in their constituencies, other than their own or those of their relatives, with the goal of at least 2,500 smart villages by 2019.

On 22 January 2015, Modi launched two schemes – Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana and Sukanya Sarnridhi Account. In June 2015, Modi launched the "Housing for All By 2022" project, which intends to eliminate slums in India by building about 20 million affordable homes for India's urban poor. In May 2016, he claimed that his government have been able to plug leakages worth Rs. 360 billion (US\$5.3 billion) across various schemes by identifying and stopping 1.62 crore fake ration cards.

In 2016, he announced his target to double the Farmers income by He also launched Pradhari Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in 2016.

Modi launched Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana in August 2014, in which 21.90 crore accounts have been opened and an amount of Rs. 377.75 billion (US\$5.6 billion) have been deposited by 18 May 2016. He launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) on 1 May 2016 to distribute LPG connections to women of BPL families.

Sh. Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister of India on 26 May 2014 at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. He was the first to invite all leaders of the SAARC countries to his swearing-in as prime minister to strengthen ties among its member states. Continuing his efforts to promote close relationships with neighbouring countries, his first foreign visit as prime minister was to Bhutan.

Modi visited Nepal on 8 August 2014, and began a five-day trip to Japan on 30 August. On 17 September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in India; financial memoranda of understanding and cooperation agreements between the countries were signed, which Modi called a new chapter in their economic relationship. The prime minister had a successful visit to the United States in the last week of September, which led to an improvement in relations between India and the US. In a 27 September 2014 address to the United Nations General Assembly Modi asked for the adoption of 21 June as International Yoga Day, and a resolution doing so was approved by the 193-member body. He celebrated the same by doing Yoga in Delhi in 2015 and in Chandigarh in 2016.

He also started a monthly Radio Programme titled "Mann Ki Baat" on 3rd October 2014. He repealed 1,159 obsolete laws in first two years as compared to 1,301 such laws repealed by his preceding governments over a span of 64 years. The Bhartiya Janata Party garnered 37.4% of the votes in 2019 Lok Sabha elections. This is the highest vote share received by the party nation-wide in any Lok Sabha election since the party was [re]formed in 1980.

As the Modi Government completes two years in power, with New vision and Programmes we can say that BJP has come up as a strong national alternative force in Indian politics.

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