

The 'faithful' Republic and its representations in Indian Literary and Public Discourses: A study of the changing natures of secularism in Post-Independence India

THESIS SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCTION: ARGUMENT AND CONTEXT

The purpose of the proposed doctoral project is to embark on a historiographic study of the gradual changes to the secularism discourse stemming from the Constitutional debates of 1946–49, right up to the landmark Babri Masjid judgement of the Supreme Court and the subsequent Ram Mandir Bhoomi Poojan in 2020. It is my contention that the idea of Nehruvian 'Progressive Secularism' has transmuted into a form of 'confrontational secularism' in contemporary times, that chooses to circumscribe itself into a bigger discourse of 'essential practices' rather than as something encouraged by the state. If 'Progressive Rationalism' was built on the Nehruvian idea of 'principled distance' of the state from all religions; 'confrontational secularism', in my argument, have a different origin and an even more distinct ultimatum.

It is my hypothesis that this move from Nehruvian Secular Consensus to the act of 'inducing political consent' is caused by the negotiation that goes on within the underbelly of populist politics. The secular movement, which should have remained a rational project of the civil society, almost becomes a form of a vulnerable declaration that appears today in the Preamble. Starting from an encouragement transforming into a forcible declaration, secularism in the contemporary times, arguably, remains firmly entrenched within the state policy, which privileges the cosmological against the rational. This phenomenon pits religion against the very freedom to 'essentially practise' religion. In my thesis, I shall consider Non-Anglophone Indian novels (emphasising on Bengali, Hindi and Urdu), party resolutions, electoral manifestoes and memoirs as primary texts to navigate the changes within the 'secularism discourse' in the Indian Republic.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (and the RESEARCH GAP in Existing Scholarship)

Research Gap:

The original question that led me towards my doctoral project was my own interest in how non-Anglophone Indian writers dealt with the question of 'secularism' in their work. As I went on with my readings, I realized how inconspicuous these texts were in scholarship pertaining to the said subject.

Original Research Questions:

- 1) The shift caused to the secularism discourse in terms of mentioning of the word 'secular' in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution from the 1946 argument offered by the Constituent Assembly against the addition of the phrase.
- 2) Existing scholarship on the subject of secularism and Indian Literature, singularly deals with Anglophone Indian literature. The question here is how does non-Anglophone Indian literature in major Indian languages deal with the question of 'secularism' and if at all the mood of the discourse change vis-à-vis the shift identified in question (1)
- 3) The cultural dissension points on questions of syncretism and secularism.
- 4) How does (or if at all) the Non-Anglophone texts that deal with the subject of the secularism (and the shift), accommodate the question of Provincialism within their own literary discourse?

DETAILED SYNOPSIS AND CHAPTERISATION

At the time of the constituent assembly debates, discussions on the subject of Secularism and the state were divided on three ideological standpoints. The 'no-concern' standpoint which remained the primary mood in the assembly called for a complete separation between the state and the religious establishments in a bid to consider religious practices to be a private affair between 'the man and his god'. The proponents of the 'no-concern' position asked for removal of all references to the God and the divine from the Preamble and the Constitution. The second position too echoed the same 'no-concern' theory fearing that religion would in fact weaken the democratic functions of the state. The third standpoint that arose during this debate was the 'equal respect theory' which in some sense influenced Nehru's own position.

This position included an equal respectable distance from all religions as long as its practices remained private. Curiously enough, this third position was considered as a

form of 'Indian Secularism' in the debates by individuals like K.M. Munshi while discussing the Non-Establishment cause of the American Constitution.

However, soon enough this consensus was raptured when secularism appeared as a subtle subtext in two distinct discussions: namely that of languages and that of minorities.

Cushioned between multiple positions which could effectively produce a severe problematic to the Union, Nehru's position in favour of the Ayyangar-Munshi formula (13th September, 1949, 1415) and Sardar Patel's earlier congratulatory note accepting the recommendations of the Minority sub-committee to surrender their right to reservation (Constituent Assembly Debates, 27th August, 1947, Volume 5, 199; Tejani, 2007, p. 247; Shiva Rao, 423) exemplifies a form of secularism that the Constituent Assembly had hoped to present. In this rare historical moment when actions of both Socialist-leaning Nehru, and Hindu Traditionalist Patel coalesced, a form of governmental 'secularism' was achieved that was not simply a cosmetically applied Western political doctrine applied on religious Indians as Ashis Nandy argues. It is on the contrary, a style of secularism that tries to assign a definition of 'Progress' produced from the dialectic between the 'communal identity' and the 'National identity' of the citizen. This argumentative premise of a largely Nehruvian 'progressive secularism' that bases itself on a 'benevolent neutrality towards all religion' (Jaffrelot, 1993, p. 102) would be used in the first chapter of the thesis wherein it would be argued that such a form of secularism was something that ultimately aimed to significantly reduce ascendancy of religion in Indian public life. In this chapter, I shall deal with the Parliamentary debates relating to the Hindu Code Bills of 1950, national language debate, the minorities debate and three non-anglophone literary texts, two Bengali novels (Tarashankar Bandopadhyay's 'Saptapadi' and Syed Mustafa Siraj's 'Trinabhumi'), one Hindi novel (Yashpal's "Jhootha Sach" translated to English as "This is not the Dawn"), and one Urdu novel (Qurratulain Hyder's 'Aag Ka Darya') to amplify in detail how such a model of 'progressive secularism' had its long standing impact on non-Anglophone literature of the time and whether such affects had other implications for the provincial Indian literatures. This would primarily dispel essentialist notions that have erroneously over time contended that the notion of secularism had primarily remained a 'cosmopolitan phenomenon' (Neelam Srivastava, 2007) to be found primarily in

Anglophone Indian literature(s). This chapter would mainly cover the period from 1950 (from the formal acceptance of the Indian Constitution) till the 1967 amendment to the Official Languages Act of 1963.

With the end of the 1967 border clashes with China, the 1967 General Elections were held and Indira Gandhi was sworn in as the elected Prime Minister. The start of her tenure is of considerable importance in relation to the myriad departures from the earlier ‘universal benevolence towards all religions’ discourse of secularism to a form of a bureaucratic top down form of secularism in the face of a rejuvenated Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). For BJS as well, the 1967 elections held under the Presidency of Deen Dayal Upadhyay, was a period of immense political churn and stronger religious mobilisation, aided in part by the establishment of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in 1964. The electoral manifesto of the BJS for the 1967 elections too shows an implicit turn towards the communalisation with an implicit intention of mobilisation of Hindus. The mention of the promulgation of an Uniform Civil Code, proposition of Sanskrit as the National Language of India (as opposed to the clamour for Hindi to receive the same honour in the earlier manifestos) and lastly the specific mention of Cow-Protection measures all indicate towards a specific direction of religious mobilisation that it hoped to achieve. With Deen Dayal Upadhyaya’s demise in 1968, and subsequently Atal Behari Vajpayee’s election as the BJS President, interesting changes were observed in its party resolutions on ‘communalism’. This shift is conspicuous in the June 1968, Gauhati Central Working Committee Resolution 68.11 titled the ‘Communal Threat’ where BJS for the first time makes a mention of the ‘One Nation, One People’ ideal.

Both Indira Gandhi’s insistence on bureaucratic secularism, and post-Upadhyay BJS’s invocation of ‘One Country, One People’ is in fact a representation of the anxious attempt to arrive at a Pan-Indian (ethno-nationalist) model of citizenship. A model of citizenship, that could be mobilized in the name of the ‘Nation’ or in the case of the Indira government ‘against Communalism’. In this chapter ranging from 1967 till 1977 (End of Emergency), when the 42nd Amendment to the Indian Constitution was made, which apart from making several sweeping changes to the legislature, also added the phrase ‘secular’ to the Preamble of the Indian constitution; we shall try to identify the populist invocations of faith as an ideology, and how through several iconographies, a rhetoric of populist secularism based on

‘faith-based practises’ was in popular currency. As representative texts of this chapter, we shall consider Bhisham Sahni’s ‘Tamas’, Rahi Masoom Raza’s ‘Adha Gaon’, ‘Topi Shukla’, Syed Mustafa Siraj’s ‘Kingbadantir Nayak’ and Tarashankar Bandopadhyay’s ‘Agradani’. We shall also consider the manifestos and the resolutions of the Jan Sangh during this period and also the text of the 1977 Amendment to make sense of the populist motives behind such a shift to the secularist discourse.

With the end of the National Emergency in India in 1977, the general elections unsurprisingly turned out to be a disaster for the Indira Gandhi led Congress. Instead, this was the start of the Janata Party experiment, led by Morarji Desai, swept the elections, based on the popular disaffection with the Indira led-Congress. The prison diaries of K.R. Malkani, Jayprakash Narayan and L.K. Advani recount the solidarity-based, but often uncomfortable discussions relating to the creation of a single political entity based on the amalgamation of the four main political parties (Advani, 146). However, when the Janata Party cabinet was sworn into the cabinet in 1977, the Jana Sangh contingent within the same decided to play down the more aggressive Hindu Nationalist features of their doctrine, while emphasising more on their points of decentralisation at village level and other more socio-economic, welfare based elements. This shift within the policies of Jana Sangh (as a part of the Janata combine) is important for in my argument this was effectively the start of the mainstreaming of ‘interest-group based’ politics that would ultimately lead to a form of ‘state-sponsored populist secularism’ which would directly lead to the flash-point within the ethnic-nationalist circuits during several elections leading to the violent 90s.

The Janata Party, at the start of its office developed good relations with other minority based political outfits. In the words of Christophe Jaffrelot (p. 285), this was possible due to the fact that the Emergency had brought the imprisoned RSS in close contact with the members of the Jamaat-e-Islami, thus making a dialogue possible between the two groups (Jaffrelot 285; Tyabji 1977). Such a dialogue made it possible for even the Imam Bukhari of Jama Masjid to not only join the Janata Party but also campaign for the same at the behest of Hemavati Nandan Bahuguna, who left Indira Gandhi led-Congress for Babu Jagjivan Ram-led faction Congress for Democracy (who in turn had an electoral pact with the Janata Party for 1977).

Bahuguna's significance lay in the fact that he remained strongly credited for popularising the 'iftar' as a political event as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1973, a cue that Indira Gandhi is stated to have followed during the National Emergency. (Ahmed, n.d., Milli Gazette, <https://www.milligazette.com/Archives/15-1-2000/Art14.htm>; Mohan Guruswamy, Deccan Chronicle, <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/140701/commentary-op-ed/article/history-political-iftar-parties>; Vardhan Singh 128)

Such mainstreaming of 'interest group politics' was in the nature of the Janata combine precisely due to its composition in which there were often strong flare-ups of conflicting political resolves. These conflicts brought the combine to a standstill in the aftermath of 1980 general election reversal of the split factions of the Janata Party, the Jana Sangh members opted out of the combine and formed the Bharatiya Janata Party and elected Atal Bihari Vajpayee as its first President. Vajpayee in his first presidential address for the BJP underlined the party's allegiance to the visions of Jayprakash Narayan, while accepting that their walkout of the Janata coalition was mainly due to the issue of the dual membership of the party and the RSS. BJP's aspiration for the Janata Party's base was evident in the fact that it fought its first electoral campaign on the basis of the 1977 electoral manifesto of the Janata Party. The attempt to emulate Jayprakash Narayan's own ideological vision, was furthermore noted in Vajpayee's own Presidential address, where he mentions 'Gandhian Socialism', 'Integral Humanism' and 'Positive Secularism' in the same breath. Of the above three, while 'Gandhian Socialism' was a homage to Jayprakash Narayan inspired Janata movement and 'Integral Humanism' was an insistence to Deen Dayal Upadhyay influenced credo of the Jana Sangh, 'Positive Secularism' was in fact an authentic enunciation which in my argument was again a mainstream political acceptance of the reality of 'state-sponsored populist secularism' that the Hindu Nationalist base of the party had to come to terms with. Vajpayee states:

'Democracy and secularism are inseparable. A state that discriminates between one citizen and another on grounds of faith, which does not treat them equally, cannot claim to be truly democratic because one of the cardinal principles on which democracy is based is equality of all citizens. Our commitment to secularism, therefore, is as fundamental as our commitment to Democracy...

It is a matter of regret that over the years Congress policies have distorted the concept of secularism. It has come to be identified simply with protection of interests of religious minorities. Indeed very often Secularism becomes only a respectable garb for appeasement of narrow communal or sectional interests...

In the Indian background, we can claim to have established a truly secular State only if we are able to instil in every citizen, irrespective of his religion, caste, region, or language, a sense of Indian-ness, which I believe exists in all our countrymen and which needs to be assiduously ruptured and strengthened' (Vajpayee, 1981, 10-11)

Vajpayee's linking of secularism with Democracy, uniform citizenry and the invocation of the political register of 'Indianness' is in essence a definitive call for a cultural Nationalism. So if Indira led-Congress of the period is to be criticised for practising secularism with communal intent, Vajpayee's expects the BJP to involve itself in a form of 'positive secularism' which is in actuality a basis of cultural Nationalism.

The decision of the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1986 to promulgate the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill is to be considered as one of the highlights of this period, which arguably sets in motion the era of religious polarisation in the country, from which point onwards the identity of the minority community in India becomes synonymous with the Muslim identity in terms of appeasement.

In this chapter, ranging from the End of Emergency in 1977 till the Demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, I seek to argue how the earlier forms of popular secularism, had largely transmuted into a form of 'state-sponsored populist secularism', and later into an 'state-controlled secularism' towards the end of the 80s notably during the Shah Bano affair, and ultimately culminating in the Babri Masjid flare-up of 1992. For the most part beyond 1980, in terms of the establishment of BJP, and Indian National Congress' own complicity in the Shah Bano affair and Anti-Sikh riots, it is my contention that the it was effectively the 'interest-group politics' (perhaps not explicitly communalism, as Rajni Kothari argues) that was fast becoming the norm within the Indian Parliamentary politics. As representative literary texts of this chapter, we shall consider Krishna Sobti's 'Zindaginama' (Hindi), Rahi Masoom Raza's "Katra Bi Aarzoo' (Hindi), Samareesh Basu's 'Jug Jug Jiye' (Bengali) and Abul

Bashar's 'Phoolbou' (Bengali). We shall also refer to the texts of the Lok Sabha debates on Indira Gandhi's assassination, the Shah Bano case and also on the resurgence of Ram Janmabhoomi Movement which ultimately led to the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992.

1992 is in most aspects to be considered as a watershed moment in the political history of Independent India. The issue of the Babri Masjid and its importance to the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement had remained important to the political order ever since the Indian Independence. In the aftermath of Advani's arrest, which ultimately led to the collapse of the National Front government, BJP faced the strong paradox of being conceived effectively as religious leaders. However, the introduction of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Bill which in the Parliament by the central government, allowed BJP the opportunity to politicise the dissent during the Lok Sabha debate, even though the Babri Masjid/ Ramjanmabhoomi was excluded from the scope of the act, because it was a subject of litigation at that point. In the Parliamentary session, the BJP members took up their cudgels to attack the Congress-legacy secularism. Advani's comment exemplified BJP's position clearly:

'...I would not like to go into the details of this Bill. Most of my colleague have discussed its various aspects. My personal opinion is that there won't be any meaningful gain. But during the discussion it was also discussed that why have we not done anything about Ayodhya or Ram Janam Bhoomi while we were in the government which has now become a big issue and people are agitated over it throughout the country...I remember it vividly that except the last two elections of 1989 and 1991, the issue of Ram Janam Bhoomi and Ayodhya never became an issue for the elections...the fact is that nobody has ever made any reference to it till 1984 elections. Neither Hindu nor Muslims nor any political party had ever said that Ayodhya problem, which has assumed bigger dimension, should be solved.

...My submission is that if there is one norm for every citizen then Secularism would come to stay permanent in India. But there are two norms or standard in the country which we have observed this morning in this very House.' (Advani, Places of Worship, Matters Under Rule 377, September 10th 1991, 478-80)

In bringing up the reference to the 'Shahbano case in 1985' (p.479), Advani effectively legitimated the exclusion of Babri Masjid/ Ram Janam Bhoomi from the

purview of the act as a decision of the central government while omitting to mention the legal status of the matter. As a result, the Ram Janam Bhoomi movement effectively became more than just a religious event and acquired the colours of an Anti-Congress, Hindu Nationalist political agenda.

The Babri event of 1992 thus effectively brought the Hindu Nationalist movement to a flash point and effectively engineered the minority other to be primarily a Muslim.

Such problematic implications of secularism were again brought to the forefront by the BJP during the Lok Sabha debates on the 2001 Parliamentary Attacks in the face of a transnational presence of the Muslim identity. The discourse of secularism had by then changed suitably keeping in sync with the neoliberal times. BJP leader L.K. Advani's speech at the Lok Sabha on 19th December, 2001, in the wake of the Parliament attack, notably concedes the consistency of the BJP's project of a cultural (read majoritarian) basis of citizenship:

...I want to assure those people who have expressed such apprehension that this is not a war between Hindu and Muslim. I wish that this should not be a war between India and Pakistan. It should be a war between a civilized community and a barbarian society. Terrorism is 'asabhyata'. Terrorism is barbarism. Civilization Vs barbarism is the kind of struggle, and if there can be another aspect of it then it can be Democracy Vs. Terrorism and this can be one aspect and one of the specific features of Democracy is that there are one hundred crore in India and all of them are equal. This is the specific feature of democracy. ("Discussion Under Rule 193: Terrorist Attack On Parliament House," 2001)

Advani's concession is important, for he proffers for a newer binary that of democracy and terrorism as the bases of Nationalist imagination in a neoliberal world. Advani's speech is also to be considered important for he effectively presented the issue of Islamic terrorism as a transnational menace, towards the end of speech where he states:

...I would like to say to my Muslim brethren that the way in which the incidents of 11th September, 2001 happened in America and Bin Laden turned out to be a symbol of terrorism for them—if somebody appreciates the actions of Bin Laden then by such actions he creates doubts in the mind of the people. ("Discussion Under Rule 193: Terrorist Attack On Parliament House," 2001)

In his speech we not only find a possible linkage of domestic terrorism with the international ‘War on terror’, but we also find a cognizance of the fact that the Indian Muslims must open themselves up to the neoliberal progressive forces, as opposed to pandering to the ‘global image of Islam as an inherently regressive religion with a unique propensity for encouraging violence among its adherents’ (Kaul, 2018). Likewise, the ‘good Muslims’/ ‘bad Muslims’ binary as perpetuated by (then) political leadership of the antiterrorism alliance, notably Tony Blair and George Bush (Mamdani, 2002) is replaced by the right-leaning NDA alliance as progressive Muslims/regressive Muslims with due support from the neoliberal climate of the period.

This trend noticeably continues effectively till 2006, when the UPA-I Government led by Manmohan Singh’s Congress engaged the 7-member High Level Committee led by former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Rajinder Sachar to study the social, economic and educational condition of Muslims in India. The findings of this committee are of considerable importance in the light of the landmark T.M.A. Pai Foundation vs State of Karnataka Judgement.

As representative literary texts for this chapter ranging from 1992 (aftermath of Babri Masjid) till 2006 (publication of the Sachar report) we shall consider the following: Syed Mustafa Siraj’s ‘Aleek Manush’ (1994) (Bengali), Narayan Sanyal’s ‘Hindu Na Ora Muslim’ (1995) (Bengali), Tasleema Nasrin’s ‘Lajja’ (1993) (Bengali), Uday Prakash’s ‘...Aur Ant Mein Prarthana’ (1998) (Hindi), Kashinath Singh’s ‘Kashi Ke Assi’ (2002) (Hindi) and Sheila Rohekar’s ‘Taaviz’ (2005) (Hindi). We shall also refer to the debate around the Places of Worship Act, the debate surrounding the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance 2001 in the aftermath of the 2001 Parliament Attacks and the findings of the Sachar Committee report to navigate how that state-controlled secularism of the earlier period moves towards a form of confrontational secularism in the recently neoliberal period.

From the time of publication of the Sachar report to the Ram Mandir Bhoomi Poojan in 2020, the confrontational secularism policy of the successive government could be effectively understood as something that is both consensual yet confrontational at the same time. Both these events exemplify a model of confrontational secularism (with its origins lying in Vajpayee’s own 1980 BJP Presidential Address mentioning

Positive Secularism) that draws a consensus from the greater public life of the country. It is hard to argue whether this betrays a continuous erosion of the secular norm within the greater society, or if this marks the position of the Indian citizen in a post-secular polity, as opposed to the ‘individuals’ to whom Nehru guaranteed “freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion’ in Article 25 of the 1950 Constitution (Mitra, 1989,p.113) towards the formation of a citizenry that is conscious and fiercely protective of their religious rights. (Vajpayee 1981, Advani 1991, Kothari 1998 and Advani 2001)

CHAPTERISATIONS IN BRIEF

I intend to divide my thesis into following chapters (yet untitled):

- **1950-1967**: In this chapter, I shall deal with the Parliamentary debates relating to the Hindu Code Bills of 1950, national language debate, the minorities debate and three non-anglophone literary texts, two Bengali novels (Tarashankar Bandopadhyay’s ‘Saptapadi’ and Syed Mustafa Siraj’s ‘Trinabhumi’), one Hindi novel (Yashpal’s “Jhootha Sach” translated to English as ‘This is not the Dawn’), and one Urdu novel (Qurratulain Hyder’s ‘Aag Ka Darya’) to amplify in detail how the model of ‘progressive secularism’ had its long standing impact on non-Anglophone literature of the time and whether such affects had other implications for the provincial Indian literatures.
- **1967-1977**: In this chapter ranging from 1967 till 1977 (End of Emergency), when the 42nd Amendment to the Indian Constitution was made, which apart from making several sweeping changes to the legislature, also added the phrase ‘secular’ to the Preamble of the Indian constitution; we shall try to identify the populist invocations of faith as an ideology, As representative texts of this chapter, we shall consider Bhisham Sahni’s ‘Tamas’, Rahi Masoom Raza’s ‘Adha Gaon’, ‘Topi Shukla’, and Syed Mustafa Siraj’s ‘Kingbadantir Nayak’. We shall also consider the manifestos and the resolutions of the Jan Sangh during this period and also the text of the 1977 Amendment to make sense of the populist motives behind such a shift to the secularist discourse.

- **1977-1992:** In this chapter, ranging from the End of Emergency in 1977 till the Demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, I seek to argue how the earlier forms of popular secularism, had largely transmuted into a form of ‘state-sponsored populist secularism’, and later into an ‘state-controlled secularism’ towards the end of the 80s notably during the Shah Bano affair, and ultimately culminating in the Babri Masjid flare-up of 1992. As representative literary texts of this chapter, we shall consider Krishna Sobti’s ‘Zindaginama’ (Hindi), Rahi Masoom Raza’s ‘Katra Bi Aarzoo’ (Hindi), Samresh Basu’s ‘Jug Jug Jiye’ (Bengali), Abul Bashir’s ‘Phoolbou’ (Bengali) and Syed Mustafa Siraj’s ‘Aleek Manush’ (1994). We shall also refer to the texts of the Lok Sabha debates on Indira Gandhi’s assassination, the Shah Bano case and also on the resurgence Ram Janmabhoomi Movement which ultimately led to the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992.
- **1992-2006:** As representative literary texts for this chapter ranging from 1992 (aftermath of Babri Masjid) till 2006 (publication of the Sachar report) we shall consider the following: (Bengali), Narayan Sanyal’s ‘Hindu Na Ora Muslim’ (1995) (Bengali), Tasleema Nasrin’s ‘Lajja’ (1993) (Bengali), Uday Prakash’s ‘...Aur Ant Mein Prarthana’ (1998) (Hindi), Kashinath Singh’s ‘Kashi Ke Assi’ (2002) (Hindi) and Sheila Rohekar’s ‘Taaviz’ (2005) (Hindi). We shall also refer to the debate around the Places of Worship Act, the debate surrounding the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance 2001 in the aftermath of the 2001 Parliament Attacks and the findings of the Sachar Committee report to navigate how that state-controlled secularism of the earlier period moves towards a form of confrontational secularism in the recently neoliberal period.
- **2006-2020:** From the time of publication of the Sachar report to the Ram Mandir Bhoomi Poojan in 2020, the confrontational secularism policy of the successive government could be effectively understood as something that is both consensual yet confrontational at the same time. Chandan Pandey’s ‘Keertigan’ published in Hindi, would be the sole text representative literary text in the period concerned apart from in depth analysis of media phenomenon such as ‘Love Jihad’ and the greater discourse around the annulment of Triple Talak.

METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of my project I wish to strictly adhere to discourse analysis especially within the larger ambit of Non-Anglophone Indian Novels (between 1950-2020). Electoral manifestoes, Party documents, records of parliamentary discussions and personal memoirs of certain political activists would also form a bulk of the primary materials along with the Novels considered. I have for the most part concentrated on Bengali, Hindi and Urdu novels to obtain a general historiographic basis of the secularism debate in multiple non-Anglophone Indian languages. I do not intend to add audio-visual texts (such as films, documentaries, serials and radio-plays) for existing research on the subject has focused solely on the Anglophone novels produced by Indian authors. Considering the non-Anglophone novel primarily thus would afford a greater argumentation in favour of cultural ‘Othering’ of the non-Anglophone literary establishment and how the secularism discourse functions within it. Most of the non-literary primary texts considered have been digitised and it is for this reason I would not need to visit archives for accessing them.

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