

# Analysis of Indian Comprehensive National Power under BJP Government

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## Executive Summary

Ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led government came to power in India, the country has seen significant changes in policy and ideological orientation both internally and externally. The change indicates a greater confidence in self-image and power capabilities of India. For this reason the increasing confidence of Indian government regarding its comprehensive national power needs to be realistically assessed. This policy brief uses five indicators and a tertiary dataset to analyze Indian comprehensive national power. The five indicators include military power, economic power, political power, national ideology, and national cohesion. The study concludes that a large part of increasing Indian power is a continuity of developments from past governments. However there have been significant changes in posture and crisis behavior in domain of military power, slowdown in domain of economic power, and an increasing consolidation and domination of political power. The consolidation of political power has also led to a shift of ideological orientation towards totalitarian tendencies in the adherents of Hindutva, resulting in increasing in-group and decreasing out-group cohesion. Consequently, this has been resulting in increased marginalization and persecution of minorities. The study highlights the need for all stakeholders at national, regional and global levels to be apprised of the possible threats and consequences emanating from shift in India's policies under the BJP government.

## Issue

The radical shift in India's internal and external policy could not come without a confidence among the decision-makers regarding the comprehensive national power of India. Therefore it is pertinent to assess and gauge the changes in Indian comprehensive national power since the BJP government's ascension to power with a view to highlighting the true state of Indian comprehensive national power.

## Background

Indian internal security and foreign policy orientation has altered significantly, especially after 2014 when the BJP government came to power. The already increasing tilt of India towards the United States cemented rapidly into a strategic alliance under the BJP government. This was evidenced by the signing of several agreements with the United States. The Indo-US strategic relationship fructified further in the shape of four foundational defence agreements between the two countries. Those four agreements include: GSOMIA, LEMOA, COMCASA, and BECA.<sup>1</sup> India also attempted to consolidate its position as a 'net security provider' in the

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<sup>1</sup> GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement), LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement), COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement), and BECA (Basics Exchange and Cooperation Agreement) – signed in 2002, 2016, 2018, and 2020 respectively – are four foundational agreements that the United States signs with its close strategic partners. See:

region through SAGAR initiative, and reinvigoration of Quad. Internally, the government took a number of steps to change the economic orientation of the country, status of minorities, and the overall state of human development and security. They also included radical steps including the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A of the constitution to annex Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), passing the exclusionary Citizenship Amendment Act (2019).

## Theoretical Framework for the Research

For the purpose of this research, the comprehensive national power is defined as a combination of material and moral power in a nation. Therefore, India's comprehensive national power can be gauged by measuring material as well as moral power. For measuring the material power, Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) is used that includes measures of military and economic powers of a country, and state of its population. However the CINC dataset only provides data up to 2016. For this reason, the measures of material power are also qualitatively discussed under the sections of military and economic power. Whereas the moral power is also measured qualitatively under three indicators, namely political power, national ideology and national cohesion.

CINC is an index that seeks to statistically measure material capabilities (power) of a country using the data from Correlates of War Project, an internationally renowned dataset on warfare and international relations.<sup>2</sup> CINC is calculated under the National Material Capabilities (NMC) dataset of the project.<sup>3</sup> The latest version (6.0) of NMC provides data on material capabilities of states from 1815 to 2016. The CINC is calculated by using six key indicators of: military expenditure, military personnel, iron and steel production, energy consumption, total population and urban population.<sup>4</sup> It calculated for each country is an average of individual values of all six indicators of material capabilities, whereas adding CINC of each country in the dataset would yield an aggregate value of 1.

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Baber Ali Bhatti, "Eroding strategic stability in region," Press Reader, accessed on December 20, 2021, <https://www.pressreader.com/pakistan/pakistan-today-lahore/20201107/281964610238543>.

<sup>2</sup> The Correlates of War Project was started in 1963 by J David Singer at University of Michigan. After his retirement, the project was transferred to Penn State University in 2001. It now operates under an Advisory Board and Director, with different datasets decentralized to different host institutions. For details, see: "History," The Correlates of War Project, accessed on January 05, 2021, <https://correlatesofwar.org/history>.

<sup>3</sup> The National Material Capabilities dataset is hosted at University of North Texas, and managed by Michael Greig and Andrew Enterline. See: "Correlates of War People," The Correlates of War Project, accessed on January 05, 2021, <https://correlatesofwar.org/people>.

<sup>4</sup> For details on how CINC and all six variables are calculated, see "National Material Capabilities (NMC) Data Documentation (Version 6.0)," Correlates of War Project, accessed on December 28, 2021, [https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities/nmc\\_documentation-6-0.zip/@@download/file/NMC\\_Documentation%206.0.zip](https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities/nmc_documentation-6-0.zip/@@download/file/NMC_Documentation%206.0.zip); also see: J. David Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985" *International Interactions* Vol. 14 (1987): pp. 115-132, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050628808434695>.

In case of India, the average CINC score of the country from 1947 to 2016 is 0.0598 with an average annual change of 0.74 per cent. The average CINC score of India during the Congress government (2004-2014) was 0.7879 with average change of 1.22 per cent annually. Whereas, according to the available data for first two years of BJP government at an average percentage change of 1.90, the CINC score was 0.8603 (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> Despite the rate of change being higher during first two years, the change could not be declared decisive due to being a part of a longer trend of incremental increase in material capabilities since mid-1980s.<sup>6</sup>

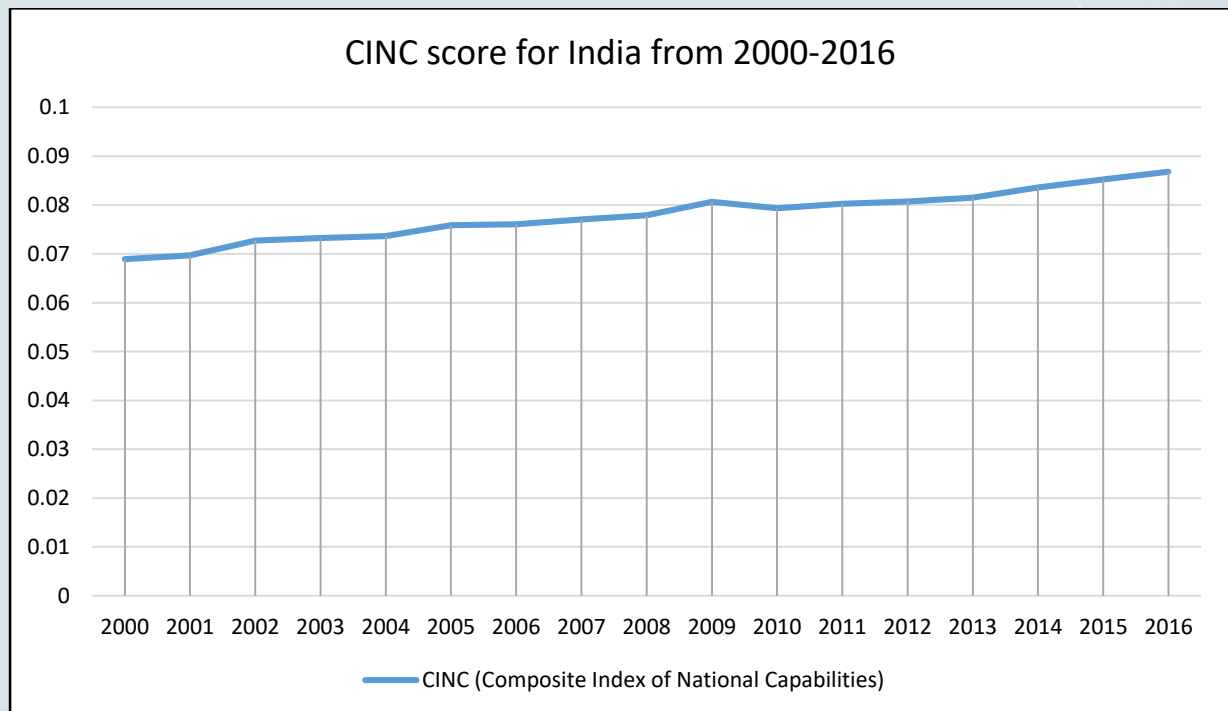


Figure 1 Graph depicting CINC score of India from year 2000-2016.

Source: "NMC 6.0 Abridged," Correlates of War Project

## Analysis

### Military Power

There have been major changes in India's military capabilities and posture ever since the BJP government came into power. The changes relate to India's defence cooperation, military modernization, posture, crisis behaviour, and defence spending. However the reason for all the changes may not be rooted exclusively in the attitude of BJP government.

<sup>5</sup> For values of CINC score and average annual change in CINC for India from 1947 to 2016, see Annexure A.

<sup>6</sup> If the 74 year history of India is divided into two parts, the average annual change in CINC from 1947 to 1984 is 0.11 per cent, while from 1985 to 2016 it is 1.47 per cent. This indicates an incremental increase in material capabilities from mid-1980s onwards. Also see Annexure A.

As mentioned earlier, India's strategic relationship with the United States further strengthened during the BJP government with agreements like BECA and operationalization of Quad into a working group, with all four member states – United States, India, Japan and Australia – joining Indian-led Malabar exercises.<sup>7</sup> India-France defence cooperation also increased in the intermittent years, with both countries conducting joint exercises in French Indian Ocean territories since 2020.<sup>8</sup> India has also continued to expand defence procurements receiving P8I maritime patrol aircrafts from the United States, Scorpene class submarines under P75 project from France, and the S-400 ballistic missile defence (BMD) system from Russia.

The development in India's defence cooperation and procurements also went in line with the military modernization that India sought since the start of century. Presently under the BJP government India plans to indigenize the defence industry with a number of projects underway that include: building and sea-trials of an aircraft carrier, plans for a total of 24 submarines including nuclear ballistic missile and attack submarines, a number of destroyers, and production of Tejas aircraft.<sup>9</sup> In a recent statement, India's Defence Minister also announced that India has informed its allies that they will make defence systems in India rather than relying on imports.<sup>10</sup> The Minister said "We are asking the world to come make in India, make for India and to make for the world," and added that the government envisions India to be a global manufacturing hub of defence systems.

Yet many impediments continue in India's defence industry. The key among them is inadequacy of industry to fulfil local demand. In June 2021, the Indian government extended an import ban on 209 items to promote defence industry indigenisation. However according to retired Indian general H. S. Panag, the indigenisation is focused on current needs of forces rather than any future forecasts.<sup>11</sup> India's ambitious timelines on procurement plans also fall

<sup>7</sup> Manoj Rawat, "Quad 2.0 Is Off to a Good Start – It Must Keep Going," *The Diplomat*, November 23, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/quad-2-0-is-off-to-a-good-start-it-must-keep-going/>.

<sup>8</sup> Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "What's behind the Rising India-France Maritime Activity in the Indo-Pacific?," Observer Research Foundation, March 27, 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/whats-behind-the-rising-india-france-maritime-activity-in-the-indo-pacific-63753/>.

<sup>9</sup> "Modernization of Indian Naval Forces – The Past, Present, and Future," SHM Group, July 26, 2018, <https://www.shmgroup.com/blog/modernization-of-indian-naval-forces-the-past-present-and-future/>; Krishn Kaushik, "Explained: India's submarine strength," *The Indian Express*, November 09, 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/simply-put-indias-submarine-strength-7613847/>; "Cabinet Approves Procurement of 83 Light Combat Aircrafts (LCA) 'Tejas' from HAL for IAF", Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 13 January 2021.

<sup>10</sup> "Have told US, Russia and France that will make defence systems in India: Rajnath Singh," *The Indian Express* December 19, 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/defence-equipment-will-be-manufactured-within-india-rajnath-singh-7679128/>.

<sup>11</sup> H. S. Panag, "'Positive indigenisation list' got lengthier but India's defence industry far from ready," *The Print*, June 03, 2021, <https://theprint.in/opinion/positive-indigenisation-list-got-lengthier-but-indias-defence-industry-far-from-ready/670630/>.

short most of the time. The P75I submarine procurement project is already around twelve years short, while the P75 project was five years short of the timeline.<sup>12</sup>

Another area concerning India's military power is its posture in peacetime and during crises. Even before the BJP was elected into power in 2014, the party announced in its manifesto to revise the nuclear policy, putting country's No First Use (NFU) posture in risk.<sup>13</sup> Later in 2016 the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar questioned the declaration of NFU policy at an event.<sup>14</sup> These developments have put India's NFU in ambiguity and initiated a debate on whether India still adheres to NFU or not.<sup>15</sup>

The crisis behaviour and decision-making in India has also changed significantly since the Modi government. Traditionally almost all the India-Pakistan crises (with the exception of four wars) have been managed by the United States as a third-party mediator without resorting to escalation. However this trend has also seen a marked shift during two major crises that occurred during the BJP-led government, starting from the Uri crisis in 2016. During the Uri crisis – that resulted from an insurgent attack on Indian military – India claimed a surgical strike inside Pakistan, marking a shift from policy of strategic restraint and reliance on diplomacy. The same was repeated during the Pulwama-Balakot crisis when India attempted to bomb Pakistani territory beyond Azad Jammu and Kashmir for the first time since 1971 war.<sup>16</sup> Both these instances indicate upping the ante and greater brinkmanship during crises by India.

Finally, the military expenditure by India can also be a key indicator to gauge the shift in military power of the country. Even though India taking the spot of third largest military spender after United States and China in 2019 caught great attention by media,<sup>17</sup> yet an analysis of India's defence expenditure based on World Bank data shows that the increase in military budget of India in seven years (\$21.9 billion) of BJP government is almost equivalent to the

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<sup>12</sup> Kaushik, "Explained: India's submarine strength."

<sup>13</sup> Sanjeev Miglani and John Chalmers, "Debates on India's Nuclear Posture," *Reuters*, April 07, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/india-election-bjp-manifesto-idINDEEA3605820140407?edition-redirect=in>.

<sup>14</sup> Sushant Singh, "Manohar Parrikar questions India's no-first-use nuclear policy, adds 'my thinking'," *The Indian Express*, December 22, 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/manohar-parrikar-questions-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-adds-my-thinking-4369062/>.

<sup>15</sup> Ji Yeon-jung, "Debates on India's Nuclear Posture," *Asian Regional Review* Vol. 2, No. 12 (2019), <https://diverseasia.snu.ac.kr/?p=3465>; Lora Saalman, "India's no-first-use dilemma: Strategic consistency or ambiguity towards China and Pakistan," SIPRI, December 02, 2020, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2020/indias-no-first-use-dilemma-strategic-consistency-or-ambiguity-towards-china-and-pakistan>.

<sup>16</sup> Moeed W. Yusuf, "The Pulwama Crisis: Flirting With War in a Nuclear Environment," Arms Control Association, May 2019, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-05/features/pulwama-crisis-flirting-war-nuclear-environment>.

<sup>17</sup> Amin Ahmed, "India has world's third biggest defence spending now," *Dawn*, April 28, 2021, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1552802/india-has-worlds-third-biggest-defence-spending-now>.

increase in preceding seven years (\$22.7 billion) during the Congress government.<sup>18</sup> In fact the Congress government since 2004 had significantly increased the military expenditure from \$20 billion to \$51 billion by the end of its term in 2014, while an upward trend in military expenditure started gradually since the opening up of Indian economy from 1990s. Any decisive shift in India's military power during the Hindutva-led BJP government cannot be discerned. The developments in military expenditure and modernization plans including many procurements were a continuation of earlier trends. The present government intends to indigenise the defence industry and procurements. Yet there are deficits in capacity and time frame that may hamper the indigenisation efforts. However there has been a major shift in alliance-making and multi-lateralism with an inclination towards the West. There has also been a consequent shift in crisis behaviour and nuclear policy that tends to increasingly destabilize the strategic stability in region.

### Economic Power

Indian economy, like that of China, has seen two major phases since independence. The first is that of centralization and protectionism, while the second of liberalization and opening up. India's economic liberalization started in 1990s when the Gulf war was followed by a global oil crisis, and the collapse of Soviet Union. Structural reforms were made easy due to India's entering in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme in 1991 due to balance of payments crisis. This initiated rapid GDP growth in India averaging around 6-7 per cent annually since 1992 that continued despite the global economic crisis of 2008.<sup>19</sup>

A steady decline took place in from 2012 to 2018, the time coinciding with election of BJP government. During this period the exports grew at 4.9 per cent annually, whereas the figure stood at 15 per cent during 2003-2011. Likewise the investment rate during 2012-2018 increased at 2 per cent annually, while during 2003-2011 it was 12 per cent. One part of slowdown is owed to the increase in corporate debt, non-performing loans and devaluation of Indian rupee.<sup>20</sup> The other is due to the centralized and marketable policies that can be used for projections rather than reforms under Narendra Modi's BJP government.<sup>21</sup>

The rise of Hindutva along BJP government also came with a political economy of its own. The RSS and affiliated organizations of the Sangh Parivar usually espouse an indigenous model of economic development in contrast to existing ideologies of capitalism and socialism. They

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<sup>18</sup> "Military expenditure (current USD) – India," World Bank, accessed on December 23, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?locations=IN>.

<sup>19</sup> Rafael Henrique Dias Manzi and Jean Santos Lima, "Another great power in the room? India's economic rise in the 21st century and the dual economy challenge," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* Vol. 64, Issue 1 (2021): pp. 2, 4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329202100105>.

<sup>20</sup> Manzi and Lima, "Another great power in the room? India's economic rise in the 21st century and the dual economy challenge," pp. 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> John Echeverri-Gent, Aseema Sinha and Andrew Wyatt, "Economic distress amidst political success: India's economic policy under Modi, 2014-2019," *India Review* Vol. 20, Issue 4 (2021): pp. 404-405, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736489.2021.1958582>.

reject the neoliberal concepts like free markets, and favour small and medium enterprises based on conservative values, promoting state interventionism to alleviate poverty and remove socioeconomic inequalities.<sup>22</sup>

The economic ideology of Sangh Parivar could not dominate in the earlier BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government from 1998 to 2004 due to Prime Minister Vajpayee's promotion of privatization instead of centralization. Prime Minister Narendra Modi however has inclined more towards centralization and welfare models in order to appease the Sangh Parivar and to gain political popularity. For the same reason Prime Minister Modi has taken a decision back for the first time since coming into power in 2014 in November 2021 i.e. repealing of controversial agricultural laws that sparked protests across the country.<sup>23</sup> The decision was reversed to appease the farmers due to upcoming elections in important states of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

However one part of the economy where India has received considerable growth has been the foreign direct investment (FDI). Since its opening up in 1991, the FDI in India grew from \$97 million to \$82 billion in 2020-21. The cumulative FDI during BJP government since 2014 has been highest in history of India, despite slower growth of investment rate. Total FDI during the seven years of BJP government from 2014-2021 has been \$440 billion, in contrast to \$305 billion during ten years Congress government from 2004-2014 and \$3 billion during five year tenure of Vajpayee government.<sup>24</sup> The economic growth during Modi government reached record high at 40% (\$51.4 billion) during first three quarters of fiscal year 2020-21 due to ease of doing business and capitalizing on the investments that were originally meant for China before the pandemic restrictions.<sup>25</sup>

External debt is also one of the indicators where India performed relatively better before contraction of the economy after Covid-19 pandemic. The central government's debt ratio against GDP was less than 50 per cent from 2014 onwards ever since the BJP government took control, and stood at 47.9 per cent in 2019. However after the pandemic, the number rose sharply in 2020 and 2021 to 51.6 per cent and 58.8 per cent respectively.<sup>26</sup> This also indicates a better performance of the government before succumbing to the pandemic.

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<sup>22</sup> Echeverri-Gent, Sinha and Wyatt, "Economic distress amidst political success," p. 405.

<sup>23</sup> "Farm laws: India PM Narendra Modi repeals controversial reforms," *BBC*, November 19, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-59342627>.

<sup>24</sup> Remya Nair, "\$97 mn in 1991 to \$82 bn in 2021 — how reforms made India a go-to destination for FDI," *The Print*, July 22, 2021, <https://theprint.in/economy/97-mn-in-1991-to-82-bn-in-2021-how-reforms-made-india-a-go-to-destination-for-fdi/699786/>.

<sup>25</sup> Subhayan Chakraborty, "Explained | How did India get record FDI in FY21 despite the pandemic?," *Money Control*, March 08, 2021, <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/explained-how-did-india-get-record-fdi-in-fy21-despite-the-pandemic-6619301.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Asit Ranjan Mishra, "India' Debt to GDP ratio is now at a 14-year high," *Live Mint*, Updated June 28, 2021, <https://www.livemint.com/economy/debt-at-58-8-of-gdp-as-economy-shrinks-11624818421328.html>.



The economic power of India grew rapidly since 1990s owing to decentralization and liberalization of the economy. The trend continued during earlier BJP government under Vajpayee. However the inception of incumbent Modi government in 2014 led to a reversal towards centralization as a part of political strategy to consolidate BJP's electoral position. This led to a slowdown in Indian economy, decreasing exports and increasing trade deficit. However the ease of business and foreign direct investment continued to improve during the same time period. External debt also declined from 2014 to 2019, but saw a sharp increase afterwards due to the pandemic. The pandemic perhaps had the strongest impact on Indian economy, marking a steep decline of -7.95 per cent during 2020.

### Indices of Human Security and Development

As the concepts of human security and development have gained importance in recent years, the indices of human development and security can also be used as indicators of India's comprehensive power. Any assessment of comprehensive power must also take into account the state of human development and security in a country, as there can be no comprehensive security in the absence of human security. Whereas, human security can be defined as freedom from threat<sup>27</sup>, or freedom for those actions that people would freely choose to do in absence of any constraints or threats.<sup>28</sup>

In this regard, Indian author Aakar Patel has recently analysed India's position in various indices of human security and development before and during the years of Modi government. A selected presentation of indices assessed by Patel can present a clear picture of the state of human security and development since the BJP government.<sup>29</sup> To measure life expectancy, availability of basic necessities, and happiness of people (development and emancipation), the Human Development Index (HDI), UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's World Happiness Report, Legatim Institute's Prosperity Index, and Numbeo Quality of Life Index may be used. In HDI global rankings India changed from 130<sup>th</sup> to 131<sup>st</sup> between 2014 and 2020. World Happiness Report ranked India at 117<sup>th</sup> in 2015, which fell to 139<sup>th</sup> in 2021. In Legatim Institute's Prosperity Index, it fell from 99<sup>th</sup> in 2015 to 101<sup>st</sup> position in 2020. In Numbeo Quality of Life Index it fell from 48<sup>th</sup> position in 2014 to 65<sup>th</sup> in 2021. In Sustainable Development Index, India fell from 110<sup>th</sup> in 2016 to 120<sup>th</sup> position in 2021.

For a broader measure of civil liberties, human rights, and press freedom (freedom from threat) several indices may be presented for a clear picture. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index," India fell in 2021 to 53<sup>rd</sup> position from 27<sup>th</sup> in 2014. In Freedom House's Freedom in the World index the country fell 77<sup>th</sup> to 67<sup>th</sup> position (partly free), and in IIOJK

<sup>27</sup> Barry Buzan, "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century," *International Affairs* Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 1991): p. 432, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2621945>.

<sup>28</sup> Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1991): p. 319, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20097269>.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed account of the preceding indices mentioned in this section, and all indices described by Patel, see: Aakar Patel, *Price of the Modi Years* (New Delhi: Westland Publishers, 2021), Chapter 1.

from 49<sup>th</sup> (partly free) in 2014 to 29<sup>th</sup> position (not free). In “Rule of Law Index” by World Justice Project, India’s position fell from 66 in 2014 to 69 in 2020. In Cato Institute’s “Human Freedom Index,” India fell from 75<sup>th</sup> ranking in 2015 to 111<sup>th</sup> in 2020. In World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, India moved from 140<sup>th</sup> in 2014 to 142<sup>nd</sup> in 2021. World Economic Forum’s (WEF) “Global Gender Gap Index” marked India at 114<sup>th</sup> in 2014 and 140<sup>th</sup> in 2020. In World’s Most Dangerous Countries for Women by Thomson Reuters Foundation, India stood on top in 2018, in contrast to 4<sup>th</sup> position in 2011. Likewise, in Internet Shutdown Tracker by Access Now’s India accounted for only 6 internet shutdowns in 2014, however by 2020 the number was 109 amounting to 70 percent of global shutdowns with most prominent shutdown in Kashmir since 2019.<sup>30</sup>

The economic indices presented by Patel also reflect a grim picture of Indian economy during the BJP government. In WEF Global Economic Competitiveness index India ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in 2017, which decreased to 68<sup>th</sup> in 2020. However the World Bank’s Doing Business Report on ease for business was one of the rare indicators where India improved significantly from 142<sup>nd</sup> in 2014 to 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2020, rising 79 places. Indian passport suffered as well, expressed in Henley Passport Index where India fell from 74<sup>th</sup> position in 2013 to 85<sup>th</sup> in 2021.<sup>31</sup>

This overview of various indices reflecting the state of human security and economic development in India clearly shows an overall decrease in almost all indices except for the ease of doing business. At some places the decline is significantly marked, while in other places it shows stagnation. Overall the state of human security and development has deteriorated during the BJP government, the underlying reasons of which shall be discussed in subsequent parts.

## Political Power

The political power in India since the BJP regime has transformed dramatically. After facing a decline in number of seats in Indian parliament since 2004 defeat to Congress, the BJP emerged as an uncontested majority party in 2014 with 282 seats.<sup>32</sup> In the 2019 elections the strength of BJP increased even more with 303 seats in the Parliament. This provided an unprecedented edge to the BJP, which had relied on coalitions to form governments before 2004.

The solidification of BJP’s position was a clear failure of Congress, as the party failed to become an alternative to BJP similar to the Democrats and Republicans in the United States. This was predicted by Indian professor Radhika Desai, who said that Congress can only avert its political demise if it manages to balance between appeasing the propertied Hindu groups

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<sup>30</sup> India had total of 6 shutdowns in 2014, 14 in 2015, 31 in 2016, 79 in 2017, 134 in 2018, 121 in 2019 and 109 in 2020. India made up for 56 per cent shutdowns in 2019, out of 213 total. Likewise in 2020, out of 155 global shutdowns India accounted for 70 per cent

<sup>31</sup> Patel, *Price of the Modi Years*, pp. 22-44.

<sup>32</sup> The Indian constitution requires a party to have at least 55 seats (10% of total) in order to nominate a leader of opposition. The Indian National Congress or any other party did not have requisite number after 2014 elections, and likewise after 2019 elections.

and the underprivileged minorities and lower classes of India<sup>33</sup>, which the Congress failed to do.

Another key factor in enhanced political power was increasingly explicit patronage of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). RSS is the key organization that drives the political and even, at times, the policy process of the BJP. It is one of the largest non-governmental organizations having an active membership of 1.5-2 million people.<sup>34</sup> It also leads around 36 different Hindutva-based organizations, collectively called Sangh Parivar. Since inception of BJP government in 2014, the RSS adopted a more visible role in policy formulation of the party and government. It carried out a meeting on policy deliberations in 2015 which was also attended by several ministers and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself.<sup>35</sup> The number of RSS unit-level offices called *Shakhas* have also expanded since 2014, reaching highest numbers (57000) in organization's history. Likewise, the number of participants in RSS training camps – called Shiksha Varg and conducted in three annual phases – have also increased significantly since BJP was elected in 2014.<sup>36</sup>

This conjunction of increase in relevance and power of BJP with RSS shows the inextricable link between the two. Prime Minister Modi himself has remained a lifelong *pracharak* of the RSS.<sup>37</sup> Over the years the BJP leadership has been made to comply with decisions of RSS, including the decision to nominate Narendra Modi as Prime Minister before the 2014 elections.<sup>38</sup> Thus politically, the BJP government grew ever stronger as it had the unparalleled support of an independent organization with members and volunteers spread across the Indian society.

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<sup>33</sup> Radhika Desai, "Forward March of Hindutva Halted?" *New Left Review*, Issue 30 (November/December 2004), <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii30/articles/radhika-desai-forward-march-of-hindutva-halted>.

<sup>34</sup> Raashid Wali Janjua and Khuram Abbas, *Hindutva: A Threat to Regional Stability* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2021), p. 15.

<sup>35</sup> Walter Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *Messengers of Hindu Nationalism: How the RSS Shaped India*, (London: Hurst & Company, 2019), pp. ix-x.

<sup>36</sup> For statistics see: Andersen and Damle, *Messengers of Hindu Nationalism*, Appendix I and III; "History of Sangh Shiksha Varg," Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, accessed on December 24, 2021, <https://www.rss.org/Encyc/2017/6/13/history-of-sangh-shiksha-varg-rss-camp.html>.

<sup>37</sup> *Pracharaks* are permanent missionaries of the RSS who commit their life to organization and are only 5% in number in the whole organizational body. In contrast, *karyakartas* are trained members who devote their extra time apart from household in activities of RSS. *Swayamsevaks* are volunteers who participate in organizational activities without any formal training. For a brief on structure of RSS, see: Ghulam Jeelani, "Explained: The organisational structure of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh," MoneyControl, April 03, 2021, <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/politics/explained-the-organisational-structure-of-the-rashtriya-swayamsevak-sangh-6720631.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Harish Khare, "After Seven Years of Modi and Shah, the RSS's Fall from Grace is Total and Complete," *The Wire*, June 03, 2021, <https://thewire.in/politics/rss-mohan-bhagwat-bjp-modi-covid-19>; Andersen and Damle, *Messengers of Hindu Nationalism*, pp. 4-5.

## National Ideology

Another marked shift in comprehensive power of India comes from its political ideology. Since the V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report 2021 declared India an electoral autocracy<sup>39</sup>, there have been frequent associations of India with autocracy and authoritarianism. However the developments since BJP's unopposed victory indicate a greater shift towards totalitarianism. There is a marked difference between traditional dictatorial/authoritarian regimes and ideologically motivated totalitarian regimes. The table reproduced below indicates key differences between both. According to renowned political theorist Hannah Arendt, totalitarian movements and regimes depend upon total mass support, up to an extent where the leaders are merely a function of the aspirations of the mass.<sup>40</sup>

	<b>Totalitarianism</b>	<b>Authoritarianism</b>
Charisma	High	Low
Role conception	Leader as function	Leader as individual
Ends of power	Public	Private
Corruption	Low	High
Official ideology	Yes	No
Limited pluralism	No	Yes
Legitimacy	Yes	No

Table 1 Difference between Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism  
Source: Unidentified/Wikipedia (Retracted)

Such totalitarian movements also require a large number of population, both to exert social control and be indispensable during any violent conflict (both intrastate and interstate). They also oppose the confines of nation-states and usually carry a supranational agenda, as was evident in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union. In the whole movement masses occupy the central position. Arendt defines masses as the collection of people who are not a part of any formal political organization or interest group. Additionally, the engagement of masses in totalitarian movements also debunks the myth that in democracies the active majority takes interests of themselves or their organizations into account, while the unorganized mass is politically indifferent.<sup>41</sup> Totalitarian movements proved that neither the active voter franchise is representative of majority, nor is the unorganized mass politically indifferent or harmless. All the above mentioned characteristics of totalitarian systems stand fit in the case of India.

In India, the BJP cemented its position as the (virtually) uncontested majority parliamentary party by increasingly engaging the masses that were hitherto disinterested in active political

<sup>39</sup> Nazifa Alizada et al., "Autocratization Turns Viral: Democracy Report 2021," (University of Gothenburg/V-Dem Institute: Gothenburg, 2021), [https://www.v-dem.net/static/website/files/dr/dr\\_2021.pdf](https://www.v-dem.net/static/website/files/dr/dr_2021.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973 [1951]), p. 325. For detailed description of characteristics of totalitarianism, see pp. 305-340.

<sup>41</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 311-312.

participation. A study on voting patterns in India indicates that when compared to the 2009 elections, the 2014 elections in India marked an increased participation ( $\approx 45\%$  in 2009 to  $\approx 60\%$  in 2014) from people of less educated localities (0-20% literacy).<sup>42</sup> The voter turnout has also consistently increased in India during the 2014 and 2019 general elections, providing unhindered legitimacy to the Modi and BJP government.<sup>43</sup>

These developments have also been accompanied by an increase in mass driven vigilante attacks and mob violence against minorities, which will be discussed in detail in coming part. According to one Hindutva ideologue speaking to media, their activities are bifurcated between Bajrang Dal, which is an organization to mobilize masses for agitation, and RSS, which is a class organization.<sup>44</sup> This shows an active disposition to engage the masses for ideologically motivated agitation and activism.

Another key characteristic of totalitarian movements is to exclude the “other” groups with hostility by considering them as parasites without any utility that need to be weeded out.<sup>45</sup> This disposition in India was reflected most prominently by the notorious statement of Indian parliamentarian Dr. Subramanian Swamy when he stated “we know where the Muslim population is large, there is always trouble... if Muslims become more than 30 per cent that country is in danger.”<sup>46</sup> He said this while defending the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, a law that sought to outlaw Muslim immigrants as illegal, and even potentially strip off present citizens if they cannot provide documentary evidence of their citizenship.<sup>47</sup>

Totalitarian movements also develop themselves for consolidation in state and society by forming extended groups and organizations apart from the ideological flag bearer party, that are “paraprofessional” in nature e.g. paramilitaries, unions for labours, students, lawyers, etc.<sup>48</sup> This was evident in Nazi Germany with presence of not only paramilitaries like SA (Sturm

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<sup>42</sup> Pradeep Chibber, Francesca Jensenius and Harsh Shah, “3 charts challenge lazy thinking on voter turnout and its link to literacy & urbanisation,” *The Print*, March 18, 2019, <https://theprint.in/opinion/3-charts-challenge-lazy-thinking-on-voter-turnout-and-its-link-to-literacy-urbanisation/207142>.

<sup>43</sup> Arvind Gunasekar, “Voter Turnout In Lok Sabha Polls 2019 Highest Ever: Election Commission,” *NDTV*, May 23, 2019, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/general-elections-2019-record-voter-turnout-of-67-11-per-cent-in-lok-sabha-polls-2041481>.

<sup>44</sup> Mandakini Gahlot, “India’s Hindu Fundamentalists,” *Al Jazeera*, October 08, 2015, documentary, <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/people-power/2015/10/8/indias-hindu-fundamentalists>.

<sup>45</sup> Examples include hostility of French masses towards aristocracy during French revolution, and Nazi hatred for Jews during the *Third Reich*. See: Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>46</sup> “India Burning (Clip) | VICE on SHOWTIME,” *Vice News*, April 01, 2020, video interview, 0:45-1:05, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCyBL8dBOEo&ab\\_channel=VICENews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCyBL8dBOEo&ab_channel=VICENews).

<sup>47</sup> The exclusion is to be done by forming a National Register of Citizen (NRC), a practice that was performed against immigrants in state of Assam earlier that left 1.9 million people out of national register. For details on NRC and CAA, see: “What is NRC: All you need to know about National Register of Citizens,” *India Today*, December 18, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/what-is-nrc-all-you-need-to-know-about-national-register-of-citizens-1629195-2019-12-18>; “Citizenship Amendment Bill: India’s new ‘anti-Muslim’ law explained,” *BBC*, December 11, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50670393>.

<sup>48</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 364, 375.

Abeilung) and SS (Schutzstaffel), but also with unions like National Socialist German Student League. In India this totalitarian disposition is reflected by use of the Sangh Parivar by RSS and BJP, the ideological flag bearers of Hindutva. These para groups then provide cover to the main party, so that when events like Babri Masjid demolition or persecution of minorities take place the burden of accountability falls on extended organizations like Vishva Hindu Prashad and Bajrang Dal, rather than BJP or RSS.

All of the abovementioned totalitarian dispositions in India's national ideology shall lead to two major implications for the region. First is the crisis of human security that can rise from exclusion and disenfranchisement of minorities from India. It may lead to a wave of immigration that can overburden neighbouring countries that are already overpopulated. Second, and more serious, is the fact that totalitarian movements have a supranational approach to politics.<sup>49</sup> This ideological orientation encourages the Indian government like it encouraged the Nazi Germany or Stalinist Soviet Union to increase their military power and diplomatic engagement. The above have negative implications for regional security in South Asia.

### National Cohesion

During the BJP government, another factor of comprehensive power that changed significantly is the national cohesion in India. As the increasing exclusion of minority groups led to decline in pluralism, it also strengthened the in-group bonding in Hindu majority. The increasing number of BJP seats in Parliament and the increasing voter turnout show a greater interest of Hindu population in BJP.

However the party-wise distribution of seats in state assemblies may reflect state of national cohesion in India better than BJP's total domination in the central government. Among ten most populous states in India, BJP has a majority rule in five and a coalition rule in one state. Additionally, out of 28 states the BJP government coalition rules 17 states in total. According to available data on party-wise distribution of seats, out of 4114 seats in state legislative assemblies in total the BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) carries more than 1280 seats (31.11%). In contrast, the Indian National Congress (INC) carries only 460 seats (11.8%), while the succeeding major parties other than NDA are no longer allied with Congress.<sup>50</sup> This trend points towards two conclusions. One is that state level elections do not allow utter domination of a single party due to distribution of seats along smaller provincial constituencies, allowing other parties to contest competitively. The other trend is that BJP rule in central government is still dependent upon a majority in central parliamentary constituencies with huge populations.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 3-4, 389.

<sup>50</sup> "All India AC Distribution," India Votes, accessed on December 27, 2021, <https://www.indiavotes.com/party/AllPartyPerformance>.

<sup>51</sup> A study by Francesca Jensenius et al. also shows that average vote share of winning candidates for parliamentary elections in India remain around 50-55%, see: Pradeep Chibber, Francesca Jensenius and Harsh

The electoral trends withstanding, the inter-group national cohesion on ground in India remains weak. Immediately after taking over the government the RSS led Sangh Parivar let loose a wave of atrocities on minorities, particularly targeting the Muslims and Christians. According to a minority rights group in India around 600 attacks against religious minorities took place immediately a year after formation of BJP government. From May 2014 to 2015, 149 attacks were against Christians while the rest were against Muslims.<sup>52</sup> According to other reports, around 1620 attacks against Christians were carried out in India from 2014 to 2018. Whereas in 2017 alone, around 700 incidents of communal violence were reported by a rights group.<sup>53</sup> Another rights group in December 2021 reported more than 300 attacks on Christians in India throughout the year.<sup>54</sup> Most recently, a conclave of various Hindutva groups called for mass exodus and genocide of Muslims on patterns similar to Rohingya crisis in Myanmar in 2017.<sup>55</sup>

Ironically during the same period, the scope and magnitude of social work and services by RSS expanded significantly. From 2015 to 2021, the number of RSS services projects under the umbrella organization of Rashtriya Sewa Bharati increased from 57000 to 92600.<sup>56</sup> In order to provide patronage to the Muslim minority, the RSS also supported foundation of a Muslim Rashtriya Manch (MRM) that sought to bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims.

Such initiatives however seek ultimately to consolidate the broader RSS goals of establishing a Hindu *rashtra*, rather than actually accommodating the minorities. According to a research by an Australian scholar, most of the Muslim members of MRM are inclined towards the organization for instrumental reasons including material reward and security, or to address their political grievances, without any genuine affiliation for RSS or the Hindu-Muslim unity.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, detailed reports show how the *sewa* or services initiatives of RSS are promoting agenda of Hindutva rather than any genuine intention for relief.<sup>58</sup>

Apart from violence and extremism against Muslims and Christians, the Sangh Parivar have also started targeting Sikh community in recent months. In one of most recent incidents, the

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Shah, "There are very few BJP strongholds or Congress bastions in India. Data shows why," *The Print*, April 02, 2019, <https://theprint.in/opinion/political-parties-in-india-dont-really-have-local-level-strongholds/215137/>.

<sup>52</sup> Gahlot, "India's Hindu Fundamentalists," *Al Jazeera*, documentary, 03:52-04:15.

<sup>53</sup> Iqbal, "The Rise of Hindutva, Saffron Terrorism and South Asian Regional Security," p. 52.

<sup>54</sup> Neel Madhav and Alishan Jafri, "Why India is witnessing spike in attacks on Christians, churches," *Al Jazeera*, December 02, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/2/india-christians-church-hindu-groups-bjp-conversion>.

<sup>55</sup> "India monks call for 'Muslim genocide' in hate speech summit," *TRT World*, December 23, 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/asia/india-monks-call-for-muslim-genocide-in-hate-speech-summit-52911>.

<sup>56</sup> *Sewa Kunj 2015: An Insight into Sewa Activities* (New Delhi: Rashtriya Sewa Bharati, 2015), available online at <https://fdocuments.net/document/sewa-kunj-brochure.html>; "Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha - Annual report 2021," Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, accessed on December 27, 2021, <https://www.rss.org/Akhil%20Bharatiya%20%20Annual%20Report%202021%20English.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> Felix Pal, "Why Muslims join the Muslim wing of the RSS," *Contemporary South Asia* Vol. 28, Issue 3 (2020): pp. 275-287.

<sup>58</sup> Sagar, "For the RSS, "sewa" is a means to achieve the Hindu Rashtra," *The Caravan*, July 15, 2020, <https://caravanmagazine.in/politics/rss-sewa-coronavirus-lockdown-brahmanical-hindu-rashtra>.

Sikhs in Indian city of Gurugram announced to allow Muslims to offer Friday prayers in gurdwaras after Hindu ultranationalists barred them from praying on public spots. Consequently, Hindutva supporters pressurized Sikhs to not allow the prayers citing historical narratives like tyranny of Mughal rule on Sikhs and violence during partition, and even threatening violence outside gurdwaras. The Sikhs consequently called back the offers to avoid violence.<sup>59</sup>

This instance however was not in isolation, and did not bar Sikhs from realizing the extremist tilt of Hindutva. In March 2021, an article by CJ Werleman informed how the Sikhs in Australia have been subjected to rising attacks by Hindutva zealots. In one instance a group of armed men belonging to a nearby RSS rally attacked Sikh men, one of the incidents that prompted Australian Member of Parliament to say that “there have already been too many incidents of far-right [Hindu] extremist violence, particularly against the Sikh community in western Sydney.”<sup>60</sup> In the same month, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) passed a resolution officially condemning RSS for the first time for suppressing minorities and attempting to turn India into a Hindu rashtra.<sup>61</sup> These developments also point out towards increasing polarization among the Sikhs against the rise of Hindutva in Indian state.

The situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) also indicates the deteriorating national cohesion in India. When the Indian government revoked articles 370 and 35-A, the Prime Minister Modi promised that it will bring prosperity and cohesion in Kashmir. Instead, there has been rising concerns regarding settler colonialism and occupation by the locals. This resulted in 937 armed attacks in the region since August 2019.<sup>62</sup> There has also been a steady increase in number of militants in the region due to repressive policies under Modi government that sparked the current generation of Kashmir insurgency after Burhan Wani. 2018 marked the highest number of 191 new recruitments of Kashmiri fighters in the decade. From 2019 to 2020, the recruitment increased by 22 per cent. The rising resistance of Kashmiri people also indicates how the national cohesion in India is rapidly deteriorating due to the actions of hard-line government in the center.

### Insurgency in Red Corridor

When it comes to insurgencies, the infamous insurgencies in red corridor and the north east India are also a constant challenge to India’s national cohesion. The communist insurgency in red corridor spans across different provinces in east and south east of India, notably in

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<sup>59</sup> Aishwarya Iyer, “No namaz in Gurugram’s gurdwaras yet as Hindutva groups urge Sikhs to reconsider decision,” *Scroll.In*, November 20, 2021, <https://scroll.in/article/1011000/no-namaz-in-gurugrams-gurdwaras-yet-as-hindutva-groups-urge-sikhs-to-reconsider-decision>.

<sup>60</sup> CJ Werleman, “Sikhs fall victim to rising Hindu nationalism in Australia,” *TRT World*, March 09, 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/sikhs-fall-victim-to-rising-hindu-nationalism-in-australia-44851>.

<sup>61</sup> “SGPC passes resolution against RSS for suppressing other religions,” *The Tribune*, March 31, 2021. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/punjab/in-a-first-sgpc-passes-resolution-against-rss-232851>.

<sup>62</sup> Fahad Shah, “The Tattered Dream of a New Kashmir,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 10, 2022, <https://foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2021-12-17/tattered-dream-new-kashmir>.



Chattisgarh, West Bengal, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh. It is one of the longest protracted insurgencies in India that has existed in different forms since the inception of India. However time and again the insurgents have inflicted heavy toll on Indian state by capitalizing on impoverishment of the people and lack of state writ, which resulted in ambush and killing of 22 personnel in April 2021.<sup>63</sup> Government counter-insurgency strategy also involved creating local militia named Salwa Judum, which operated from 2004 to 2010. The Salwa Judum went out of control resulting in blowbacks and even committed atrocities at times, resulting in at least 1700 extra-judicial deaths.<sup>64</sup> The recent announcement of formation of another Bastar Fighter police squad have also reignited concerns increasing the intensity of insurgency.<sup>65</sup> The recent counter-insurgency measures in the region resulted in sufficient curtailment of the insurgency, however the threat persists due to prolonged nature of the conflict.

### Insurgency in North East

Another hotspot of insurgency in India is the northeastern region of the country. It consists of eight states including famous “seven sister states” Assam, Arunchal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, and the eighth state of Sikkim. They are separated from mainland India by 22 Km narrow Siliguri Corridor, with Bangladesh in between. Immediately after independence, on August 14, 1947, the Nagas of present-day Nagaland declared a separate state.<sup>66</sup> Ever since then all the north eastern states have been seeing protracted insurgencies similar to those in red corridor. However one particular feature of north eastern insurgencies is that the counter-insurgency forces in this region operate under the infamous Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which allows forces to conduct operations and arrest anyone without warrants.<sup>67</sup> The AFSPA has been in force in different timelines in virtually all the states of north east India.

Since the inception of BJP government, the insurgency in north eastern region has seen a decline, with record number of surrenders in 2020 that amounted to 1900 per cent more than

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<sup>63</sup> HS Panag, “How India’s Maoist counter-insurgency is being undone by a flawed security strategy,” *The Print*, April 15, 2021, <https://theprint.in/opinion/how-indias-maoist-counter-insurgency-is-being-undone-by-a-flawed-security-strategy/640124/>.

<sup>64</sup> Suvojit Bagchi, “Is the Maoist rebellion on the brink of defeat in India?“, *TRT World*, December 13, 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/is-the-maoist-rebellion-on-the-brink-of-defeat-in-india-52584>.

<sup>65</sup> Deepanwita Gita Niyogi, “Bastar Fighter: Echoes of Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh,” *The Citizen*, January 07, 2022, <https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/newsdetail/index/9/21305/bastar-fighter-echoes-of-salwa-judum-in-chhattisgarh>.

<sup>66</sup> Kulbhushan Bhardwaj, “Insurgency in North East India: Genesis and Prognosis,” The United Service Institution of India, April-June 2016, <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/insurgency-in-north-east-india-genesis-and-prognosis/>.

<sup>67</sup> “Nagaland firing incident proves high time AFSPA is repealed from NE: Irom Sharmila,” *The Indian Express*, December 13, 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/nagaland-firing-afspa-repeal-ne-irom-sharmila-7670511/>.

2019, and 80 per cent reduction in attacks.<sup>68</sup> However the protests in region ignited again in December 2021 when Indian forces killed 4 laborers in a trick during a misinformed operation in Nagaland. The resultant clashes ended with more than 13 civilian casualties. Resultantly, protests erupted across the Nagaland and rest of north east calling for repealing the exceptional AFSPA. The public of north eastern states, including Chief Ministers of Nagaland and Meghalaya, consider the laws discriminatory and have repeatedly demanded their end.<sup>69</sup>

The increasing influence of BJP and RSS has increasingly bound the intra-group Hindu majority together which is indicated by increasing voter turnout and electoral support for BJP, as well as the expansion of RSS and its affiliated groups. However it has severely harmed the inter-group cohesion between and among Hindus and other minority groups, particularly the Muslims and Christians. This is indicated by incrementally increasing incidents of violence and hatred against the minorities, as well as the futility of initiatives aimed at normalizing the aggravating relations between Hindus and other social groups in India.

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<sup>68</sup> Neeraj Chauhan, "Insurgency-related incidents dipped by 80% in N-E states last year: MHA data," *Hindustan Times*, March 02, 2021, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/80-reduction-in-insurgency-related-incidents-in-n-e-states-last-year-mha-data-101614676827488.html>.

<sup>69</sup> "Nagaland firing incident proves high time AFSPA is repealed from NE: Irom Sharmila."

## Findings of the Study

After evaluating the comprehensive power of India in six key indicators of military power, economic power, indices of human security and development political power, national ideology, and national cohesion, this study reached following conclusions:

- The increase in military power of India is a part of earlier trend of defence multilateralism, modernization and procurements. However after the BJP government there has been an increased prioritization of indigenization of defence industry, without much focus on future forecasts of capacity building.
- Military posture and crisis behaviour of India has turned increasingly belligerent and escalatory. This is expressed by indications of revision in NFU policy for nuclear weapons and the increasingly aggressive posture during the Uri and Pulwama-Balakot crises.
- India's economic power has received setbacks during the BJP government following the extensive liberalization after 1991 reforms that continued through the Vajpayee led BJP and Congress governments up until Modi. Narendra Modi's prioritization of politics, and the changes in economic policy towards centralization and welfare in order to receive political leverage has negatively impacted the Indian economy. However some sectors of Indian economy have shown positive progress, particularly the FDI and external debt servicing.
- The political power has increased significantly with the BJP-RSS nexus that provides BJP with on ground support of world's largest non-government organizational network. This has cemented BJP's political position allowing it to form majority government without any opposition leadership in both 2014 and 2019.
- The consolidation of power and increasingly exclusionist policies of BJP and RSS are also indicating India's shift to totalitarianism. Totalitarianism, in contrast to authoritarianism, does not rely merely on autocratic leadership but mobilizes both the masses and the political leadership to develop strong in-group cohesion and diminish pluralism by marginalizing and excluding minorities from mainstream. That has been happening in India under the ideological leadership of BJP with the Sangh Parivar carrying out work on ground.
- For the reasons stated above, the national cohesion in India is also experiencing a paradox. On one side there is increasing marginalization of minorities, especially the Muslims and Christians, while on the other hand there is a greater solidarity and unity among Hindus. This is leading towards increasing intra-group cohesion among followers of Hindutva but decreasing the inter-group cohesion among diverse social groups in India, thus deteriorating the overall national cohesion.

- The fragmentation of India's national cohesion is also evident in insurgencies of Kashmir, red corridor, and the north east India. Where the Indian forces are making quantitative gains, yet the public sentiment remains in opposition to the Indian state and is only increasing in discord.
- The selected indicators point that India's power is increasing materially but weakening morally. The political consolidation and domination of Hindutva in different spheres facilitates decision-making in India that would otherwise not be possible, e.g. the revision of NFU, escalating crises, and persecuting minorities. Such actions will have destabilizing effects on regional security with adverse impact on of strategic stability as well as human security. The internal instability and conflict may lead to large scale migration causing a humanitarian crisis.

### Policy Recommendations

Keeping the findings of study in view, following policy recommendations are made to contain the threat of increasing power of Hindutva:

- National internal security and defence policies may be reviewed keeping India's aggressive behaviour in view. Third party mediators like the United States must also be apprised of the dangers of escalatory behaviour of BJP government and impartial mediation be emphasized during crises.
- South Asian countries must also be engaged and apprised of regarding the human consequences of the rise of Hindutva and exclusion of minorities, which may trigger a migrant crisis in the region.
- World community must also be informed of shift in Indian political ideology towards totalitarianism that, like the Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia, may lead not only to internal implosion and genocide but may also lead to expansionist wars driven by the idea of Akhand Bharat.
- Sangh Parivar's activities and influence through its overseas organizations and NGOs may also be highlighted before the world community, particularly developed countries, where the promotion of Hindutva may lead to increase in extremism and subversive activities against the host country. Host countries may also be advised in this regard to develop counterstrategies against surge of Hindutva.

## Annexure A

**Table depicting CINC score and rate of change in CINC of India since inception in 1947 to 2016**

Year	Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) Score	Per cent change in CINC
1947	0.0528	
1948	0.0525	-0.73
1949	0.0514	-1.98
1950	0.0496	-3.59
1951	0.0489	-1.24
1952	0.0469	-4.26
1953	0.0467	-0.36
1954	0.0465	-0.42
1955	0.0452	-2.86
1956	0.0452	0.05
1957	0.0458	1.34
1958	0.0463	1.20
1959	0.0469	1.14
1960	0.0461	-1.66
1961	0.0487	5.72
1962	0.0491	0.80
1963	0.0515	4.76
1964	0.0517	0.40
1965	0.0520	0.71
1966	0.0521	0.04
1967	0.0507	-2.59
1968	0.0508	0.09
1969	0.0503	-0.91

1970	0.0523	4.03
1971	0.0526	0.55
1972	0.0542	3.09
1973	0.0542	-0.12
1974	0.0536	-1.06
1975	0.0546	1.89
1976	0.0536	-1.80
1977	0.0531	-1.02
1978	0.0532	0.32
1979	0.0528	-0.78
1980	0.0517	-2.11
1981	0.0520	0.51
1982	0.0542	4.31
1983	0.0544	0.31
1984	0.0545	0.20
1985	0.0560	2.81
1986	0.0567	1.27
1987	0.0576	1.56
1988	0.0585	1.61
1989	0.0595	1.71
1990	0.0599	0.62
1991	0.0624	4.21
1992	0.0635	1.66
1993	0.0636	0.15
1994	0.0639	0.61
1995	0.0651	1.86
1996	0.0663	1.75
1997	0.0664	0.22
1998	0.0677	1.92
1999	0.0682	0.77

2000	0.0689	1.07
2001	0.0697	1.15
2002	0.0727	4.32
2003	0.0732	0.65
2004	0.0737	0.60
2005	0.0759	2.98
2006	0.0761	0.28
2007	0.0771	1.29
2008	0.0779	1.10
2009	0.0807	3.58
2010	0.0793	-1.70
2011	0.0803	1.19
2012	0.0808	0.61
2013	0.0815	0.91
2014	0.0836	2.62
2015	0.0852	1.92
2016	0.0868	1.89

Source: “NMC 6.0 Abridged,” Correlates of War Project, accessed on December 28, 2021, [https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities/nmc\\_documentation-6-0.zip/@@download/file/NMC\\_Documentation%206.0.zip](https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities/nmc_documentation-6-0.zip/@@download/file/NMC_Documentation%206.0.zip).