

Indian Nationalism and its Challenges in the Right-Wing Era of Politics

Ashish Sharma* and Samarth Mishra

Amity School of Communication, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior, India

Abstract

Background: As a leading cause of morbidity and mortality, Hypertension is a pressing global concern. Adherence to antihypertensive is a cornerstone of effective antihypertensive therapy. However, suboptimal medication adherence is widespread. Mobile health technology i.e. text messaging is a promising tool that can promote medication adherence with a wide-reaching effect on population health.

Aims: To critically assess the effectiveness of text-based messaging interventions for improving medication adherence among community-dwelling adults with Hypertension.

Methods: Studies were identified through a detailed search of six databases by two independent reviewers: PubMed, Embase, Cochrane, PsycINFO, CINAHL and Scopus. Studies included were: (1) published in English, since 2000; (2) randomised controlled trials; (3) done on community-dwelling adults diagnosed with Primary/ Essential Hypertension; (4) utilised 1 or 2-way text messaging, tailored text messaging, interactive voice response and text-based mobile applications; and (5) with medication adherence-related outcomes. Data extraction was conducted based on the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Intervention, and relevant studies underwent a study appraisal using the Cochrane Risk of Bias Tool.

Results: Twelve studies were included in the final review. Text-based messaging interventions exhibited a small statistically significant effect on medication adherence scores and systolic blood pressure reduction while the effect on controlled blood pressure and adherence remains uncertain. Subgroup analyses revealed having a multifaceted content on Hypertension management may be more effective than solely medication adherence content and or reminders.

Significance of the study: There is limited evidence that text messaging-based interventions resulted in improved medication adherence and blood pressure control as a result of adherence. With the rise of mobile health, future studies exploring the cost effectiveness and feasibility of tailored and interactive text messaging interventions are warranted to influence the use of public health resources into the development of communication tools as a public health strategy for promoting medication adherence.

Keywords: Medication adherence • Text messaging• Hypertension• Compliance• SMS

Introduction

The nation-states of the present are formed and shaped through an ongoing evolutionary process. The crucial factors that have triggered this evolution- the collapse of empires, decolonization, the rise of capitalism, and most recently, the disruption of large federal states, have all added to the making of the nation-state. The charter of the United Nations (UN), the French Revolution, regionalism, and rising globalization- can all be said to have a role in building and shaping the nation-states. But today, only nationalism has persisted dominant and powerful across the world, maybe because its other substitutes- socialist internationalism, UN multilateralism, and global capitalism; all failed to be effective. However, in the present time, the biggest challenge to nation-states is arising within their territorial boundaries, bearing a threat to the whole of humanity. Indian nationalism, however, deals with a range of diverse elements- ethnicity, language, religion, culture, traditions; that made it into a nation-state. Since the independence struggle against British colonialism, Indian nationalism has been subject to harsh dispute. As of now, according to the Indian constitution, India, as a nation-state, must remain humanitarian, pluralistic, and inclusive. But the real question stands that 'Is India, presently, upholding the values mentioned in the constitution?' There's no particular definition of nationalism (more specifically to India as a nation-state), as many thinkers, experts, revolutionaries, philosophers hold a different notion about it. Rabindranath Tagore, in his essay '*Nationalism in India*,' says- "India doesn't have a political problem but a social one, and it exists everywhere, even in the west. However, unlike India, the western

states, for instance, Europe, have racial unity from the very beginning. On the contrary, India, since the start of history, has suffered the problem of race". Tagore says that while trying to be political, the nation shouldn't cut subservient classes in the pursuit of its common objective. Therefore, one can say that Tagore didn't have a favourable view of nationalism. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book '*Discovery of India*,' describes "nationalism as a memory of the past, laying significance to all its traditions". Nehru, while embracing the past as well as the future, asks the Indians to ignore the orthodoxy and accept science and technology as a means to form India into a nation-state. Gandhian Nationalism says that nationalism isn't evil, but the exclusiveness, narrowness, and differences brought by nation-states are. Mahatma Gandhi in his book '*Hind Swaraj*,' criticizes the people who associate the nation with violence. According to Gandhi, the individuals of a nation-state must be united, despite having their differences with each other. Gandhi, therefore, had a vision of an "imagined community" in his view of the nation-state..

Nationalism in India

Indian nationalism started in the late 18th and the early 19th century, its nature- anti-colonial and secular. It marked the emergence of nationalism and the beginning of nation-building. During the struggle against the Britishers, literature played a crucial role in nationalism, not merely a political movement. Scholars like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Mahatma Gandhi, and many others wrote extensively on the spirits of nationalism in India. It was inclusive, bringing diversity and plurality under one umbrella. The middle class played a crucial role in the national movement against colonialism, with people from different social and cultural backgrounds coming together to fight for a singular cause. It can't be ignored that colonialism was the driving factor for Indian nationalism. Therefore, it can be said that nationalism was an anti-thesis to British Rule. It was nationalism that most helped Asia and Africa to fight against colonialism. Nationalism in India was about a nation-building drive, and it incorporated itself in art, science, literature, and religion. It helped India become 'modern India,' which was progressive in socio-economic, political, and religious spheres. It made

*Address for Correspondence: Ashish Sharma, Department of politics, Amity School of Communication, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior, India, E-mail: asharma3@gwa.amity.edu

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Indians realize their rights and democratic politics, a modern India that didn't have feudalism, colonialism, and abolished slavery. The nationalism cleared the air of social differences in India, and every India was free from oppression. It was the elites and the educated that played an essential part in awareness of the national movement. The Indian nationalists began criticizing and questioning the bigotry and crude policies of the Britishers, challenging their dictatorial governance. These scholars sensitized the common public and strived to remove the social evils from modern India. The British Government and the East India Company were responsible for abusing the Indian resources and destroying its economy and treasure. Racism allowed Britishers an inhumane and torturous rule over the Indians, stealing capital from weakened India. The Britishers brought socio-economic and political outrages upon the Indians, the Bengal Famine, for instance, killed millions of Indians, because the Britishers were hoarding up rations. The Britishers had complete control over the Indian lives. They controlled everything, education, farming, business, etc. It soon made Indians realize the evils of colonialism, and at this moment, the spirits of nationalism were at their peak in the Indian hearts and motherland. However, the nationalist sentiment took some time to develop due to a lack of social harmony and a common objective. The revolt of 1857 marked the beginning of India's struggle against the Britishers. Until the end of the 19th century, scholars laid the foundation of Indian nationalism in the public domain. By the 20th century, every Indian realized that as long as India was under British rule, it could never prosper and gain independence. The mid-20th century witnessed the Gandhian phase, where nationalism had turned into a mass movement.

Hyper-Nationalism and the Indian Press

In India's post-independence era, the newly born Indians didn't face the need to prove their nationalism, by showing their patriotism to the nation. In that era, being a nationalist was more of a symbolic expression. These representations, however, were limited to the tricolour and Indian soldiers. But in the present times, there has been a stark change in the meaning of nationalism, especially in India. Today, it has become a political nuclear weapon that, used to silence dissenting voices. The politicization of nationalism has led to people comparing nationalism to religion. It has started polarization and communal hate in India, which has further motivated violence and conflicts. For Mahatma Gandhi, nationalism meant the prosperity of the human race, that the country should be free, but not at the cost of human lives. He despised racial discrimination and communal hate. But today, India is far from the idea of nationalism that Mahatma Gandhi had envisioned. Present India suffers from communal polarization and religious intolerance, a complete contrast to the notion of humanity. We have been taught that nationalism stands for love for one's country, but it can be more significant than that. Modern nationalism, which is now also called 'hyper-nationalism,' has become toxic. The politicians and the media have created this scenario, where patriotism to your nation stands above all things. Nationalism is now associated with religion, which is slowly turning India into a fascist state, where Islamophobia has become common. Nationalism is a sensitive issue, and its manipulation can cause chaos in a country. One should remember that it was nationalism that caused the partition of India, where millions of innocent lives were slaughtered. The 1984 'Operation Blue Star,' in the end, caused mass killings of Sikhs across the nation. In the 2004 Gujrat riots, both the Hindus and Muslims lost their lives, all in the name of nationalism. Today, nationalism has been reduced to standing on national anthems in cinema halls and proving allegiance to your nation. What it should stand for is tolerance, recognition of every religion, equality, standing against injustice, and not letting the efforts of our freedom fighters and martyrs go in vain. Nationalism means respecting every opinion, even if you don't agree with it. It should not be limited to caste and religion but should strive for knowledge and freedom of thought, where every individual matter.

BJP and Hyper-Nationalism

Since the Modi government came into power in 2014, the definition of

nationalism has changed. The discussion on nationalism has gradually shifted towards 'Hindu Nationalism.' The BJP has turned it into hyper-nationalism. The sudden change in discourse happened slowly through a pattern. At first, the BJP, with the help of the press and social media, started telling people that the Congress party has always served the Muslims. It accused congress of casteism, alleging that the party favours one religion, and appeases Muslims. The BJP, in the 2014 general elections campaigning, said that if it wins, it will be an inclusive party that treats everybody equally, and will follow the Gujarat development model. It won't give any special privileges to any religion. As soon as the BJP won the 2014 general elections, it started to look for an enemy on which entire blame could be put, something that was an enemy to the Indian nation. Hence, Pakistan became the enemy, and anyone, particularly the Indian Muslims who questioned BJP's governance, was said to go to Pakistan. According to this narrative, you either stand with the nation or you are against it, and if you are against the government, you are anti-national.

Using hyper-nationalism, BJP crushed down dissenting voices and criticisms. The biased mainstream media and the press set out a narrative focused on strengthening BJP's political propaganda. The 2016 JNU student protests, the arrest of the human rights activists in 2019, the constant Muslim baiting before the elections, and the biased news that is sometimes Islamophobic, are all examples of when the Indian media's coverage was responsible for spreading communal hate. The BJP has realized that the media has immense power over influencing public opinion; therefore, if the media presents news that favours the party's narrative, the public will ultimately believe in it.

Nationalism as a Tool of Propaganda

The use of nationalism as propaganda by the BJP (Bharatiya Janta Party) has long been widespread since the times of post-independence India. The thought of India as a "Hindu Rashtra" to create nationalist sentiments among the public has been its common agenda. In the present times, BJP has used this populist rhetoric to silence its dissenters. Claiming to protect the nation first, the ruling party has successfully created an "us vs. them" rhetoric, which means you are either with India or against it. For instance, in the year 2019, the central government revoked Article 370 of the constitution, limiting Kashmir's autonomy. Most of the mainstream media portrayed the move as a victory for India. However, the critics who questioned this move were branded as "anti-nationals," both by the BJP and the Indian media. The use of nationalism as political rhetoric has served both the mainstream media and Indian politicians. It has indirectly helped the ruling party to stifle dissent, suppressing any questions related to public policy and governance. The populist agenda also helped BJP to win the 2019 Lok Sabha election for the second time. The party fought the elections on sentiments rather than actual issues. The party's nationalist interests were bombarded on the public, both by the mainstream media and the politicians. Nationalism was also used as a weapon to silence the opposition. The impact of this populist agenda was evident in 2019- #nationlovesindianarmy, #indiaagainstantinationals; they were trending on Twitter. With the help of the media, the government has successfully homogenized public opinion. The neo-liberal media system has helped politicians escaping accountability. The endorsement of government actions by most of the mainstream media reflects the weak status of objective journalism in India. The media has inclined towards publicity of the government's patriotic and nationalistic achievements, singing praises of the ruling party. Dissent and criticism viewed as an anti-national activity, as a result, have coerced the Indian media towards submission.

Hindutva as a Political Weapon in India

There is a stark difference between Hinduism and Hindutva. The BJP, as noticed, advertises the Hindutva ideology, which aspires to make India into a Hindu Rashtra. Both are practised differently, the former with faith and the latter with political motives. If we go into the literal meaning of Hindutva, it means 'Hindu-ness' or 'Indian-ness.' Veer Savarkar was the founder of the Hindutva ideology. At that time, a person didn't need to prove his identity

by showing his Hinduism. But it was the British Raj that forced the creation of Hindutva in India. According to Savarkar and persons who thought the same, India was ruled by Muslims and Christians for centuries. Thus, at the beginning stage, Hinduism was all about creating a unified identity, to bring together the people to whom India belonged. The ideology was, in fact, able to bring together people from different religions, including the Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. But what Hindutva failed to answer was that what its followers should believe. The founders of RSS-Veer Savarkar and K.B Hedwegar, themselves were atheists and agnostics. Therefore, one can comprehend that Hindutva wasn't an absolute doctrine, but more of a branding. If we truly want to know what shaped real Hinduism more than Hindutva, Mahatma Gandhi gave it the real sense. His vision was the total opposite of the Hindutva ideology. It was based on belief rather than branding. Gandhi's Hinduism was about non-violence, a concept he inspired by Buddhism and Leo Tolstoy. When Nathuram Godse, a member of Savarkar's RSS, assassinated Gandhi in 1948, the Hindutva ideology was disbelieved for almost half of the following century. But in the present time, one of the party candidates of the BJP hailed Mahatma Gandhi's shooter as a "patriot." Narendra Modi didn't agree with the candidate's remark. However, the candidate was not removed from the party and further won the elections in the end.

Prime Minister Modi's electoral progress, Varanasi was never BJP's forte, the constituency through which Modi won the 2014 elections. It had never been a stronghold for the Hindutva group. Congress, since the times of Nehru and Gandhi, had a strong influence on Varanasi. Despite being a long time RSS member, Modi didn't contend the 2014 elections on the Hindutva agenda. As apparent, he chose "Toilets, not Temples," to make his point that he was determined to work hard and give results, not advertising. However, making massive statements and getting things done are two different things. Right, what economic reforms Modi brought at the initial stage benefitted India, but it could not sustain. The promise of creating jobs and employment for the youth remains unfulfilled. The demonetization, a huge step to curb black money, turned out to be a complete failure, destroying the GDP and caused many families to suffer. To cover up all the shortcomings of the BJP, the party and its followers started using the Hindutva agenda to divert attention from the public's attention from crucial issues. It all followed a pattern: first, the 'Love Jihad,' that accused Muslim men of luring Indian women to marry them,

and then converting their religion. The allegation was that Muslims were trying to increase their dominance over India. Next came the 'Gau Raksha,' or 'cow protection,' where Mob Lynching led to the deaths of several innocent Muslims in states like Uttar Pradesh. The right-wing vigilante groups like 'Gau Raksha Dal' took it upon themselves to ensure the protection of cows in India, all supported by the BJP and the RSS. Since BJP came into power, cases of mob lynching increased rapidly in India. It all became worse when Modi chose Yogi Adityanath as the CM of Uttar Pradesh. Under his reign, the UP became a highly polarised state, and the violence against the Muslims became normal. This entire made Narendra Modi look normal. It is true that in recent years, Pakistan has become active in supporting terrorist groups against India; everyone knows that Pakistan has been sheltering terrorist organizations for a long time. But Modi took it as an opportunity and made national security the critical issue for the 2019 general election, sweeping aside every crucial issue. The media portrayed Modi as a protector of India-the Chowkidar. Result? Modi and the BJP won the 2019 elections with a full majority. All this hyper-nationalism and patriotism is "Hindutva," not "Hinduism."

Conclusion

In current times, the definition of Indian nationalism has changed. It is now used as a political weapon to silence dissent, anyone who criticizes the government, immediately becomes an anti-national. The Hindutva ideology, which is associate with Indian nationalism, is being used to turn India into a majoritarian state. In recent times, BJP and the RSS have used Hindutva to disseminate its hyper-nationalistic political views. Because of Hindutva and hyper-nationalism, there has been a generalization of communalism in India, and Islamophobia is at an all-time high. Nationalism has turned into patriotism. The self-righteous right-wing groups have been doing communal violence and inciting hate, under the name of patriotism.

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