

Abstract

This thesis examines the political rise of Hindutva nationalism in India, particularly the treatment of Muslim minorities in Karnataka after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 2014. It analyzes the way in which political ideology, media narratives, and legal frameworks intersect to create a climate of systemic discrimination, social exclusion, and violence against Muslim communities. It examines how the CAA and NRC — policies that reinforce religious exclusion and mainstream and social media contribute to the reproduction of anti-Muslim stereotypes.

Through qualitative empirical research, including interviews with social workers and members of Karnataka's Muslim community, the study reveals the lived realities of those impacted. It also points to patterns of struggles with economic disenfranchisement, psychological distress and institutional barriers as well as the resilience and work of social workers operating within such a complex political climate. The results also show a troubling normalization of hate and widespread distrust in law enforcement and the courts. This thesis ends with a call for a recommitment to human rights, social justice and the protection of marginalized voices in a time of increasing intolerance.