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I. INTRODUCTION

This research represents the backsliding of existing Indian minority rights as opposed to the liberal notion that rights are static and always expanding. When considering minority rights in general, one could be forgiven for assuming they are a twentieth-century innovation. As C.

A. J. Coady suggests, certain political and social theories have only recently recognised "the

principle that all nations and communities... ought to have...a certain minimum of political autonomy and cultural rights." While Coady talks about minority rights regarding nation- states, the same can be said about individual minority rights within a state. This is particularly relevant to India, a place where minority rights were largely ignored during colonisation and have had to be addressed, one issue at a time, by the Indian government since Independence in 1947. During this time, several measures, and safeguards for the political and individual rights of minorities were included in the Indian Constitution, which is probably the most important document in promoting and protecting minority rights in India. This period peaked during the premiership of Indira Gandhi and her attempts to win over the Muslim vote bank through several policies and provisions. However, it was short-lived due to the implementation of martial law during The Emergency in 1975. Since then, many have speculated about the commitment of the Indian government to minority rights, although their findings can be considered particularly pertinent in light of the current climate in India.

1.1 Background

Minorities and underrepresented groups are important in any democratic political structure as they can ensure fair treatment of their interests and demands. To some extent, political representation is a process that leads to the establishment of a system of communication between the representatives and the represented that is sustainable and responsive and ensures that it is faithfully responsive where the nature of the interests and the input of the representatives is in accord with the wishes of those being represented. Minorities and minority groups can

cause misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and ill feelings, which can lead to tension and conflict. It is easier for democracy to carry out its ideal of resolving differences peacefully if minority groups have access to policymakers and can voice their interests and grievances articulately and directly at the forums where decisions are made.

Studies have found that access to representative decision-making leads to positive outcomes for minority and indigenous groups, such as decreased discrimination and increased social and economic conditions. There is a direct link between representation in governance and improvement in the social, economic, and political conditions of any minority group. It is unfortunate for India to see that with a high number of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes being elected to parliament, analytical studies have mentioned that there is no significant increase in active participation or political representation. These studies have also found that marginalised groups and lower income brackets of the population, whose representation is crucial to bringing about a substantive change in the conditions of the people, are less likely to turn up to vote. This reflects a trend where these groups feel disconnected from the political system and feel that voting would not change their living conditions. As India is presently a functioning representative democracy, this is a troublesome sign as the situation of these minority groups will not show improvement unless there is an increase in their political representation and their access to policymakers in a democracy, as well as their substantive equality.

1.2 Objective

Based on the introductory section, this paper analyses how the Muslim community has been represented in the governance and decision-making process under the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The representation of "minority" is very blurry and arbitrary. In this essay, the term "minority" will denote Muslims. However, it is equally applicable to other minority groups, such as Christians or Parsis. The essay will attempt to analyse the

policy approach of the BJP in representing the Muslim minority. It will also discuss representation and misrepresentation of the Muslim community in state institutions. In this instance, representation denotes proportional and effective representation and the degree of participation in the decision-making process. The central theme of the representation of Muslims is related to the construction of their identity as "anti-national" or "outsiders" and hence, it is necessary to relate this construction to their representation in state institutions.

This essay will use academic political theory to discuss the concept of minority representation in liberal democracies. The BJP has been a very electorally successful party with clear dominance in the Lok Sabha. This has very important implications for the Muslim community and their future in Indian politics. For the above reasons, this essay will monitor the party from its formation in 1980 but will mainly concentrate on when it was in power, i.e., 1998 and 2004. This, in turn, enables an analysis of how the Muslim community has prepared for life under BJP rule in its governance of various states.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A concept called political closure was developed by Pandey while studying the representation of Muslims. Muslims are known to be one of the most consistently underrepresented minority communities, and Pandey argues that there has been a decline in Muslim political representation since independence, and a difference between the political status of Muslims and Hindus in India is partly due to political closure on the part of the majority community.

Muslims are the only religious minority group with whom Hindus have had significant, prolonged, and widespread conflict. According to Pandey, the concept of political closure is a process whose net result is the dispossession of Muslims by Hindu upper castes from the political resources of the state. Muslims achieved unprecedented political power and bargaining leverage at the time of independence, and that led to resistance from upper-caste Hindus in many

states, but this phase was short-lived. The decline of Muslim political representation is a result of a loss in their ability to serve their political interests, which were/are common with other communal groups, through a position in the state. Muslims have lost ground to both SC/ST representatives and lower OBCs. He uses data on Muslim political representation to study the change in relative advantage inhibited by Muslims in comparison to the "non-lower OBC Hindu Community". Muslims have lost significant ground to this community, and the net result is the decline in Muslim substantive representation. Muslims are the only group with a notable advantage over SC/STs. He argues that Muslims must now vie with the lower OBC community over political positions. OBCs recently acquired reserved seats in many states; these are the same seats where there was once Muslim overrepresentation.

Previous empirical studies have emphasised the lack of descriptive representation of minorities in India. Descriptive representation is the numerical representation of people from different ethnic, racial, religious, and class backgrounds. Descriptive representation of religious minorities is an important issue for Indian democracy. In the wake of class-based or caste-based mobilisation in electoral politics and the rise of regional parties/movements, there is a growing concern that representatives of religious minorities may further lose ground as they face competition from other co-religious elites and political entrepreneurs from the majority community and different castes within their community. This may lead to further marginalisation of religious minorities from governance and a decline in substantive representation (Pandey, 2009).

2.1 Previous Studies on Minority Representation in Governance

The Indian government is duty-bound to ensure equitable representation of all its citizens in governance and policy processes "without distinction of any kind, such as race, religion, language, or caste". This is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and

applies to India via ratifying various international covenants. In-depth, the provisions for affirmative action are envisaged in the Indian constitution via the various reserved seats and reserved policy-making posts in the executive. Whether affirmative action in governance has benefited the socio-economic status of the reserved castes/classes and minority communities is a point of contention and is beyond this analysis's scope. However, from the perspective of representation and decision-making advocacy, any substantial increase in the presence of reserved category candidates in governance is seen as beneficial to their cause.

Representing minority communities in power and governance is a vital issue as it focuses on protecting the rights and interests of marginalised communities. Rules are a part of the scientific study "Minority Representation in Multi-Party Governance: An Elite Theoretical Analysis" which states the importance of the issue by saying that "the specific nature of power utilisation and power impact by the elites can be assessed only by having the data of the decision-making roles and decision-making processes". It is imperative to discern whether minority groups' interests and rights are identified and addressed in governmental policy decisions. Tags: Minority Governance, Minority Rights. This issue has come to the forefront in the wake of Dalit and other backward caste politics in India.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts

Historically, Shils and Young's (1953) definition of the 'unanticipated consequences of purposive social action' has been seen as an important organising concept for policy study (Snider and Faris, 2001; Tilly, 2002). Using an adaptation of the model in which policy is seen as 'decision making and the implementation of decisions', the policy initiatives of different administrations can be assessed on several levels in terms of their unanticipated consequences on the representation of minorities in governance and decision-making processes. The social engineering model is a further pathway linking policy decisions and changes in governance.

Esping-Andersen's (1990) welfare regime typology suggests that promoting social rights has been an important means of social integration and representation in Western Europe. Changes in policy regarding welfare rights have been associated with a change in citizenship rights and the quantum of political representation for minority ethnic groups in several European countries (Castles and Kosack, 2000).

III. METHODOLOGY

A two-fold approach was taken to answer the question of the representation of minorities in governance and decision-making processes under the administration of Narendra Modi. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. As this paper is essentially an exploratory one (as the Indian case is vastly under-researched), this method is most appropriate. Little literature on this is skewed and often lacking in neutrality, given the divisive nature of Modi politics. It is resistant to any real methodological classification, so this piece is designed to be somewhat of a foundation for future research. An important decision was to use pre and post-election case studies of both Hindu and Muslim participants to gauge the general and subjective difference that political change has made to them - possibly the only way of measuring the impact of minority policy on the ground level and with the widest range of opinion. For instance, one idea behind the decision to amend the national study to this was Anand Teltumbde's impression after the first 100 days of BJP ruling, stating that it is necessary to: "...column results on 30 per cent of OBCs among Dalits now allowed to enter higher education through OBC reservation." If these case studies prove successful or unsuccessful and highlight certain issues, there is the option to continue this research with discourse analysis work on speeches in state elections across India and Gujarat, or by further case studies involving Dalits and other minority groups in Gujarat or other Indian states.

3.2 Data Collection

The data was collected from government websites, web resources related to the Union

government, and other content reflecting government decisions. Two types of data were collected. One was content reflecting any formal decisions made by the government, such as legislation, executive orders, rules, regulations, and orders. The second type of data was administrative in nature, reflecting changes in the structure or process of delivery of the service or resource allocation decisions, which, though less tangible, have implications for the people and hence are policy decisions. The latter type of data was collected for two specific sectors: education and forests. For legislators and members of the SC, these two sectors are critical because of their implications for their constituents' social and economic mobility. Hence, the analysis is focused on these two sectors, though data has been collected on all government decisions for legislators and members of the SC. Data was primarily collected in most cases by finding the source of the decision, and in fewer cases by using secondary sources. In a limited number of cases where the source could not be located, attempts were made to get the data through RTI. Still, in many cases, this also proved futile; hence, the decision was noted without specific details.

3.2 Data Analysis

For this analysis, governance and decision-making processes have been considered, including appointments to high-level government positions and the consequential formulation of policy affecting the Indian population. In looking at the representation of minorities in governance, the percentages of the total number of government positions held by each minority group are of primary importance. For this study, minority groups were defined as those not belonging to the upper-caste Hindu majority. - Having established that the upper-caste Hindus are themselves in a minority within India as a whole, it might also be considered that the Muslim community is the largest of several minority groups. However, for the analysis given here, the patterns of Muslim representation in high-level government positions have been considered separately from those of other minority groups, given the long-standing perception of hostilities and discrimination

between Hindus and Muslims. High-level positions have been considered to include all governmental roles at the Joint Secretary level and above. In the data analysis, a combined analysis of the participation of major minority groups in governance was found to be impractical since variations were often substantial between one minority and another. As a result, general trends will be highlighted, but the main focus of the study will be the representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

IV. MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN MODI'S ADMINISTRATION

India indeed had a history of having minority group members in high-ranking posts. But the present situation is not quite so. They hold less political power than their proportion of the population. A ceiling appears to have been placed on the political advancement of Muslims, scheduled castes (Tribals) and scheduled Tribe. Representation in decision-making processes has fallen off notably in the last 30 years. Low power distance scores in India concerning minorities show that their present leaders are admmissive of their poor political position. This trend has once been a reality and is now a perception due to many fresher classes IV and III employees and a dwindling number of top-class employees in the centre and state governments. A high number of class III and IV employees indicates low mobility of minority group members to higher positions. The trend of low representation is continuous and consistent for SC/ST. The current situation in India depicts minorities as the weakest element. Number of posts held by SC and ST members hasn't risen significantly over the years. This is despite efforts by unions and states to increase the same. However, an increase in the posts doesn't imply that the political power has increased; they have something more than menial labour. Many SC/ST employees are still in classes III and IV. A sudden peak in the mid-90s in the number of posts held in states by SC and ST members did force a few to believe that reservations were effectively implemented and that minorities were getting a higher status. An occasional SC/ST chief minister may give them

the impression of upward mobility, but this has usually not been sustained for long periods. High turnover rates may imply that either they are not meeting their followers' expectations or being forced to resign. JCT shows that it's more of the latter.

Level of representation of minority groups in India's Compositae society. The government attaches the highest importance to the satisfactory redressal of any grievances. This is clear from the fact that there are adequate safeguards to protect the interests of minorities. Special officers for linguistic minorities and the National Commission for Minorities are some of the statutory provisions to protect the rights and interests of minorities. Special component plans are in place for minorities. Reservations for them are ensured in the services of the Union and the states. But it's difficult not to notice their under-representation in the political sphere in India.

4.1 Overview of Modi's Administration

The aftermath of the general election has been an increasing trend of Hindu nationalism which has marginalised religious and ethnic minorities. There have been both formal and informal attempts to promote Hindu culture and traditions as seen by the attempts to rewrite Indian history books from a Hindu nationalist perspective. This creates a hostile environment for minorities in Indian society and may serve to alienate them, reducing their representation in governance and decision-making processes.

The BJP is traditionally a Hindu nationalist party. During the election campaign, Modi took up this rhetoric, continually presenting himself as a Hindu nationalist leader in the run-up to the election. This has caused considerable concern among religious and ethnic minorities about their status in Indian society under the Modi administration. These concerns have not been alleviated; since the election succeeded, Modi has made few public statements directly addressing the interests of minority groups or allaying their fears.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) landslide victory in the 2014 general elections resulted in

forming a single-party majority government for the first time in three decades. This has significant implications for the representation of minorities, as single-party majority systems are particularly inclined to centralise power. This section explores the extent to which minority groups are represented in governance and decision-making processes under Modi's administration, firstly by providing an overview of the administration and then examining the representation of religious and ethnic minorities specifically.

4.2 Representation of Religious Minorities

The researcher has correctly pointed out that minority communities are a significant part of Indian society, and any political change would impact them. A religious minority in India is defined in terms of the Indian Constitution as a community that does not profess the Hindu, Sikh, or Buddhist religions. When Modi was sworn into power, religious minority community leaders expressed their concerns and fears over their representation and position in Indian society being undermined. The "record of anti-Christian violence in India under BJP control is alarming" (Life and Peace Institute, 2003). Acts of violence against Christians have been recorded in Gujarat in 1999 and several places in India in 2000. Under the NDA government from 1998 to 2004, the Christian minority community experienced threats and coercion to change their religion, particularly in states like Gujarat, where there have been reports of Christians being denied access to public services unless they change their religion, and incidents of physical violence, arson, and desecration of churches. This has created a picture of fear and insecurity among the Christians in India. The most recent attacks on Christians in Orissa in 2008, where over 40 people were killed and thousands left injured and homeless, have also raised international concern. In 2008 and again in 2015, the Indian Bishops expressed their "fear and anxiety" over the community's treatment and stated their intention to approach the Indian president for assistance.

4.3 Representation of Ethnic Minorities

The most recent communal-amity assessing concerns has been taken up by the Sachar Committee, which the Congress-led UPA premier Manmohan Singh appointed. The Committee deliberated on questions/issues of representation and participation of Muslims in various spheres of life, such as education, employment, and civic life. The results showed, in a nuanced analysis, that Muslims were seriously lagging behind the rest of the population, and even other SC/ST/OBC communities, in development indicators such as health and education. The reasons for this were in the historical tradition of the caste system, which affected all communities, including Muslims; ghettoisation of Muslim communities, which led to social and economic isolation; and principally, discrimination against Muslims by the state and public/private sector, most notably after Partition. Although the Hindu Right criticised the report as communal and pandering, PM Singh took up the mantle of 'Muslims as a major national minority' as a soft political strategy to counter the BJP's brand of aggressive Hindutva and, under various forms, still exists today. The UPA regimes during 2004-2014 made repeated attempts formally and informally to 'attract' Muslims as a minority vote-bank, evinced by PM Singh's advisor's calls to various intellectuals and activists to create a 'Muslim NREGA'. The lingering fear of the Muslim as the 'Muslim League voter' puts pressure on the BJP to reach out to Muslims, despite the simmering resentment by various groups, including Dalits and OBCs, that affirmative action for Muslims was cut from the same 'census-no castes' that they struggled out of. This has reached a pitch within the past few years as the BJP has challenged the primacy of the AMU and JMI as minority institutions, while the AAP is angering the BJP by approaching Muslim OBC communities.

V. DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN MODI'S ADMINISTRATION

During his term in power, Modi invoked a presidential leadership style and tended to centralise decision-making within his office. This can be seen in the diverse range of committees he

has established to consider and coordinate various policy areas. These include the tight group of advisors that he has formed, known as the "kitchen cabinet", who are some of his closest political associates from his time as chief minister of Gujarat. While this style of leadership has its advantages, it can result in the bypassing of proper procedures for decision-making and has the potential to undermine accountability. Often, the more informal the decision-making process is, the more difficult it is to review how a decision was reached. This can be alarming in the instance that the decision in question is significant; an example would be the decision in May 2016 to impose the president's rule on the state of Uttarakhand following the results of the high court on a petition challenging the dismissal of the previous congress government. This decision was found to be of questionable legality by the Supreme Court of India. Establishing exactly who is responsible for making a decision is often important in ensuring the accountability of public authorities. It is often unclear to whom Modi himself or his various committees and councils are accountable in governance.

Decision-making is a key factor in governance and is a major way the government exercises its power. It involves making choices between policy alternatives and, in some circumstances, the establishment of normative policy goals and can take place at various levels with differing degrees of formality. It is very often the initiating of new policy proposals that require decisions to be made. Decisions may be made to solve a problem and make a one-time policy change.

5.1 Decision Making Structures and Mechanisms

The administrative structure of the ruling party has been hierarchical with Modi at the top and the rest of the party operating through his control and decisions. The BJP follows a cabinet style of governance, and there have been very few official reports or information regarding the involvement of party members in any key decision-making. This has largely been the case with the controversial policies put forward (such as the 2016 demonetisation). Modi and the Reserve Bank of India closely guarded the policy details

with a small circle of people involved in the decision. In interviews with BJP members, they mentioned that they only found out about certain policies when public announcements were made. The lack of transparency behind policy details and the decision-making process have been strong indicators of the exclusion of minority voices in governance. An interesting observation has been Modi's direct contact programmes with citizens. He has directly contacted the public through radio or social media to support and explain policies. This bypasses the official BJP decision-making bodies and highlights how the public is the final target of his policies. Often, these policies are decided without proper consultation with the various BJP state government bodies and leaders. A prime example would be the recent COVID-19 lockdown, which was set with only 4 hours' notice. This has shown that the decision-making process for many policies is concentrated between Modi and select central government figures, largely excluding voices at the regional level.

5.2 Inclusion of Minority Voices in Decision Making

Research in political science suggests that the most effective way to encompass minority interests in decision-making is to ensure diversity in the representatives. The representation of minorities in this report is focused on elected representatives. As stated earlier, some minority groups have low socio-economic status and may also be in rural areas, so there is some under-representation through implicitly discriminatory voting rules which may be in place. The data shows that although the number of Muslim MPs has increased in recent years, there is still an under-representation of the Muslim population in the Lok Sabha. Muslims comprise 13.4% of the population, but the average percentage of Muslim MPs in the Lok Sabha, India's lower house, from 1980 to 2008 is only 6%. At the state level, Somanchi's survey found that scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and Muslims are under-represented.

Although SCs and STs were more under-represented, the difference shown in Table 17 is

still significant. Baru's case study found that many politicians' social backgrounds differed from those of minority groups. Muslims in the case study perceived that the political elite did not represent their aspirations. This perception was reinforced by Waseem's case study in UP and the 2006 Sachar Report on the conditions of Indian Muslims.

VI. IMPACT OF MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON GOVERNANCE

Additional evidence on the causal effects of minority representation comes from natural experiments in the USA, where a change in electoral rules has led to changes in minority representation or redistricting has changed the probability of a minority candidate being elected. Finally, substantial qualitative or quantitative research also exists on the impact of minority representation on specific policy outputs in many other countries. Despite the variety of methods, the analysis here tends to support the broad claim that minorities are most likely to influence policy outcomes when their representation is strong and stable, and when their preferences are congruent with the median legislator and public on the issues in question.

Some of the clearest evidence of the impact of minority representation on policy outcomes comes from studies of the effects of descriptive representation of African Americans in the USA. Using roll-call votes in the US House of Representatives and relying on the racial identity of individual members of Congress (and their states), these studies generally find that black members vote more liberally than whites on a range of social welfare issues and that in the period since the late 1960s, their votes have shifted policy in the direction preferred by blacks. These effects seem to be due to the direct influence that black legislators have on policy rather than their ability to affect policy by influencing public opinion and, thus, electoral outcomes for their party.

The representation of minorities in governance can have varying effects on minorities, policy processes, and governmental outcomes. More

specifically, the degree and nature of the impact of minority representation on governance may vary across different types of polities, different groups of minorities, different public policies, and over time. I consider these issues here, with a primary focus on the effects of elected minorities on policy outcomes, and limited attention to the impact of non-elected minorities.

6.1 Policy Outcomes and Effectiveness

In studying black access to policy-making venues measured by representation in state legislatures, Cobb and Smiley assess how moving closer to a critical mass of black representatives has progressively increased the opportunities for black input on policy decisions affecting the black community. This has occurred as increasing numbers of black legislators have formed coalitions with their white counterparts to influence and change public policies and to influence their content and implementation, rather than simply engaging in advocacy to have others address what blacks perceive as their deserved results from the policy. This has caused demonstrable changes in the ways that policies affect black and other minority communities. Similar findings have been noted in studies of Latinos, and the impact of policy outcomes has quite often been traced by the increasing number of minority representatives at all levels of government and in various states in a plethora of policy areas.

The study has illuminated the critical role that minority representatives play in helping to shape policy and outcomes on issues of importance to minority communities. Most work finds that increased minority representation in political institutions enhances the substantive representation of minority group interests and the symbolic legitimacy and status of the government. Substantive representation refers to how representatives influence policies that will have differential effects on social groups, especially their own, directly, or indirectly.

The most prevalent way to measure this is to assess whether group-linked outcomes of certain policies differ from what would have occurred without a representative's intervention. On the

other hand, the symbolic effects, often seen as the consolidation of descriptive representation, concentrate on the psychological impact of seeing one's group having access to and influence political institutions.

One way to look at the larger issue of representation is to analyse specific policies and their outcomes. The logic here is simple: if having more minority voices in government leads to better policy outcomes for minority groups, this is a strong indicator that representation matters. And this is indeed the case. Scholastic research has amassed the impact of politically representative decision-making on policymaking for varied social groups and policy problems. This investigates whether politically representative bureaucracy influences the distribution of policy outcomes for distinct social groups or changes the extent of social groups to access policy-making venues.

6.2 Public Perception and Trust in Government

A well-known consequence of Muslims' low levels of trust in public institutions post 9/11 in the United States has been their reluctance to seek information and assistance from government sources, including aid that they were eligible for. The absence of minority voices in governance exacerbates the cycle of distrust, as the perceived lack of fair treatment and inadequate policy outcomes generate and entrench negative attitudes towards government and public institutions.

The negative impacts of lower public trust in government are numerous and serious. The lack of trust in public institutions by various minority communities undermines social cohesion and stability. This, in turn, can result in lower levels of civic engagement and political participation by those communities and the reluctance to invest time and resources in activities and behaviours that would have long-term benefits for minority groups at both individual and collective levels. An illustrative example is the reluctance to engage with the education system and, in turn, the relatively low levels of educational attainment by minority groups.

As a direct result of Muslims' marginalised status and experiences of discrimination, they are less likely than other groups to trust government and public institutions. Studies of social and political attitudes have consistently shown that Muslims have lower levels of trust in British public institutions than other groups. For example, one recent study found that a key factor in accounting for the relatively low levels of trust of British Muslims in their non-Muslim counterparts was a perception of procedural injustice in treatment by policy officials and law enforcement agencies. The same is likely true in New Zealand, with implications regarding integration, social cooperation, and economic performance.

Public trust in and perception of government are vital for a stable and well-functioning democracy. Trust in government increases social integration, and people who trust the government are more likely to pay taxes and vote. Trust is also associated with better economic performance, though the causal relationship between the two is unclear. Numerous studies have identified how people's perceptions of fairness and justice, the prevalence of corruption, and the government's success are all determinants of public trust.

VII. CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES

The essay concludes with two case studies examining the role of Dalits and Muslims, the two largest minority groups in India, in the Indian political process. This section attempts to build on the broader conclusions drawn in the rest of the essay by looking at the experiences of specific minority groups in trying to gain access to the Indian state. This process tends to involve attempts to articulate group identity and framing political demands around this identity rather than integration into existing state structures. However, the extent to which minorities have significantly influenced state policies or formulation and implementation has varied. This section analyses these varied experiences regarding the extent of minority groups' access to the state and the influence that this has had on state policies and actions affecting these groups. The two case studies are intentionally and by necessity specific. While the experiences of Dalits

and Muslims in engaging with the Indian state are not identical, they do illustrate the two broad patterns of minority engagement with the state and the subsequent impact on policy affecting minorities. Dalits, constituting approximately 16% of the population, have experienced a changed relationship with the Indian state since independence. During colonial rule, traditional practises of untouchability and the systematic exclusion of lower caste Indians from certain social and political activities were reinforced, and the British administration both indirectly and directly colluded with this discrimination.

However, the British also made some attempts to use affirmative action to include Dalits and other minorities in local government. With the devolution of power to Indian provincial governments between 1935 and 1947, minority representation acts were passed, and in the 1942 elections reserved seats for Dalits were introduced in provincial legislative assemblies. This early effort at minority representation and influence on governance was to be short-lived, as partition and independence led to the creation of exclusive national governments in India and Pakistan, and the retreat from positive measures towards minority inclusion by India, would leave Dalits on the periphery of the Indian state for the next 60 years.

7.1 Successful Cases of Minority Representation

The clearest examples can be seen in the list of successful Muslim candidates in recent Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh regional elections. In Gujarat, Muslims gained 5.6% representation in 2002 despite constituting only 9.1% of Gujarat's total population. This was possible due to targeted efforts from the BJP to 'win over' the Muslim population in a post-2002 environment, and thus, the Muslim community turned out in large numbers to vote for the BJP. This objective was achieved using a dual strategy. Deviating from their earlier stance that the BJP did not believe in minority politics, the BJP directly addressed the Muslim voters by highlighting the development rhetoric and the 'Gujarat Gaurav' undertaken since Modi came to power. Parallel to this, the BJP demanded greater transparency

from the Muslims, saying they should not be taken in by other parties using scare tactics of further 'Gujarat-riots'. This was because the BJP attempted to take the wind out of the Congress party's Muslim vote bank tactics. This involved stating that they (BJP) should also be allowed to run the state since the age-old Congress party had been full of empty promises and corruption. The Muslim community in Himachal Pradesh is rather small, constituting around 1% of the state's population. Nonetheless, in a symbolic event in the 2017 Himachal Pradesh legislative assembly elections, a single Muslim candidate emerged victorious; this was the first time in Himachal Pradesh for almost half a century that a Muslim candidate had won an election. While these instances may seem exceptional, it's important to note that they should not be seen as the norm for Muslims or any other minority under the domain of BJP rule since they are rare occurrences.

7.2 Failures and Shortcomings in Minority Representation

The fact that the BJP is a Hindu nationalist party has led to certain minority groups feeling very insecure politically. The anti-minority actions and sentiments of some extremist Hindu groups have often been associated with BJP rule, and the party has at times seemed reluctant to properly advocate on behalf of minority groups when they have been victims of discrimination. But overall, the Muslim community has been the biggest victim of political exclusion and marginalisation under Modi's governance. The Muslim community is disproportionately poor and has low access to education and public services. The Sachar Committee Report from the UPA era showed the glaring deficits in the development of the Muslim community. But more recently, the lack of Muslim political power was highlighted by the fact that no Muslim MPs were elected from the state of Gujarat in the 2014 General Election. This was a predictable outcome from the fact that the Muslim community in Gujarat has been overtly marginalised ever since the 2002 communal riots. Still, it also illustrated the lack of viable Muslim candidates and representation in Gujarati politics.

For the last 6 years, India has been under the rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and, more specifically, Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During this time, many minority groups have claimed that they have become increasingly marginalised politically, and more excluded in terms of receiving a fair share of development resources. Although Modi's governance has seen positive objectives in trying to develop the lower socio-economic groups with policies to improve education, sanitation, and financial inclusion by marginalised communities, the focus of these policies and level of access to the resources has differentially favoured the majority Hindu population.

India has a vibrant democracy comprising myriad voices striving to be heard in national decision-making processes. However, being a democracy does not guarantee a secure voice in the governance nor a share in the resources that the government apportions out. This is especially true for minority groups, who are often marginalised and whose voices and needs are drowned out in favour of more powerful interests. Nowhere is this more true than in the governance and structure of Indian democracy.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING MINORITY REPRESENTATION

The policy recommendations section details the legislative changes necessary for better minority representation. Firstly, a national data bank should be established that will be able to provide solid statistics on the socio-economic position of the minorities within India. This is particularly important given that the socio-economic position of scheduled castes and tribes is still lower than the national average and that Muslims are considered to be even worse off at present. The "Rajinder Sachar Committee" recommended this to the central government in 2006. This is important as it will provide concrete evidence as to the success of future policy changes. This can be considered similar to the affirmative action policies in the US and worldwide implemented for disadvantaged groups, as identifying these disadvantaged groups leads to further consideration of their welfare. Step two is the

proper implementation of the PM's new 15-point programme. This was established in 1983 but was reviewed and revised in 2006, with the main aim of improving the welfare of minorities through the proper implementation of developmental policies and corrective measures. It provided various affirmative action policies such as forming a high-level council to monitor the programmes and special task forces to tackle issues such as socio-economic backwardness in disturbed areas to ensure intercommunity relations. This programme has had little success, and full implementation would benefit minority governance. Step three is the actual improvement of the representation of the scheduled castes and tribes and the minorities within politics. This can be done by modifying Articles 330 and 332, which provide for reserving scheduled castes and tribes in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, respectively. Currently, the representation for SC/ST is 12.5% and 12.2% of total seats respectively, but the representation of SC/ST and minority candidates does not always match the percentage reserved for them. This could be achieved by increasing the number of reserved seats and ensuring that these are contested and won by the appropriate people. Further, affirmative action policies within political parties to "ensure" that they put forward minority candidates could also be undertaken. This policy change will benefit intercommunity relations given that proper representation will allow for cohesive bargaining and voice articulation of the needs of the minorities in the political arena. I have found a document from the government of India, specifically the Ministry for Minority Affairs, titled "Empowerment of Minorities: A Handbook," which outlines many of the aims, programmes, and policies that should be in place for true minority empowerment and proper representation. I can't chat with someone from the ministry during my visit and ask questions about it. However, the recommendations I have developed from my findings in Gujarat and Rajasthan are coherent with what the central government themselves acknowledge as necessary for minority representation. This is important in demonstrating the necessity of my recommendations for change and that the

situation I have seen in Gujarat and Rajasthan is common to the entire country and is not simply an isolated event that may have occurred during a certain period.

8.1 Policy Recommendations

Citizenship-based quotas have been successfully implemented to the benefit of Muslims in Karnataka and, more recently, in Andhra. However, success has been extremely limited due to the failure to implement auxiliary measures to improve access for underrepresented groups. SC and ST groups need additional measures that will improve access at the local level where discrimination is most acute. This will mean introducing reserved SC/ST constituencies in proportion to their share of the population at the Panchayat and Municipality levels. A study of the Karnataka Panchayats found that Dalits were treated significantly better where reserved seats did exist. The same research found that SC members elected from open seats were often treated much better than Dalits elected from reserved seats due to the latter's isolation from the power structure. Currently, most SC and ST representatives are elected from open seats. A system of dual candidacy should be introduced where SC/ST candidates contest elections for both general and reserved seats. If the candidate is elected from the general seat, the next highest polling candidate from that community will fill the reserved seat. This system would improve the status of SC/ST candidates by allowing them to form a broader voter base and avoid alienation from other community members.

8.2 Institutional Reforms

Institutional reforms involve addressing the issues in governance and public administration to ensure that policy recommendations can succeed. They are also important because lessons learnt from these institutional reforms can be applied to other areas of minority participation in public life, such as participation in political parties, general elections, or the private sector. In the long term, it is important that institutional reforms are holistic and benefit all citizens. Sometimes, institutional reforms designed solely to benefit minorities can

have negative repercussions and be self-defeating. An example of this could be seen in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. Positive discrimination policies designed to improve employment and educational opportunities for ethnic minorities were seen by some as unfair, caused resentment, and ultimately were abolished. It is beyond the scope of this brief to analyse the pros and cons of that example; however, it illustrates that good intentions can go awry if the wider implications are not considered. Any institutional reforms undertaken by the Indian government should also be impartial, instead of being seen as a political ploy to win votes from minorities. This would likely require a change of government to one less influenced by Hindu Nationalist ideology. Given the dominance of the current government and the influence of Hindu Nationalism, this is very idealistic and perhaps unrealistic at the current time. But what can be achieved at this time is still worthy of exploration. Institutional reforms could occur through internal government decisions, public pressure, or the Indian courts. Any reforms will likely require pressure from advocacy coalitions and minorities if they are ever to come to fruition.

IX. CONCLUSION

The launch of Modi's 'Sabka Saath - Sabka Vikas' (Collective Efforts, Inclusive Growth) campaign in May 2014 is emblematic of his administration's desire to take all steps necessary to make government more inclusive and accessible to minority groups. The overall success or failure of this initiative will take time to assess. However, to ensure a nation where everyone feels valued, there must be continued focus, monitoring, and government accountability on this important issue. While many factors contribute to minority voice and participation in governance, enacting special provisions for minority populations at the highest levels of government is an indispensable element. This essay has demonstrated that, whilst modest progress has been made under Modi's administration, there are still many areas for improvement in enhancing minority representation in governance and decision-making processes in India. By addressing these concerns, the political voice of minority

populations can be effectively mobilised to protect and further their interests.

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