



## Fascist Tendencies in Indian Politics

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**Abstract:** India is a nation known for its democracy but India has shown the trends of fascism throughout the contemporary history, whether it be the emergency that happened during the Indira Gandhi's term. The rise of fascism in the Indian politics can be sensed in India from the very beginning of the independence and it still persists in the countries politics and it still manages to play a major role in the Indian politics. This paper tries to evaluate the symptoms as seen in the country for the deadly fascist virus in the country's politics. The paper focuses on separatist movements including Khalistani Movement, Separatist Movements in Jammu and Kashmir and Naxalite Movement and emergency. This paper discusses in brief about these topics and comes to a conclusion based on these.

**Index Terms - Fascist, Emergency, Khalistan, Naxalist movement, Autocracy, Separatism.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

Fascism is a political theory and movement that stresses authoritarianism, militarism, the suppression of dissent, a rigorous social order, and racial and nationalist aspirations at the cost of individual rights and liberties. By the period of World War Two, fascism grew increasingly popular across Europe. Fascism is founded on a variety of fundamental principles, including a strong and persistent nationalism, a disregard for human rights, a privileged military, a manipulated mass media, a close relationship between the state and religion, the protection of corporations, and a contempt for the arts and academics. The emergence of fascism in Indian politics dates back to the early days of independence and continues to this day, playing a considerable effect in national elections and other political processes.

From 1919 to 1945, fascism was the dominant political theory and mass movement in many areas of Europe. It is possible to find followers of this theory in Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and the Middle East. Benito Mussolini, the first European fascist leader, derived the term fascism from the Roman word *fascis*, which referred to a bundle of elm (often incorporating an axe) used as a symbol of criminal authority in ancient Roman empire during 700 BC. Mussolini acquired the name for his party from the Roman word. There were many similarities between fascist parties and movements throughout this time period. These included a belief in natural hierarchy within the society as well as the rule of elites, a disparagement for electoral democracy as well as political and cultural liberalism and a strong desire to establish a *Volksgemeinschaft* (German for "people's community") in which individual interests were secondary to the good of the nation, and contempt for the rule of elites. End of World War II saw a steep decline in emergence of fascist parties throughout Europe. After World War II, almost all Fascist parties were mostly eradicated in Europe, and in countries like West Germany and Italy, they were made illegal. The late 1940s, on the other hand, saw the beginning of the rise of fascist parties and organizations throughout Europe, Latin America, and South Africa. True, a number of "neofascist" organizations in Europe garnered a substantial following, particularly in Italy and France, but they were unable to compete with the big fascist parties of the interwar period. This was especially the case in Italy and France.

## 1 Indian Separatist Movements

When people talk about India, the term "secession" most often refers to the breaking away of one or more states from India. Nonetheless, there were many who advocated for the establishment of a whole new autonomous administrative territory inside India. There are a number of separatist movements, each of which has thousands of members; nevertheless, in spite of the high voter participation in democratic elections, some of these groups have very little support among locals. On the other hand, according to the secession laws of India, you might be subject to criminal prosecution if you attempt to proclaim independence from the Indian government. In Article 1 of the Indian Constitution, it is stated that India is a "Union of States." This implies that the nation cannot be divided, despite the fact that it is made up of many different states, and that no part of the Union can break away from the rest of India and form its own independent nation.

Since India gained its independence in 1947, the number of organizations advocating for ethnic or religious separation has skyrocketed. India is now experiencing a number of separatist movements that are emblematic of the problems that the nation faces on a geographical, ethnic, and humanitarian level. In India, there have only been a limited number of secessionist movements. On the one hand, India's huge size and rich ethnic variety are largely to blame for the country's separatist conflict. On the other hand, the state's continued refusal to yield property based on ethno-national claims is also a major contributing factor. Both the vastness of the country and the variety of its people are major factors that contribute to the violence. In the next section, we shall investigate many of the separatist groups that were active in India during the time period in question.

### 1.1 Khalistani Movement

The Khalistan movement is a Sikh separatist group with the goal of establishing Khalistan, also known as the "Land of the Khalsa," in Punjab. The proposed state would encompass the region that is today divided between the Indian and Pakistani provinces of Punjab.

Fewer than 2% of India's population identifies as Sikh, making them a small religious minority. Punjab, a state in northern India, is home to the country's biggest Sikh community. They comprise a substantial component of the Indian bureaucracy, military, and commercial sector despite being a minority in the nation. Punjab is also one of the richest states in India due to its high per capita GDP and education rate. Despite this, Punjab lost a significant number of Sikhs throughout the 1980s since many of them wanted a new identity based on their faith and the language that they spoke (Punjabi) (Sikhism). They were used to differentiate themselves from people who spoke Hindi and Hindu regions, such as the neighboring state of Haryana, as well as to petition the central government for more economic and political advantages.

During the 1980s, as the secessionist movement gained support, Khalistan's territorial goals encompassed, at different points in time, Chandigarh, areas of Indian Punjab (including all of North India), and western Indian state territories.

According to Jagjit Singh Chohan, when the Indo-Pak War of 1971 came to a close, Pakistani Prime Leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared his complete support for the formation of Khalistan.

From the time of the partition, there has been a desire among Sikhs for a homeland that is separate and distinct from India. Pamphlets were used in 1940 to make the first overt demand for Khalistan. These pamphlets were published in the year 1940. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the movement in the Sikh-majority state of Punjab expanded, and it reached its height in the late 1980s. This expansion was made possible with aid from the Sikh diaspora. During the 1970s and 1980s, a violent separatist effort to create Khalistan paralyzed the Punjab. It was supported by the All-India Sikh Student Federation, and it was masterfully directed by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Sikhs continue to pray twice daily in their temples (called gurudwaras) about their duty to rule and the concept of a Khalsa state, despite the movement's failure for various reasons.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, selective killings, and massacres were all part of the Khalistan movement's violent campaign. Throughout the movement, more than 22,000 Sikhs and Hindus, including 12,000 civilians, perished. In June 1984, Sikh insurgents commanded by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale were expelled from Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, due to the Indian government's authorisation of Operation Blue Star. Sikhs throughout the world were offended by the military action inside the temple complex, which they saw as an attack on their faith. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her two Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, on 31 October 1984, just five months after the operation. In 1985, Khalistani separatists stationed in Canada exploded a bomb on an Air India flight from Toronto to

New Delhi, killing 329 passengers. 82 youngsters under the age of 13 were among the deceased. Canada has never seen a more catastrophic terrorist strike.

In reaction to the indignation over the assassination of Indira Gandhi, anti-Sikh riots in Delhi alone murdered approximately 3,000 Sikhs. During the 1990s, a severe police suppression against separatists, factional infighting among the members who were the part of the movement, and disparagement among the Sikh community all contributed to the end of the insurgency and the movement's failure to accomplish its goal. Punjab's chief minister, Amarinder Singh, blamed Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Western Khalistani supporters for the present extremism.

After the killing of Bhindranwale, the movement was quickly put down, despite the worldwide attention and support that helped the campaign to begin. A tiny handful of supporters maintain the campaign's viability. According to reports, khalistani supporters participated in the recent farmers' march.

## 1.2 Separatist Movement in Jammu and Kashmir

Since the 1930s, Kashmir, a highly disputed area of south Asia, has been plagued by unrest and instability. Historically, the Muslim majority challenged the rule of the Hindu minority (Maharaja Hari Singh). Later on, a Muslim elite emerged in the shape of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, who, together with Nehru in the early 1950s, blocked Kashmiri Muslims from attaining independence inside the framework of India. This was accomplished by preventing Kashmiri Muslims from seceding from India. Nehru backtracked on his previous promise to hold a vote in Kashmir after India had conquered Pakistan in 1947 and the United Nations successfully mediated a truce in 1948. As a direct consequence of this, Sheikh and Nehru's arrangement did not work out, and as a direct consequence of this, Nehru was even compelled to jail his close friend Sheikh. Since then, there has been a growth in fundamentalism in the valley that is directed against the Indian state. This fundamentalism began to ignite in the late 1980s with support from Pakistan.

At the very least since 1989, insurgency has been a problem in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan had a significant role in the growth of the unrest into a full-scale insurgency. The initial anger was driven by the ineffectiveness of Indian administration and democracy; nevertheless, Pakistan played a substantial role in the expansion of the unrest in the region. In Kashmir, there are armed groups with opposing goals: some want the region to be completely independent, while others want to join Pakistan. It is speculated that a disagreement about who has power in a certain location is at the heart of the uprising that is taking place. Late in the 1970s, the government of India adopted a number of democratic changes; however, by the year 1988, all of these reforms had been totally undone. Moreover, as a result of the severe limitations placed on nonviolent methods of expressing unhappiness, the support for militants who want armed independence from India saw a huge surge in popularity. After an extremely controversial state election in 1987, in which many people believed the results had been falsified, the uprising had its start that year. There are dozens of separatist organizations who are now in control of the Kashmir area. Jammu and Kashmir's two major separatist and irredentist organizations are the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the Hizbul-Mujahideen. The JKLF wants to create a single independent state out of the territory of Kashmir that is currently governed by both India and Pakistan. Establishment of an Islamic state is an ultimate goal of Hizbul-Mujahideen and form an alliance with Pakistan. Despite the fact that the JKLF was responsible for the killing of Hindus in Kashmir in 1989 and 1990, the organization continues to maintain that the central premise of its struggle is secular and that both Hindus and Muslims have a place in a unified Kashmir. This is despite the fact that the JKLF was responsible for the killing of Hindus in Kashmir. In spite of this, Hindus are pessimistic about the separatist movement and see it through the lens of Islamic extremism that exists in other parts of the globe. There are a number of Islamic fundamentalist organisations in Kashmir that are linked with the Hizbul Mujahideen who have tried several times without success to coerce Muslim women in Kashmir into wearing the burka (veil). As a consequence of this broad interpretation of Islamic law and public support for the JKLF's vision of azadi, the Kul-Jammat-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir, the newly formed apex organisation of roughly thirty militant nationalist organisations in Kashmir, has revised its professed objectives (All Kashmir Freedom Front). The year 2019 marked the official end of Jammu and Kashmir's separate identity. Since that time, the Indian military has made significant progress in its fight against insurgency. Throughout the first six months of 2020, wars and other armed engagements claimed the lives of 283 individuals. In order to forestall violence, civil unrest, and demonstrations in Jammu and Kashmir between 2019 and 2021, the Indian government imposed a communications blackout and a security lockdown in the region. To be more specific, it continued until February 2021. As a direct consequence of the operation, thousands of people, most of whom were young men, have been taken into custody. The government of India has said that the decision to seal the country and send out a sizable number of security officers was made for the purpose of preventing terrorist attacks. A great

number of countries, including Pakistan, have voiced their disapproval of the cancellation and subsequent closing of the facility.

### 1.3 Naxal Movement

The Naxalbari insurrection that took place in West Bengal in 1967 was the spark that ignited a Naxal-Maoist movement over the whole of India. The passage of time made it possible for it to gradually grow over all of the southern Indian states. Some of the Indian states administered in part by the Communist Party of India (Maoists) include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Telangana. There is a route marked in blood that goes across area held by the Naxals. They have a significant amount of support among India's indigenous tribal group, whom the government has ignored for far too long. In many cases, the ideology of naxalism, which is also known as "left-wing radicalism," can be traced back to Charu Mazumdar. 1965 was the year he started the organization, which he called a "revolutionary opposition." The "peasants' armed struggle" in Naxalbari was broadcast on Beijing Radio in 1967, which contributed to the cause of gaining worldwide attention (Siliguri division of West Bengal). Charu Mazumdar was taken into custody by the police in July of 1972. After enduring unspeakable torment during the night of July 27-28, he was finally put to death the next morning.

There are numerous parallels between the downtrodden Dalit and Adivasi populations in India's caste-based system and the philosophy of the Naxalite movement. In a resolution passed in 1980, the Central Committee of the Naxalites outlined the goals that they wished to achieve as follows: Andhra Pradesh districts of Adilabad, Karnapur, Khammam, East Godavari, Chandrapur, and Garchehiroli, Chandrapur, and Garchehiroli are surrounded by a homogeneous and a continuous forest. The term "adhiaar" was used to describe to the vast majority of the agricultural laborers who lived and worked in the Naxalbari and Khoribari districts (sharecroppers). Slaves from the Rajabansi, Oraon, Munda, and Santhal tribes, collectively referred to as "adhiars," labored away on the tea plantations owned by the Jotedars (landowners). From 1967 until 1972, Naxalite revolutionaries were active in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala with the cooperation of the Communist Party of India. They engaged in brutal activity during this time (Marxist-Leninist). Initially, the Naxals expanded throughout a total of 13 states. In 1947, naxal groups in Andhra Pradesh attempted to rouse the local farmers by staging a rebellion against the nizam and the feudal authority.

The People's War Group (PWG) was established in the year 1979 in the city of Warangal, which is located in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. It was led by a teacher by the name of Kondapath Satyanarayan. The territory of Andhra Pradesh subsequently grew to encompass the districts of Azelabad Khammam, Warangal, East Godavari, and Visakhapatnam. The Naxalites have been a problem for the government in the southern part of Orissa ever since April 1996, when they first established their People's War Groups. Both Malkangiri and Raygada have proven to be very beneficial for the PWG in terms of their efforts. Members of tribal groups account for about 58.36% of Malkangiri District's total population of 5,000,000 residents.

The Naxals continued to pose the biggest risk to India's national security. In the next years, the government will focus almost entirely on the Naxalite movement as its top priority. Even if there are certain times of peace, Maoists in India are still carrying out attacks on police and army. The most of the bloodshed is taking place in Chhattisgarh. On April 6, 2010, a Naxal ambush took place in Dantewada, which is located in the state of Chhattisgarh. As a direct consequence of the ambush, around seventy-six police personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force were killed. The attack that was carried out by the Naxal movement nearly entirely annihilated the 82nd CRPF Battalion. On April 26, 2017, in the town of Sukma, Chhattisgarh, members of the Naxal movement staged an ambush, which ultimately led to the deaths of twenty-five soldiers of the Central Reserve Police Force. The ambush was carried out by members of the Naxal movement. Two Central Reserve Police Force personnels were killed in Chhattisgarh on June 2019, as they were participating in an operation that was attacked by Naxal extremists. Around the time when the 199th CRPF battalion and the local police were preparing to undertake an operation to seize control of the area near to Keshkutul hamlet, there was an exchange of gunfire that took place.

The Central Reserve Police Force of India "withdrew around 1,450 officers and soldiers from more than 200 battalions," trained them in technical and signals intelligence, and established "CRPF's own intelligence section to limit losses and reliance on the state machinery." This action was taken as a direct consequence of the ineffectiveness of the Central Reserve Police Force of India non its fight against the Naxalites. Extremists affiliated with the Naxalite movement conduct operations against government forces or infrastructure almost every day. These operations may include the kidnapping and murder of anti-Naxalite leaders as well as the

abduction of informants. Notable high-profile killings include that of Bandwan CPI-M leader Rabindra Nath Kar and his wife, Madhya Pradesh Transport Minister Lakhiram Kaware, in addition to the arson of police stations and forest department towers for an amount equal to the salary of railwaymen, which is Rs 12 lacs. The Naxalite movement continues to be one of the most severe threats to the safety and security of the nation.

## 2 Emergency and Autocracy

The television show "The Emergency," which ran from 1975 to 1977, makes use of the word "fascist," although it never clarifies the philosophical meaning of the term. Indira Gandhi, who was serving as India's prime minister at the time, declared a state of emergency in order to safeguard the nation from "ultra-militant subversive organizations" like the Communist Party of India, the Ananda Margis, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), and the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (Marxist-Leninist). In the year 1971, a national emergency was proclaimed by the Congress government, which at the time was led by the legendary Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Declaration of an emergency was the lowest moment in the history of India's democracy.

On June 25, 2022, India will commemorate the passing of 47 years after the start of the Emergency, a period that was significant in the country's past. On this day in 1975, India's then-president, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, adopted the request of the Congress government in New Delhi, which was led by Indira Gandhi, and declared a nationwide emergency. One of the most controversial times in India's intellectual and political history was the Emergency, which began on June 25, 1975 and lasted until March 21, 1977. It was one of the longest states of emergency in contemporary Indian history. The judgement handed down by the Allahabad High Court on June 12, 1975, which found then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi guilty of election fraud and disqualified her from holding political office, was the impetus for the proclamation of a state of emergency in India.

In the 1971 election for the Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency in Uttar Pradesh, Indira Gandhi won the poll with a significant margin of victory against the socialist candidate Raj Narain. Following this, Narain filed a challenge to her election on the grounds that it had been tainted by electoral fraud and a breach of the Representation of the People Act of 1951. Her putative election agent, Yashpal Kapoor, worked for the government, and she reportedly recruited more government employees to assist with her campaign. Once it was determined that Indira Gandhi had committed electoral fraud, Judge Sinha removed her from Parliament and barred her from competing for public office for the next six years.

The next day, for some inexplicable reason, Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, locking up opposition leaders and prohibiting the media. Concerns over the nation's safety were prioritized by the Congress party administration, which used the just finished war with Pakistan as an example. In spite of resistance from the vast majority of party members, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was persuaded to carry out the plan by a small group of party officials. These individuals were headed by Siddhartha Shankar Ray, who served as Chief Minister of West Bengal at the time. According to historians, Sanjay Gandhi, the son of the prime minister, supported "extraconstitutional" tactics, and as a result, he supported the Emergency.

The Question is how the emergency was fascist. During those 21 months, she transformed India into a police state, imprisoned her political opponents and journalists, censored the press, and froze the Constitutionally given fundamental liberties. The minister of Information and Communication, I K Gujral was fired from his position and Sanjay Gandhi, the son Indira Gandhi was made the in charge of the ministry. Sanjay Gandhi also issued a forced sterilisation. Compulsory sterilisation was part of a bigger programme to reduce poverty, which in turn would stimulate rather than delay economic growth. Moreover, if Mr. Gandhi were to reduce population increase by even a modest percentage, he would get national and international recognition. The strongest opposition to the sterilisation programme came from the poorest rural populations and Muslims. In regions dominated by Hindus, Muslims constituted a minority. They were particularly opposed to sterilisation because they believed it was the majority's plan to eventually eliminate their community. Also, the judiciary of the India was turned upside down. And Just AN Ray became the Chief Justice super seceding two chief justices.

## II Conclusion

If fascism is studied in a historical context, there is no shortage of examples demonstrating how dissenting voices were repressed and power was monopolised by an intolerant group of individuals. Democracy and opposition parties, as well as religious and racial minorities, are crushed by the state's weapons of power. Although India, prima facie never had a fascist regime but there were instances in the contemporary history. Like Saffronisation of Indian history textbooks, communal riots, legislations that are against the minorities right, demolition of Babri masjid and most importantly the '75 emergency. Politicians should be mindful about the consequences that their actions have on the people of India. In democracy there is no place for autocracy. When a political leader is infested by a sense of insecurity and egotism that leads to the downfall of the entire state. This events not only shaped the present India but also gave a model to the future government telling them what they should not do in future. In a developing world there is no place for fascism.

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