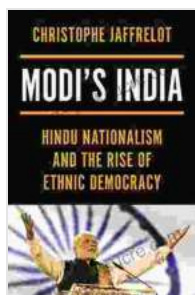


# Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy in India

Hindu nationalism, a political ideology that seeks to establish a Hindu nation in India, is a significant force in Indian politics. It advocates for the supremacy of Hindu culture and identity and has been influential in shaping the country's social and political landscape. This article examines the history, key principles, and contemporary manifestations of Hindu nationalism in India. It also analyzes the ideology's impact on the rise of ethnic democracy, a concept that emphasizes the rights and autonomy of specific ethnic groups.



## Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy by Christophe Jaffrelot

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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## The Historical Roots of Hindu Nationalism

Hindu nationalism emerged in the late 19th century as a reaction to British colonialism and Christian missionary activity in India. The movement's early proponents sought to preserve and promote Hindu culture and traditions,

which they saw as threatened by foreign influences. Among the key figures in the early Hindu nationalist movement were Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

## **Key Principles of Hindu Nationalism**

Hindu nationalism is based on a set of core principles that include:

\* **Hindutva:** The belief that India is a Hindu nation and that Hindus constitute the original and dominant population of the country. \* **Hindu supremacy:** The idea that Hindus should be given preferential treatment over other religious groups in India, including Muslims and Christians. \* **Cultural nationalism:** The emphasis on Hindu culture, language, and symbols as defining features of Indian identity. \* **Anti-colonialism:** The belief that British colonialism was detrimental to India and that Hindus have a right to self-determination.

## **The Rise of the BJP**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the main political party that espouses Hindu nationalism in India. Founded in 1980, the BJP has become a dominant force in Indian politics, winning several national elections and forming the federal government on multiple occasions. The party's rise to power has been fueled by its ability to mobilize Hindu voters and its commitment to Hindutva ideology.

## **Hindu Nationalism and Ethnic Democracy**

Hindu nationalism has had a significant impact on the rise of ethnic democracy in India. Ethnic democracy is a political system that emphasizes the rights and autonomy of specific ethnic groups. In India, Hindu nationalism has led to the creation of a number of ethnic political parties

and organizations that represent the interests of different Hindu castes and communities. These groups have played a key role in shaping the country's political landscape and promoting the interests of their respective constituents.

## **The Role of Religion in Hindu Nationalism**

Religion plays a central role in Hindu nationalism. The ideology emphasizes the importance of Hinduism as a defining characteristic of Indian identity and seeks to establish a Hindu state in India. This has led to tensions with other religious groups in India, particularly Muslims and Christians. Hindu nationalists have also been accused of promoting violence against religious minorities.

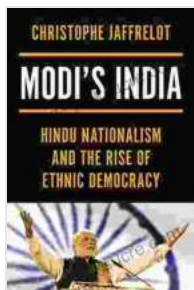
## **Challenges to Hindu Nationalism**

Hindu nationalism has faced a number of challenges in recent years. These include:

\* **Growing opposition from secular and liberal groups:** Many Indians oppose the ideology of Hindu nationalism and see it as a threat to the country's secular constitution. \* **International criticism:** Hindu nationalism has been criticized by international human rights organizations for its intolerance of religious minorities. \* **Economic challenges:** The BJP government has faced criticism for its economic policies, which some argue have not benefited the poor and marginalized.

Hindu nationalism is a complex and multifaceted political ideology that has had a significant impact on the history, politics, and society of India. The ideology's emphasis on Hindu supremacy and cultural nationalism has led to the rise of ethnic democracy in the country, but it has also faced

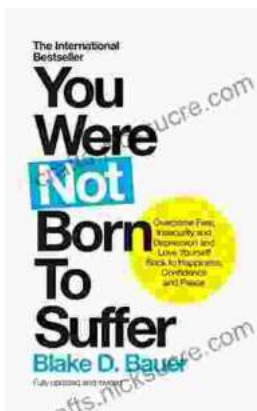
challenges from secular and liberal groups. The future of Hindu nationalism in India remains uncertain,



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