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### WING POPULISM: CAPTURING THE GLOBE

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#### ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to explore the reasons for the recent trend of the rise of rightwing populism in the whole world. The origin of the terms 'left' and 'right' dates back to the French Revolution and the seating arrangements. The term 'right' was soon understood to mean reactionary or monarchist, and the term 'left' implied revolutionary or egalitarian sympathies. While populism is an idea of grouping people against 'the elites. Both right ideology and populism are based on the segregation of society in two sections. When right wing political ideology merges with populist ideology, it is termed as "Right wing populism". Right wing populists generally converge on issues like opposing immigration, nativism, protectionism etc. This ideology is gaining popularity rapidly in the present world order. The reasons are many, like social media, print and electronic media, civil society, economic instability, and charismatic leadership. Along with this the article also tries to find out the connection of hatred and human nature with the rise of right-wing populism. It focuses on how when hatred at the international level is justified it gives away for hatred at the domestic level as well which results in the cause and effect of right-wing populism.

**Keywords:** Right-Wing Populism, Global Politics, Paid Media, Indian Politics, Human Nature, International Relations and Ethics, Political Science.

#### INTRODUCTION

"When something seems 'the most obvious thing in the world' it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up!"

*-Bertolt F. Brecht*

"Man is a political animal". Politics describe who we are and what we desire to become. It shows our potential and helps us to achieve it. So, studying political trends is necessary to know more about ourselves.

Right-wing views often preach a return to an earlier and 'better' time. The core of the far right's worldview is organicism, the idea that society functions as a complete, organised, and homogeneous living being. Adapted to the community they wish to constitute or reconstitute whether based on ethnicity, nationality, religion or race, the concept leads them to reject every form of universalism in favour of autophilia and alterophobia, in other words, the idealisation of a "we" excluding a "they"(Jean-Yves Camus, 2017, p.22).

Albertazzi and McDonnell define populism as an ideology that "pits a virtuous and homogeneous people

against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007, p.05). They believe only they represent the people and their demands.

If we analyse present political trends globally, certain things are common. Right wing populist ideology is at its peak. We have many examples like Brazil, the European Union, Russia, Turkey, India, Israel, Hungary, Poland, and United States. Also, many established governments are adapting this trend too.

But what is the reason that the whole globe is gradually attracting towards such trends?

There are various factors which give us the breeding ground for the rise of right-wing populism such as social media, print and electronic media, civil society, economic instability and charismatic leadership. We will discuss all those factors and will get to know that how these factors act as the catalysts for right wing populism.

More importantly, we will try to find out the root cause of such trends. How the realistic understanding of human nature is responsible for this, what are the effects of hatred and ethics in it and why a majority of people is attracted towards it and why is it happening now?

### **The problem?**

Populism looks like an ideology that is followed by a group of common people against “the elite” who are corrupt and self-serving. It seems like an approach of welfare that tries to define a society as “moral” vs “corrupt” or “us” versus “them” or “poor” vs “elite”.

However, populism can be used in any form if merged with some other ideologies. It can be dangerous for a society because it has roots in division and segregation. This results in “welfare chauvinism”. It can be used for a moral purpose too but chances are very less.

Presently we can find many cases showing the practicality of this theory. They can be seen juxtaposing “the people” against both “the elite” and an additional group who are also regarded as being separate from “the people” (McDonnell & Cabrera, 2019: 487-488). This additional group is generally presented as the enemy of others based on their race, caste, religion, region and ideology. They generally refer to a section of people which they believe is “whole”. They try to distinguish between “us” vs “them” among the present society. We will mainly focus on the examples of India to see how right-wing populist trends are dividing the society and what the reasons behind this trend are.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This paper aims to find out various reasons for the rise of right wing populism and find out the core idea behind the origin of right wing populism.

The major outcomes of this paper are understanding the accelerating factors for right-wing populism such as social media, electronic and print media, civil society, economic instability, charismatic leadership etc., justification by Realistic thinkers about selfishness and violence in International Relations, why right-wing populism leads to segregation in society, what are the stages of hatred in the domestic sphere and how media and political leaders support it?

### **Right wing populism and world**

Right wing populism is not a new phenomenon. It was present for a very long time. But presently it is at its

peak and its nature has been changed and become widespread. There are so many examples to solidify this. Brazil in which Jair Bolsonaro, a right-wing candidate from the conservative Social Liberal Party, won the presidential election after a runoff with left-wing candidate Fernando Haddad in the second round.

In the United States Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, noted for its anti-establishment and anti-illegal immigration rhetoric, was seen as that of a right-wing populist. The ideology of Trump's former Chief Strategist, Steve Bannon, has also been characterised so. In Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi are both right-wing nationalists and populists.

European Union Brexit was a great sensation that showed the trends of right-wing populism. UK Independence Party, under the leadership of Nigel Farage, led the “Leave” campaign of the UK. It was the decision of almost 52 per cent of the population. Major issues were immigration, sovereignty, economic loss etc. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban - presents himself as the defender of his country and Europe against Muslim migrants.

In India recently concluded 2019 Indian general election, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by BJP have swept across the elections with an unprecedented majority of 353 seats by gaining popularity across India and reducing the United Progressive Alliance led by Indian National Congress to only 91 seats. They got a great victory even in the 2014 general elections. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is the parent organisation currently ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Right-wing populism has been fostered by RSS which stands against the persecution of Hindus (Religious violence in India) by various invading forces over the centuries and have also been attributed to the concept of Hindutva. It vows to protect the ancient religion and culture of Hinduism and have strong views against the destruction of its ancient heritage, particularly the Islamisation of India.

These are just very few examples, except some countries almost the whole globe is captured by this phenomenon, it's extending without any barrier and it needs to stop because this battle is not against some corrupt elites anymore it's against our people, our section of society and against the minority who are portrayed as criminals. Understanding the implications of right-wing populism- Right wing populism has its effects not just in the

political sphere but all the spheres like social and economic too.

Let's look at the tweets, president trump posted during his campaign and after he got selected on June 16, 2015 – In his speech announcing his candidacy for President of the United States, Donald Trump said, “When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.”

June 16, 2015 – In the same speech announcing his candidacy, Donald Trump said, “I will build a great wall—and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me—and I'll build them very inexpensively. I will build a great, great wall on our southern border, and I will make Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words.”

Dec 5, 2018– “in the world. I want clean air and clean water and have been making great strides in improving America's environment. But American taxpayers – and American workers – shouldn't pay to clean up other countries' pollution.”

He even called the Paris agreement “fatally flawed”.

In 2018 alone, 20 people were killed in alleged right wing attacks in the USA (Lowery, Wesley & Tran, 2018).

Similarly, let's look at some incidents in India—

Sep, 2017– Ms. Lankesh, 55, was the editor of Gauri Lankesh Patrike, a weekly newspaper, was assassinated. Her newspaper was critical of Mr. Modi's government and the Hindu nationalists.

August 2013, the activist Narendra Dabholkar, who campaigned against religious superstitions, was murdered.

In August 2015, M. M. Kalburgi, a scholar and outspoken critic of idol worship among Hindus, was gunned down at his doorstep. In February 2015, Govind Pansare, a Communist leader, community organiser and columnist, was killed in a small town near Mumbai.

various supporters of B.J.P. and its parent organisation, the Hindu nationalist mother ship, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, celebrated the murders on social media. Later, the accused accepted they killed them to save their religion.

On social media during the Kerala floods, a post was viral in north India which said, “Kerala deserves this disaster because they killed cows, no one should help them as they will be cursed too.” Ironically, the whole world was praying for Kerala while their own country or some section of the country was praying for them to die due to their so-called sins.

As of 2016, cow protection vigilante groups were estimated to have sprung up in “hundreds, perhaps thousands” of towns and villages in northern India. There were an estimated 200 such groups in Delhi-National Capital Region alone. Some of the larger groups claim up to 5,000 members. They are often armed, and violence is common. According to a June 2017 Reuters report, citing a data journalism website, a total of “28 Indians – 24 of them Muslims – have been killed and 124 injured since 2010 in cow-related violence” (Tommy Wilkes, 2017).

All such violence rose recently in majorly right wing supported nations.

### CRITICAL PROBLEM AREAS

The force behind right wing populism is the authority of the states. But how do they get so much public support? What's the reason behind their popularity at this large level? And why this trend is seen globally? The reasons are many, but the focus is on the major following ones:

#### Social Media

In all the above stated incidents, one thing is common i.e. role of social media. Social media is a new revolution presently. These platforms act as the news channels for young India. But how social media became a catalyst of this process? How it can be seen as a major reason globally? Broadly two reasons can be analysed-

- i. It accelerates communication between people- Due to this every single information, data, a fact even fake news is shared by all. When they share the same information, like-minded people bind together. If the news is hate-mongering it will bind more people together and now they have a platform. This results in a formation of a “mob”. This mob has no individual identity. In a group, humans tend to be more powerful and fearless. Due to which they pursue anything fearlessly, even hatred.
- ii. Creating an image of virtual reality- We have an understanding from the very beginning that whatever is written is true, so we strongly believe what social media serves us. Social Medias like Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook and so on behaves like a different world, where you can be whoever you want to be. You can grab any personality or characteristics and act accordingly because you can always delete whatever you did and hide behind your virtual reality which is not so in the real world. This results in a large number

of social media trolls who can defame anyone. Even death threats are very common on Internet now. In India since January 2017, more than 30 people have been killed based on rumours circulated through WhatsApp, according to an analysis by data journalists at IndiaSpend (Purohit, 2019). Many gave data on how Russian tweets were used in American politics in favour of Donald Trump candidacy. The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal was a major political scandal in early 2018 when it was revealed that Cambridge Analytica had harvested the personal data of millions of peoples' Facebook profiles without their consent and used it for political advertising purposes.

The same things happen in India as well, like-minded people connect and continue organised "psychological harassment" against different ideologies. Various examples are showing how people are fearful of writing even their genuine ideas on social media.

Social media also gives us an identity that presents us as a part of a community. There is no individual identity left. People have started taking their sides based on their group identity. This stops any debate and just rash trolling starts.

This trolling is generally in favour of a protectionist ideology and against any liberal suggestion or even person. This gives a breeding ground for right wing populism to grow.

### **Print and Electronic Media**

Media is called the fourth pillar of democracy. It is always expected from media that it will show us the reality and will help us achieve the real vision. But the recent contribution of media doesn't seem satisfactory. Media instead of being with people is seen more with the authority. There are various ways in which media acts as a catalyst in the rise of right-wing populism-

- i. It prepares a narrative for people- this narrative is often in favour of a particular ideology. Reasons are, either they are fearful of the powerful positions or they are benefitted by it or can be both. This narrative is fed to the people in a way that divides people based on their identities. It divides them against their people projecting them as enemies. Their highlighted issues are generally the one which grabs the attention of more people. Their aim is not to provide news anymore but to make more profit.

Also, most of the advertisements given to the

newspapers come from the government and if you write anything against the government, then obviously the only way they can penalise you (is) to choke your advertising supply.

It was reported in India that the government's administration has frozen all advertising spending with the publishers of the Times of India, The Hindu and The Telegraph, three of the country's highest circulation English-language outlets. The decision appears to have come after all three papers published articles or a series of articles that irritated the central government. Government spending accounted for 15 per cent of all advertising revenues for the Times of India newspaper group and for the ABP Group, which publishes The Telegraph (Withnall, 2019).

So, it becomes necessary for media to remain a servant of government rather than the fourth pillar of democracy.

- ii. No space for dissent- The media doesn't seem to be interested in asking counter questions to the one in power. They are more interested in showcasing political leaders as celebrities rather than a servant of people. Media is no more acting as a bridge between people and government but as the servant of authority. Times are tough for journalists in India, where many reporters and editors say it is becoming increasingly difficult to do their jobs. Loyalists to the government have bullied editors into taking down critical stories, hushed government bureaucrats and shifted from the common practice of filing defamation cases to lodging more serious criminal complaints, which can mean jail time and take years in India's overburdened court system. Indian journalists like Punya Prasun Bajpai and Abhisar Sharma are the very few names among many who accepted that they left their jobs due to the pressure coming from the loyalists of government. Also, Journalists who dare to challenge the Trump narrative are frequently attacked as "enemies of the American people" and repeatedly mocked on social media.
- iii. Sense of crisis- It's always humans' tendency to look for someone who will save us from all the problems, this is the reason politicians can get such fame. The one who pretends himself as a "macho man" can be the only saviour. So, security becomes the topmost priority during elections. You are told to be insecure to gain votes. You are told to be a part of WAR and being an active participant, you need to support that macho

man who can save us all. Media gives us this sense of crisis in which people need to be a part of this war type situation for their nation. This sense of crisis is generally evoked just before elections. This directly transfers all the votes to the right wing. This is how media helps the right-wing ideology by provoking people emotionally.

**Civil Society:** Civil society can be seen as an active society that raises the voice of people regarding various issues. Their aim is a better society. But why do they act as a catalyst in the rise of right-wing populism? Reasons are-

- i. Civil society is divided- civil society is made up of common people. They try to grab common issues but now they aim to grab more attention and more support. So, groups are made based on already present identities. These identities are generally based on region, religion or caste. Their aim now is to promote their well-being by promoting how great their identity is which results in other counterparts of different identities dividing the society in general. Many such groups are often seen as using violence against people too. Civil society is expected to raise their voices against administration, but they are now often seen against common people, they are themselves divided by social stratification.
- ii. Fear leads to silence- Various groups prefer being unbiased and want to raise genuine questions but the majority and power is generally with hate mongers which leads to a fearful environment among them. This fear leads to silence which finally leads to more hate.
- iii. Means versus Ends sometimes when a genuine issue is raised by these groups their aim seems to be good but generally to grab attention, they try to evoke narrow identities to get their aim fulfilled. Recently, a man was killed due to some issues among friends. However, the issue was non-religious but to grab justice faster or to grab the attention of people and media many civil society groups started provoking people to help their religious brother. We may feel that the aim was good i.e. to grab justice but the means used was wrong as it will develop further stratification in society. Such kinds of examples are not rare they happen every once in a while, and these incidents catalyse right wing populism.

### **Economic Instability**

The rise of right-wing populism is also seen as a result of economic instability. Hitler's Nazi party came to power after 'Great depression of 1929' and after the 'Global economic crisis of 2008' many right-wing parties emerged in various countries too.

Right wing populist parties come to power by promising a stable and strong economy. They blame the immigration of people from other countries, policies of previous governments and imports of goods and services as the main reason for the instability of their economy. By promoting protectionist policies, they easily build up a revolutionary image for themselves within the masses and they are elected in the hope of change.

When we look at India, India's once-impressive economic growth, averaging above 8 per cent in 2010, slowed to some 5-6 per cent in 2012-13 while inflation rose to double digits. BJP focussed on economic issues throughout the campaign such as jobs for youth, infrastructure improvements and strengthening the economy, hammering the Congress party for stalled development projects while promoting the Modi's state of Gujarat as a model of success. So, India's corporate leaders backed Modi as a decisive administrator needed to revive industrial growth.

For the U.S. economy as a whole, 2016 was an off-year. Economic growth slowed to a tepid 1.6% annual rate, which was a five-year low and a sharp drop from the 2.9 per cent pace of 2015. A number of actors have shaped the results of the US presidential election and the economy was also one of them. Donald Trump won because his protectionist strategies were more convincing for the average American.

If the economy has been good, people don't seek out change; they are content with the party in power. On the other hand, if the economy isn't delivering the growth and jobs that people expect, they want a change in leadership.

**Charismatic Leadership:** Right-wing populist parties are held to be distinctive from other kinds of political parties in a way that their leaders are alleged to be 'charismatic' figures who play a crucial role in the electoral success that their parties have enjoyed. A political group to gain such popularity needs a charismatic leader. They let people believe in the divisions they have made. They let people immerse themselves in such a kind of social stratification.

People start calling them a messenger of God to add divinity to whatever the leader is doing. This makes more people part of that divine work. They often attract people based on their narrow identities and divide society. Which give rise to right wing populism.

Now we can conclude that right wing populism is favouring a populous section of society and alienating the other minority sections. This identity is provoked by a charismatic leader which divides the society in general. It may also include hatred for the designated 'others'.

The reasons we analysed above were just the catalysts for the rise of right-wing populism. Then, what is the root cause of it? Where does the origin of right-wing populism reside? To look into it we have to dig deeper into it.

Right wing populism is based on certain common ideas i.e. segregation, alienation, protectionism, the othering of communities, preference of self over others, hatred for 'others' etc.

But, from where does the idea of othering comes and why it leads to hatred? In this article, we will try to explain how Realism justifies selfishness in the International sphere at first which is later justified in the domestic sphere as well. Once selfishness and othering are justified it soon takes the form of hatred in both the international and domestic sphere which is easily justified as something which is required for a practical world.

Where are the roots? Why does right wing populism even emerge?

Various philosophers have defined human nature. Does the major debate argue if human nature is moral or immoral from within? There are various views about it but when we talk about international relations, majorly thinkers converge on the idea that 'Realism is Ethics for International Relations'.

Firstly, we have to analyse the views of different philosophers regarding Human nature-

According to Machiavelli (Machiavelli, 1981) history suggests that 'human nature has remained constant in all ages- mainly two characteristics can be derived-

- a) Man is selfish by nature.
- b) Man is materialist by nature.

For him being selfish/materialistic is not a sin. It's just a fact about human nature.

Based on the Resolutive compositive Method, Thomas Hobbes (1968) explains that man is utilitarian by nature. He further explains, the human mind is made up of

particles that are in the state of motion and it is continuous. This motion is shaped by an external stimulus which is (i) Aversion and (ii) Inclination, which results in love and hate. So, man is pleasure and power seeking. In this process, he generally ignores other people's emotions. He too believes that this individualistic nature of humans is not to sin rather a fact.

Bentham goes a step further and says, pleasure is just a quantitative concept and there is no concept of quality in pleasure. He provided 'Utilitarian Ethics', according to which we are bound to act for our pleasure, and this is how we should act. By saying this he removes the sense of guilt in working for one's pleasure. John Locke (Locke, 1887) gives a balanced view of human nature. He believes the man is self-centric by nature. However, man is rational enough to understand that to serve self-interest one has to take care of the interest of others too. Man is a mixture of both reason and passion.

We can conclude that human nature consists of both selfish and ethical elements. But we tend more towards our selfish nature and we continuously try to find justifications for our selfish nature to get rid of any kind of guilt. But what stops people to act in utter selfishness? Two kinds of Ethics stop us from acting selfish-

- a. Internal Ethics- This kind of ethics is present within us. It makes you believe that hurting others in any way is wrong. This can be called as the 'voice of the soul'. It stops you from opting for any selfish act in any condition possible. It is based on your principles or moral teachings which give you a general moral understanding of things. However, this ethics is never static, it keeps on changing according to time, region and situation. Everyone has a different understanding of ethics. But general ethical principles remain the same. This ethics is hard to achieve due to our selfish tilt but often hard to break too.
- b. External Ethics – This kind of ethics is imposed from above by laws, fines and regulations. This is based on the Lockean idea that to serve your self-interest you have to take care of other's self-interest too. This ethics is practical and applicable. This is imposed from above so can be broken easily if they find any way out to get rid of the punishment.

Both ethics work together to stop someone from acting utter selfish but Internal Ethics is superior to External Ethics. If internal ethics is somehow broken it takes a very violent and harmful turn because then people start

believing that their acts are ethical and there is no guilt left which further increases the wrongdoing and there is no coming back from it. However, to break external ethics one just needs to find a way out of punishments.

The very idea of the right wing is segregation, and this emerges with the breakdown of internal ethics.

Internal Ethics breaks down into three stages-

**First stage** – ‘Realism is Ethics’.

Realism is the most important school of International Relations. The very core idea of it says that ‘International Politics is nothing but a power struggle. It believes that in International Politics, nations are either in war or in preparation for war. And this is because ‘Man is a power-seeking animal’. We can understand this by the writings of thinkers like Machiavelli, Hobbes, Morgenthau, Kautilya (Kautilya, 1992) etc.

Machiavelli established the autonomy of politics from ethics. He believed politics has its ethics. Here end justifies the means. He held that all men are wicked, and they will always give vent to the malignity in their minds when opportunity offers.

Morgenthau (Kunz & Morgenthau, 1948) on the other hand gave his famous ‘six principles of realism’. According to which human nature is power seeking which makes nation as power seeking too. Self-interest is the driving force and there are no universal moral principles in the case of International Relations, it has its own set of rules.

In each of these writings, they firmly believe and let us believe too that in the International sphere it is right to be selfish, materialistic, or power seeking. By saying that they also justify all the means possible to achieve power or other goals and this includes violence too.

Realism is the most followed school in countries. It is considered the ethics of international politics. As the capture of power is the ultimate goal, so any way possible to get it is ‘sacred’. This justifies all the violence in International Relations on the name of ‘Nationalism’. This very first step of calling realism perfect legalises/justifies the sense of ‘other’ in the international sphere.

At this stage, internal ethics breaks at the international level, because we can justify our wrongdoings in the name of the nation, and this isn’t considered wrong at all.

**Second stage**- ‘the other half is alien’

Realism gets the status of ethics in International Relations because these thinkers can impose this idea that the other half against which our policies are going to

be implemented are not among us, they are different, they are either enemies or ‘others’. This sense of ‘us’ vs ‘them’ actually justifies the sense of alienation and all the violent policies against them.

But this is not all. This sense of “other” is also present in the domestic sphere. This sense is generated by right wing populist leaders which generally have a charismatic personality. They convince people that even in the domestic sphere there is an ‘alien group’. This is in the roots of rightist ideology that they accept and believe in social stratification. This stratification rises to the extent of alienation. They often give us an idea of a nation that doesn’t comprise of ‘all’ but only a section of society, which is generally the majority group.

By making this divide in a society, it draws an imaginary line of a nation that is not just geographical but cultural. Here ‘nation’ doesn’t coincide with ‘state’ but narrows itself down to a separate cultural, religious or regional identity. By doing this the same conditions of the International sphere arises. This means the same rules, ethics and standards are all applicable in the domestic sphere too. By this, the realistic principles become ethical in the domestic sphere too. This justifies all the violence and segregation towards the designated ‘others’ even in the domestic sphere.

Even in the above stated catalysts for right wing populism, the core idea is their selfish need. Media groups prefer that narrative which they can sell more, civil society does the same. The political leader wants a supporting section of society which can easily be built up by narratives like nationalism, hatred and populism.

The breakdown of these ethics gives rise to right wing populism. As the feeling of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ comes only if we consider other people aliens or enemies. And if it is justified by certain charismatic leaders then there is an identity different, superior and moral than the other one. This leads to a belief that whatever selfish, violent, unjust actions they are taking is ‘sacred’ and they are given the responsibility to save ‘their people’. They are hiding their selfish deeds behind the mask of nationalism, religion or their cultural identity.

**Third stage**- Direct attack / Hatred justified.

Here direct attack is attempted either by a mob, an individual or an organisation in a form of mob lynching, gun firing, suicide bombing, harassment etc. This attack is based on communal identity. The second stage is successful when various groups or individuals are instigated enough to go for a direct attack and the

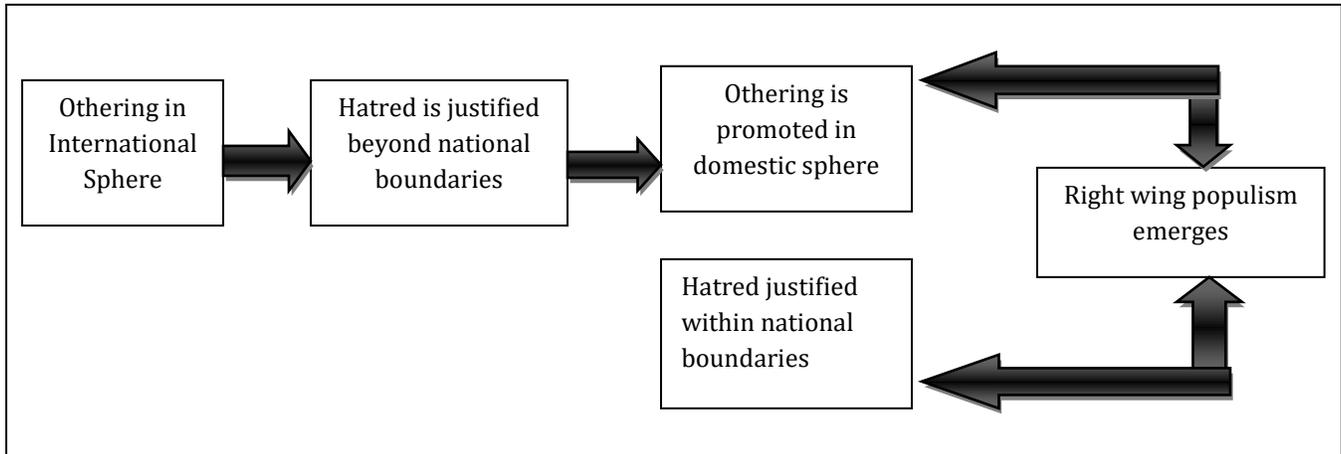
masses are supporting the violence attempted by their community.

Justification starts by calling it a form of ‘retaliation’. This retaliation is considered as an answer to decades long suppression of the majority by ‘minority appeasing’ Along with this the catalysts such as social media, print media, civil society and charismatic leadership helps in justifying the attack or hatred as a kind of defence

political parties and the ‘other’ community. This suppression can be real or imaginary. Here violence is not only justified but considered important for the sake of security.

against the national and international threat on the majority community by a minority community. (See in figure no. 1).

Figure no.1: Reaction of Majority Community by a Minority Community



Source: the figure is drawn by the author.

**EXAMPLE OF INDIA: DELHI RIOTS-2020**

Clashes between pro-and anti-CAA protesters in Jaffrabad on February 23 night turned into communal violence and spread across northeast Delhi over the next four days. Forty-two people, including a policeman and an IB personnel, lost their lives, while hundreds were injured, and shops and houses burnt or destroyed. Let’s discuss the stages in which these riots proceeded.

**First Stage: Realism is Ethics**

The relations between India and Pakistan turned hostile soon after the partition in 1947. After Independence, the two countries fought three major wars and continuous border skirmishes were normal. War is always a spectacular story. Governments show off their power to get popularity. We as citizens feel overwhelmed with patriotism ignoring the disgusting ground realities. The greater the war rhetoric more powerful the government is considered. Both the countries consider each other as enemy countries. Political parties take advantage of such hatred and come to power declaring hostile actions against each other. Balakot Airstrikes played a major

role in the election campaign of Indian prime minister Narendra Modi who asked people to vote for the martyrs of the airstrike and nationalism. BJP led NDA to win the elections and BJP on its own got a clear majority for the second term in 2019.

Among citizens too hatred for each other is common; it can be seen by the level of energies and sentiments involved in India-Pakistan cricket match. Social media trolling and abuses at such platforms are common among citizens as well.

In the first stage hatred between India and Pakistan is justified for the sake of national interest and people support it too.

**Second Stage: The Other half is ‘Alien’**

The *Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA)* was passed by the Parliament of India on 11 December 2019. It amended the Citizenship Act, 1955 by providing a path to Indian citizenship for illegal migrants of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian religious minorities, who had fled persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before December

2014. Muslims from those countries were not given such eligibility. The act was the first time when religion had been overtly used as a criterion for citizenship under Indian law. Along with CAA, 2019 the BJP government completed an update of the *National Register of Citizens (NRC)* in Assam. On 19 November 2019, Home Minister Amit Shah declared in Rajya Sabha that NRC will be implemented all over India. The left out will be recognized as illegal immigrants. In this context, there are concerns that the present amendment of the Citizenship Act provides a "shield" to the non-Muslims, who can claim that they were migrants who fled persecution from Afghanistan, Pakistan or Bangladesh, while the Muslims do not have such a benefit.

This triggered various protests across the country criticizing the bill as prejudicial against Muslims. Muslim women started peaceful protests at Shaheen Bagh against CAA-NRC on 15 December 2019.

**Role of Media-** The mainstream media has run extensive campaigns to defame the protests. Republic TV openly called Shaheen Bagh protests, paid and a form of Islamic radicalization. When a decline in the number of protesters seen on 6 March 2020, Republic TV defamed it by saying "Biryani has stopped being served" and "Money has run out after Delhi elections". Many other individuals and organizations tried to defame it in various ways. Derogatory remarks were also made on women sitting there for protests.

**Role of political leaders-** BJP IT cell head, Amit Malviya shared an unverified video calling Shaheen Bagh protest, a paid protest. Sambit Patra, spokesperson of BJP called the protests 'anti Hindu'. Amit Shah, a major leader of BJP too asked for votes against Shaheen Bagh in the Delhi elections. Union Minister Anurag Thakur raised slogans like "Deshkegaddaronkogolimaaro..." (shoot the traitors). BJP MP Parvesh Verma said on video that protesters at Shaheen Bagh would "enter your homes and rape your daughters and sisters."

Kapil Mishra, a representative of the BJP government in Delhi assembly elections called Shaheen Bagh, 'mini-Pakistan'. He asked people to consider Delhi assembly elections as India- Pakistan match and accused other parties of creating many 'mini-Pakistan' in Delhi.

A whole narrative was there which defamed Shaheen Bagh protests as communal and against the definition of nationalism. It presented it a protest which was organized by another community that is against the nation.

### **Third stage: Direct Attack/ Hatred justified**

On 23 February 2020, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Kapil Mishra and his supporters reached a protest site at Maujpur Chowk "to answer Jaffrabad [blockade]" by anti-CAA protesters. Mishra then spoke out in a rally against the CAA protesters and threatened to take matters into his own hands if the police failed to disperse the protesters from the Jaffrabad and Chand Bagh areas in three days. This has been widely reported to be the major inciting factor.

Soon, protestors were reported to have hurled stones on pro CAA gatherings and clashes broke out.

On 24 February 2020, violent clashes broke out in several areas of North-East Delhi. Both Hindu and Muslim mobs attempted violence at a huge level.

In Shiv Vihar, several shops and houses owned by Hindus were torched by a Muslim mob. Later, mutilated bodies of workers were recovered from the site. Around 8:30 PM, a tyred market (predominantly owned by Muslims) was set on fire by the crowd that screamed: "Jai Shri Ram" (Hindu demigodsloganeering).

On February 25, a mosque was reported to have been vandalized in Ashok Nagar. The hindu-Muslim clash continued throughout the day. The dead body of Ankit Sharma of the Intelligence Bureau was found in a drain in Jaffrabad. Tahir Hussain, an AAP councillor whose house was alleged to have been used by rioters, was booked for the murder and arrested later.

51 people or more died in the riots, out of which 36 were Muslims and 15 Hindus.

### **Justifications by social media**

Many videos were viral on social media platforms, people were grouping based on their communities, all were becoming part of propaganda, rejecting government bill was considered anti-national, radicalization on both sides could be seen. There were videos where the police themselves supported the majority. However, violence was attempted by both sides, but the side supported by authority feels powerful and tend to break internal and external ethics altogether. Justification by news media- Community blaming started, only incidents that favoured the narrative of the central regime were shown. It was considered anti-India if minority harassment was shown as it destroys the image of India globally, called it 'misreporting with an agenda'.

## Leaders

Riots for political leaders is just like a campaign, othering of communities is already at peak, they just need to choose their side of share. The same was happening in Delhi as well. No one was refraining from acting communal, the vulgarity of their power-seeking minds was naked but still many people could not see.

## EXAMPLE, UNITED STATES- EL PASO SHOOTINGS- 2019

### First Stage

After Mexican independence in 1810, Mexico and the United States had numerous territorial disputes. Political upheaval in Mexico and economic opportunity across the border spurred migration to the United States after the Mexican Revolution. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) paved the way for a closer U.S.-Mexico relationship on security, trade, and counter narcotics. But soon migration became the reason for tensions between both the countries. Among citizens, too Anti-Mexican sentiments were seen.

*Second Stage:* Donald Trump won the 2016 elections majorly by campaigning about building a wall against Mexico and renegotiation of NAFTA. Hatred against immigrants was commonly seen. This can be proved by various right-wing attacks. One of them was El Paso shooting of 2019.

*Third Stage:* A mass shooting occurred at a Walmart store and killed 23 people. Patrick Crusius a 21-year-old white male from Texas openly fired at people. Before shooting he posted a manifesto online claiming he was inspired by Christchurch mosque shootings in New Zealand that killed 51 people earlier the same year. The manifesto promoted white nationalism citing the Great Replacement conspiracy theory.

President Trump supported such mindsets in many of his election campaigns directly or indirectly. This kind of authority support always gives people a feeling that their cause is just and important which leads to a breakdown of internal and external ethics.

There are various examples like Hanau shootings in Germany, Christchurch shooting in New Zealand etc. which prove that hatred at the border soon reaches hatred inside borders and realism justifies it in one way or the other. This whole mindset of othering of communities is the cause and effect of right-wing populism.

## Why Now?

Right wing populism isn't a new phenomenon. Its worst phase was present during the time of Hitler. But now its scale is even wider, it has spread its wings all over the globe.

We understood that how the sense of 'other' is provoked in the domestic sphere too which leads to more attraction towards right wing populism. But why this trend is at its peak now? Why is it extending to the whole globe now?

The reason lies in the increase of urbanization, marketisation, and globalization.

Due to increased urbanization, our global society is converting itself into a market-based society in which the market is everything. The basic goal of a market is profit. And the desire to fulfil this goal has so much invaded us that we have accepted profit as both the means and the end. So, to achieve this goal, we are guided with an individualistic selfish force that tells us to think about "oneself" only. This selfish or materialistic ideology which is on the rise now actually gives rise to its repercussions too. We know that the concept of marginal.

utility doesn't apply for profit or money. The more 'profit' seeking society we are making, the more 'power' seeking society we are pursuing to. Every charismatic leader who comes to power with an essence of right-wing populism has always supported capitalism because this extreme capitalistic mindset which seeks just profit can think of harming others and they don't care about those who are crushed under their profit seeking mechanism.

The rise of various technologies and social media took our identity and made us a part of a group identity which gave us the tag of a powerful mob and divided us from a powerless group of 'others'.

Globalization has formed a 'global village' which surely tried to diminish the geographical boundaries and tried to unite us too. But while erasing geographical boundaries we were also giving way to cultural, religious and other identity-based boundaries. Which gave rise to a narrow concept of nation. When this nation narrows down it divides the society and gives rise to right wing populism. Urbanization, marketisation, and globalization is increasing at its highest speed now which is why right-wing populism is at its peak globally. These phenomena are not the reasons for right wing populism but the push factors working for its acceleration.

### Way Forward

Now we know that the reasons we were blamed for the rise of right-wing populism and violence globally were just the catalysts for it. The real reason lies in the realistic understanding of human nature and how it is accelerated by our philosophers who solidify the fact that being selfish is not a sin.

So, we need to understand how we can curb these reasons for eliminating the effect of right-wing populism and diminish the feeling of hatred generated all these years. Several steps can be taken like we need to realise that realism is not the only discourse in the International sphere focus should be given on writings that support idealism as well. Because idealism is not always unachievable, and we have to believe the fact that being selfish and hurting others 'is a sin'. Thinkers like J. Ann Tickner, Woodrow Wilson, Immanuel Kant, Michael W. Doyle give their contribution to the idealistic understanding of International relations and human nature. A blend of both idealism and realism is required in the International sphere. Efficient laws are required for leaders who try to break the nation in the name of any other narrow identities in the domestic sphere. Hate mongering leaders and media persons should be held accountable for whatever they say or provoke based on narrow identities. However, sedition laws are there but they are highly misused. There should be a balance between freedom of expression and the integrity of the nation.

Laws regarding social media trolls, fake news and mob lynching are highly required. It should not curb the right to privacy, but it should also regulate hate provoking content. This can easily be done by social media platforms, but the government need to take more steps for that?

News channels can start getting paid by citizens themselves which will reduce their dependency on the government this can be done by introducing a digital link by all media groups for people to pay through it. By this people can pay for their favourite news channel and this will also maintain the impartiality of news channels. People need to be aware that hurting someone both physically and emotionally is wrong and they will be punished for it without getting a way out.

More value-based teachings can be promoted to maintain cultural harmony among people.

People who work for peace either at the International level or at the domestic level need to be praised by

global institutions. For example, recently, The Nobel Peace Prize for 2019 has been awarded to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea.

### CONCLUSION

Now, we can conclude that right wing populism is the most prominent phenomenon in the present world order. All the factors like social media, electronic and print media, civil society and charismatic leadership accelerates this process and when we dig deeper into such trends, we realize the real problem lies in the understanding of human nature. When realist thinkers exaggerate human nature as selfish and justify it being so in International Relations it gives an understanding of "us" vs "them" in which doing wrong to the "other" section is justified. This justified hatred is also applied in the domestic sphere against a minority section by calling them 'the other half' which is further accelerated by factors that we have discussed above. The roots of hatred lie in the feeling of alienation which is created by the boundaries either at the International level or domestic level. This negative effect of right-wing populism can be stopped by taking some steps to strengthen internal ethics i.e. by inculcating values and external ethics by making laws and implementing them efficiently.

Boundaries were made to simplify things to make lives better and make our mother Earth a better place to live but this hatred and alienation from each other will only push us towards our devastating ends.

"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and the soul of its people." *Mahatma Gandhi*

"In a democracy, the well-being, individuality and happiness of every citizen are important for the overall prosperity, peace and happiness of the nation." *A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.*

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