

Analysis or Advocacy?

**Deconstructing the 2026 TNI Report
Hindutva as a Global Far-Right Project**



March 2026



Counter-Narrative to

Hindutva as a global far-right project

Fascism, Neoliberalism, And Transnational Networks in Twenty-First-Century India

By Transnational Institute

About Us

American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD)

Founded in 1997, American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD) is the world's first and most prominent Hindu organization dedicated to combating defamation. Started as an initiative of the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), now part of HinduPACT, AHAD actively monitors mass media, products, public places, and other media to ensure the respectful and accurate representation of Hindu dharma, culture, images, and icons. AHAD documents and responds to Hinduphobia. Since the inception of AHAD, hundreds of thousands of Hindus have participated in various advocacy activities led by AHAD. AHAD AI uses purpose-built, sophisticated AI tools to detect and counter Hindu hatred.



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HinduPACT

The Hindu Policy Research and Advocacy Collective (HinduPACT) was established in 2020 as an initiative of the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), dedicated to advocating for and researching issues concerning the American Hindu community. HinduPACT promotes human rights, voter education, and policies affecting American Hindus, aiming for peace and understanding through informed policy initiatives and grassroots advocacy. On January 1, 2025, HinduPACT became an independent organization.



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Tattwa.ai is an independent technology company specializing in applications of Artificial Intelligence for the betterment of humanity. Tattwa.ai is an initiative of Dharma Universe LLC. The Hindu Universe, the very first Hindu website is another initiative of Dharma Universe.

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Overall Summary

TNI's report¹ does not read like an inquiry that reaches a conclusion. Instead, it reads like a mobilization brief that starts with a conclusion and then gathers evidence to support it. That matters because it influences every follow-up decision: definitions are expanded so the label fits; connections are promoted into structure; and normal democratic actions

become suspicious whenever Hindus do them. The result is a narrative that looks like analysis but acts like a campaign memo.

A genuine democratic critique of India's current situation doesn't require demonizing entire civilizations. It can criticize Indian politics without declaring Hindu identity politics as inherently fascist. It can call for stronger institutional safeguards without suggesting elections are mere theatre. It can call out harassment networks without treating diaspora civic participation as a

covert extremist pipeline. TNI prefers the opposite approach because it yields a simple moral story. If Hindutva is fascism, then everything adjacent to it becomes evidence, and global mobilization against it becomes self-evidently righteous.



Section 1: Verdict-First Framing and the Weaponization of the Word “Fascism”

TNI’s first and most consequential move is definitional. Fascism, it implies, does not need uniforms or the abolition of elections. It can be inferred from a mix of identity assertion, digital ecosystems, and state power exercised in contested ways.¹ This is not neutral. It is the report’s master key: once fascism is loosened into a general category of “illiberal mass politics,” it becomes infinitely reusable.

But fascism, in serious scholarship, is not an insult and not an all-purpose synonym for “right-wing nationalism.” Even when definitions vary, they tend to identify bounded features: a myth of national rebirth, a mass-mobilizing ultranationalism, and a political form that aims at totalizing transformation rather than ordinary partisan governance.² When a writer deploys “fascism” without criteria, the label becomes unfalsifiable. Whatever happens can be interpreted as proof because the concept has been stretched to fit the interpreter’s moral desire.

Then TNI inserts a ranking claim, not a finding: Hindutva is declared among the most globally embedded far-right movements.¹ A ranking requires measurement. What counts as “embedded”? How are movements compared? What are the indicators? TNI’s introduction supplies mood rather than method: it wants the reader to feel that the conclusion is obvious.

The reader should notice what this accomplishes. If Hindutva is installed as “global far-right,” the rest becomes automatic. Diaspora lobbying becomes infiltration. Cultural assertion becomes supremacy. Organizational scale becomes coercion. Any institutional stress becomes authoritarianism. The label does not merely describe; it governs interpretation.

And because it governs interpretation, it also governs the moral imagination. If the ideology is fascist, then combating it becomes a moral emergency. That is the functional purpose of the label: not to clarify India, but to authorize a global posture toward Hindu civilizational politics as inherently illegitimate.

Section 2: Diaspora Mobilization: How TNI Turns Normal Democratic Participation Into “Extremist Infrastructure”

TNI’s second move is to treat diaspora civic life as a network of suspicion. Events, fundraisers, advocacy organizations, and community mobilization are framed as the “infrastructure” of a transnational far-right project.¹ It is a classic maneuver: describe civil society activity using the vocabulary of security threats, so participation itself starts to smell like conspiracy.

This is where the double standard is most clear. Diaspora politics are neither new nor inherently malicious. They are a common part of democratic systems: diasporas organize, lobby, donate, build alliances, and promote narratives in host countries.^{3 4} Some do so responsibly, while others do it irresponsibly. However, the presence of diaspora activism does not indicate extremism.

TNI uses the “Howdy Modi” rally as a cinematic showcase.^{5 6} It was large-scale, theatrical, and politically consequential in symbolism. But a diaspora rally is not a doctrine. It shows capacity, enthusiasm, and community organizing. Every major diaspora group can cite its own version of this phenomenon, whether related to Israel, Ireland, Armenia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Palestine, or other national causes. The democratic question is not “did you mobilize?” but rather “what did you do with your mobilization, and did you cross legal or ethical boundaries?”

The deeper strategy of the report is to group Hindu advocacy organizations as “far-right” merely based on their proximity and framing.¹ However, advocacy organizations are generally assumed to be legitimate in democracies. The burden is to prove wrongdoing. Disliking an ideology alone is not enough. If an organization intimidates critics, harasses minorities, spreads incitement, or engages in unlawful pressure, it should be documented and penalized. But TNI’s approach is more extensive: it treats *advocacy itself* as the suspicious target.

That is dangerous because it creates a permission structure for discrimination. Once diaspora Hindu participation is labeled as extremist infrastructure, everyday community activities become suspicious: temple fundraisers, cultural programs, civil rights advocacy, and even electoral volunteering. The overall result is not just criticism of Hindutva, but suspicion of Hindu civic life.

The UK example demonstrates the same pattern. TNI points to WhatsApp campaigning and community targeting to suggest interference.^{1 7} However, targeted political messaging to communities is common. If the claim involves intimidation, coercion, or foreign influence in violation of laws, the evidence must specify these details. Otherwise, you’re simply criminalizing community politics by viewing Hindus more harshly than others.

In other words, TNI's "mapping" does not refer to mapping command-and-control. Instead, it maps ordinary diaspora behaviors and then rebrands them as clandestine. That is why it feels convincing to audiences predisposed to distrust Hindu politics. It also fails the test of democratic fairness.

Section 3: “Neoliberalism + Hindutva”: A Theory-Of-Everything That Trades Evidence for Elegance

TNI’s political economy section provides a comprehensive explanation: Hindutva’s rise is linked with neoliberalism and surveillance capitalism, and polarization is used to manage inequality.¹¹ It is elegant, and that elegance serves as a warning sign. A single simple equation does not usually govern real societies.

The main suggestion is that Hindu identity mobilization mainly serves as a cover for capitalist restructuring and elite control. That might be true in some situations, cases, or networks. However, as a comprehensive explanation, it needs causal proof that TNI does not provide. Otherwise, the report is misleading by treating the existence of market policies and identity politics as evidence of a single, unified plan.

This is also where TNI introduces a global issue into a local accusation. Digital surveillance, platform manipulation, and outrage incentives are found in most democracies. If these issues are widespread, they cannot be seen as unique to one ideology. Instead, they should lead to calls for regulation and institutional safeguards. They should not be used as evidence that Hindu identity politics is fascism.

More importantly, TNI’s reductionism overlooks organizational complexity that even critics recognize. RSS-linked social embeddedness includes service and welfare activities. Christophe Jaffrelot, who is critical of Hindu nationalism, still describes this as a “social welfare strategy.”⁸ This challenges TNI’s caricature that the ecosystem is solely a corporate tool.

The stronger critique of political economy is not “Hindutva equals neoliberalism.” The stronger critique is more specific and actionable: identify where policies deepen inequality, where welfare turns into patronage, where corporate-state ties undermine fairness, and where polarization is used to avoid accountability. These are evidence-based critiques that can be litigated and changed. TNI prefers a broad moral story because broad stories are easier to mobilize around.

Section 4: The “Ecosystem” Claim: When Influence is Described As “Enforcement” Without Proving Command

Here, TNI attempts to offer a mechanism: it argues that organizations, party networks, online mobilization, and street-level groups operate as a coordinated system of intimidation and enforcement.¹⁵ This is a point where rhetoric must be carefully monitored, because the report combines two very different claims.

The first claim is common and generally true: parties coordinate messaging online, cultivate influencers, and benefit from volunteer networks. The second claim is serious: that these networks act as quasi-paramilitary enforcers, blurring civil society into coercion. These are different claims, and they require different types of evidence.

Online harassment is real. Press freedom monitors have warned about online hate campaigns targeting journalists in India and have urged state action.⁹ The broader public discourse about coordinated trolling, including allegations that party-linked networks have directed abuse campaigns, has circulated for years in mainstream reporting.¹⁰ These are serious issues. But the existence of harassment does not automatically indicate a centrally directed “enforcement” system. It shows breakdowns in norms, inconsistent enforcement, and platform incentives that encourage cruelty. The solution is procedural: stronger enforcement against threats and doxxing, platform accountability, and protections for journalists and activists.

Vigilantism and lynching allegations are also serious and well-documented. Human Rights Watch has described violent cow-protection vigilantism and raised concerns about impunity and political rhetoric.^{11 12}

Yet TNI’s argument hinges on framing these harms as a core ideological trait. It encourages readers to see every vigilante act as evidence of a central ideological drive. However, real-world causality is often more complex: local power, opportunism, prejudice, and social media amplification can come together with sporadic political patronage to produce violence without a clear command structure. Reporting that centers on individual vigilante cases usually highlights ecosystem dynamics rather than a single controlling entity.¹³

The distinction is important because the solutions differ. If you advocate for central command, you call for dismantling the entire movement. If you recognize an ecosystem problem, you focus on law enforcement, prosecution, and prevention mechanisms that reduce impunity and dismantle local networks of violence. The constitutional approach is more challenging but more effective. It punishes crimes without labeling identities.

TNI opts for the branding approach because it creates a compelling global mobilization story: the movement is fascist, the ecosystem is enforcement, and thus international opposition is morally necessary. That might be rhetorically effective. However, it does not satisfy the standard of proof needed for such a bold claim.

Section 5: Kashmir, security governance, and the trick of “context-free” indictment

TNI’s Kashmir passages are written to make the reader feel that the case is already settled. Restrictions after August 2019, internet shutdowns, preventive detention, and counterterror laws are presented as obvious signs of “Hindutva fascism.”¹⁴ The report’s emotional approach is straightforward: once Kashmir is framed as fascism, every security measure becomes proof of ideology.

But if we truly care about rights, Kashmir is the last place where we can afford to overlook the full context. The region’s politics have been shaped not only by constitutional disputes and protests but also by decades of insurgency, counterinsurgency, and cross-border terror networks. Context is not a moral license. It is the factual basis on which proportionality must be evaluated.

Start with the constitutional change itself. The abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganization of the state in 2019 remain subjects of political debate. However, it was not left in a legal vacuum. The Supreme Court upheld the abrogation in December 2023.¹⁵ That does not end the discussion about how the transition was carried out. It does, however, make it more difficult for TNI to portray India as operating outside the rule of law in a purely authoritarian way. A claim of fascism must confront institutional opposition rather than dismiss it.

Now consider the communication restrictions, which became the global symbol of post-2019 Kashmir. International reporting described it as the longest internet shutdown imposed in a democracy, and Access Now’s tracking is regularly cited as the backbone of the documentation.^{16 17} This is a significant rights issue. Collective communication punishment can enable human rights abuses by decreasing visibility. It can also disrupt education, healthcare access, livelihoods, and journalism.

Yet here as well, what matters is not just outrage but governance discipline. In *Anuradha Bhasin* (January 2020), the Supreme Court held that indefinite internet shutdowns are impermissible and emphasized the necessity and proportionality requirements, including review standards.¹⁸ A global free expression analysis later highlighted the judgment’s proportionality limits and its insistence that shutdown orders cannot be indefinite by default.¹⁹ These interventions demonstrate that legal contestation exists and can lead to restraint. TNI’s framing tends to overlook this because it diminishes the “fascism” narrative of total control.

TNI’s broader approach is to see security governance as an ideology rather than a dilemma. It simplifies a complex issue into a straightforward moral story: restrictions exist, therefore fascism.¹⁴ But Kashmir is not governed in a vacuum. Encyclopedia Britannica’s overview notes that militant organizations and insurgency emerged in the late 1980s and intensified in the early 1990s, leading to a prolonged cycle of terrorist violence and political

instability.²⁰ That historical pattern is not an excuse. It highlights why any critique must address two threats simultaneously: violent networks and state overreach.

The terror ecosystem is also well-documented, not conjecture. UN Security Council sanctions summaries list Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba as terrorist groups,²¹²² and the UN listing of Masood Azhar is part of the same documented picture.²³ The U.S. designation of The Resistance Front as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, described as a Lashkar front, underscores the ongoing international security dimension.²⁴ This matters because it explains why Indian policymakers and many citizens see exceptional measures as necessary rather than driven by ideology. If TNI ignores this context, it can present a simpler story. But it cannot tell a more accurate one. More importantly, the internet shutdown should not be viewed as an issue of collective punishment, but as a response to mass destabilization of law and order, followed by an anticipated loss of life engineered by Pakistan, a sworn external adversary.

Then there is the law itself, especially UAPA. TNI views India's counterterror framework as a tool to suppress dissent, and it is valid that concerns about civil liberties exist.¹⁴ Government releases citing NCRB data and parliamentary annexures provide state-by-state UAPA case counts for recent years.²⁵²⁶ Media reports have raised questions about outcomes and patterns of conviction.²⁷ These are exactly the kinds of materials that should inform reform: patterns of extended pre-trial detention, barriers to bail, etc.

But the honest way to argue this isn't to say "UAPA exists, therefore fascism." The honest approach is to demonstrate procedural harm: years in prison without conviction, weak evidentiary thresholds, and poor oversight. Those are measurable. Those can be litigated. A fascism label, on the other hand, is politically loud and procedurally vague.

TNI also highlights the media environment and information control in Kashmir. Reporters Without Borders has called Kashmir an "information black hole" and reported arrests and harassment of journalists. Amnesty has expressed similar concerns. These reports are important, and they should result in specific demands: clearer press protections, judicial review of detentions, transparency in restrictions, and enforceable timelines for restoring normal civic life.

What TNI offers instead is a civilizational indictment. In doing so, it risks undermining the very coalition-building needed for reform. When you describe every security-state abuse as the expression of an identity ideology, you ensure that supporters interpret critique as an attack on their identity, and opponents treat reform as impossible. Kashmir needs the opposite: a rights-focused constitutional approach that can speak to security-minded citizens without giving the state a blank check.

Kashmir faces real, well-documented security threats. A democracy proves itself by ensuring the safety and security of its citizens, and by preserving its territorial integrity. It cannot ignore threats, but its response must be reviewable and accountable. TNI's framework makes that discipline harder by replacing policy debate with moral branding.

Section 6: WhatsApp, virality, and the temptation to turn the internet into one party's fingerprint

TNI's digital section aims to present the modern smoking gun: a data-driven propaganda system that radicalizes populations, intimidates critics, and manufactures consent.¹⁴ It wants the reader to feel that the digital world is where "fascism" has evolved for the platform age.

Reducing real harms to a single-ideology focus is intellectually lazy and politically dangerous. WhatsApp has played a significant role in Indian political communication. Reports around the 2019 election described how WhatsApp groups were used for propaganda and misinformation and how organizational discipline was important in message distribution.³⁰ That does not prove fascism. It shows that political rivalry now operates through encrypted networks and volunteer mobilization.

Rumor-driven violence is another widely discussed harm. Analysis in *Economic and Political Weekly* warned that we should differentiate disinformation from direct incitement and recognize how social tensions and local power dynamics become explosive when amplified by messaging platforms.³¹ This point is important because it challenges TNI's simplified explanation. If the main cause is incitement rooted in local prejudices and networks, then the issue isn't just "Hindutva propaganda." Instead, it's a structural problem: virality, social division, and weak enforcement.

Technical research supports this ecosystem perspective. A recent study on the spread of harmful content in WhatsApp groups highlights the structural dynamics involved.³² Such research is important because it demonstrates that platform design and network topology can amplify harm regardless of one party's ideological intent. It also points to policy solutions: limiting mass forwarding, improving reporting mechanisms, and strengthening investigative capacity around incitement networks.

The TNI report views WhatsApp activism as evidence of a civilizational project.¹⁴ That is where the reasoning falls apart. Harassment networks exist in India and are present across political domains worldwide. Platform outrage incentives are universal, used by both state and non-state actors from all sides of the political spectrum. Surveillance temptations are common in democracies and non-democracies alike. If something is universal, it doesn't prove that one ideology is uniquely fascist. It may indicate that democracies are failing to properly manage digital spaces.

The constitutional remedy isn't glamorous, but it's real: enforce laws against threats, stalking, and doxxing; establish transparent rules for content moderation that meet the requirements of necessity and proportionality; hold platforms accountable for amplifying incitement while safeguarding legitimate dissent; and ensure that surveillance is overseen independently. However, restrictions on platforms and individuals' freedom of speech can also be viewed as conflicting with constitutional guarantees of free speech and

expression, which must not be sacrificed to achieve the political aims of activist groups or activist-generated political reports. Therefore, a governmental regulatory agency must carefully balance these interests.

Nothing about these solutions requires branding Hindu identity politics as fascism.

Branding doesn't protect journalists. Process does.

TNI chooses branding because it mobilizes international allies. The cost is losing analytical integrity and weakening domestic coalition-building. If you want real protection for victims of digital harassment, you need enforceable standards, not civilizational demonology.

Section 7: “Caste”: The Analytic Shortcut That Turns a Living Struggle into an Ideological Stamp

TNI views caste as the moral justification: Hindutva is presented as a project that ultimately sustains “Brahminical” dominance while using cultural nationalism to build broader coalitions.¹⁴ It is an argument meant to serve as moral certainty: if the structure is Brahminical, then every political outcome reflects hierarchy.

The first problem is that the claim is often unfalsifiable. If Dalits and OBCs support the BJP, it becomes “co-optation.” If they oppose it, it becomes “resistance.” Either outcome is dismissed as the same conclusion. That is not an explanation. That is ideological closure.

This critique is not only a Hindu response; it also serves as a scholarly warning. A 2023 paper argues that describing Hindutva simply as “Brahminical” is insufficient because it cannot explain the significant support among groups that the theory views as structurally excluded.³⁷ The point is that political behavior and identity formation are more complex than a single label.

Second, caste coalitions in India are not static. They are negotiated. They are regional. They shift. Scholarship on Uttar Pradesh discusses the BJP's mobilization of Dalits and OBCs and suggests that electoral outcomes can surprise expectations because coalitions are not permanently cemented.³⁸ That is not a view of an unchanging Brahminical machine. It reflects contested social politics.

Third, TNI breaks down three distinct levels that need to be distinguished: organizational rhetoric, leadership composition, and local practice. These layers can diverge significantly. A movement can claim to oppose discrimination, yet still maintain internal hierarchies and behave differently at local levels depending on caste power dynamics.

This is where quoting stated positions matters, not as vindication but as evidence. Recent reporting quotes RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat framing the opening of temples, water bodies, and cremation grounds to all Hindus as part of ending caste discrimination.³⁹ If TNI claims the ideology is essentially committed to caste hierarchy, it must confront the movement's own public self-presentation rather than pretend it does not exist.

Fourth, caste does not align neatly with the Western far-right/far-left axis that TNI uses. Analysis of Hindutva populism highlights how caste and religion can blend in political behavior, altering how people understand belonging and interest.⁴⁰ The term “caste” has been a colonial trope. Hindu concepts of varna and jati (jaati) were merged by the British into “caste.” This counter-report does not claim that there was no discrimination in Hindu society historically.

Like every society in the world, India also experienced historic discrimination in the past. The point here is that there is nothing inherent in Hindu dharma, Hindu scriptures, or Hindu civilization that endorses or encourages this discrimination. Hindu organizations oppose

using caste as a rhetorical weapon to preemptively delegitimize Hindu civilizational politics. The term “Brhaminism” is simply a dog whistle used to rally groups against the Hindu revival.

The constitutional approach is more complex and humane: evaluate movements based on measurable outcomes related to discrimination, representation, access, and protection. When they fail, critique them specifically. When they succeed, acknowledge their achievements. That is what justice requires. TNI’s moral judgment aims to mobilize, not to establish truth.

Section 8: Geopolitics - When Strategy Is Treated as Ideology, and Diplomacy Becomes a Morality Play

TNI aims to demonstrate that Hindutva is not just domestic authoritarianism but also a geopolitical initiative: aligning with the West, partnering with Israel, and strengthening ties with Gulf states are described as part of a global far-right realignment.¹⁴ The report's technique becomes almost too obvious here, as it relabels normal statecraft as ideological justification.

Begin with the Quad. Governments describe the Quad as a partnership for a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” and joint statements emphasize cooperation in maritime security, technology, infrastructure, and resilience.^{41 42} You could argue that the Quad is part of the effort to balance China. You could debate whether it's rhetoric masks power politics. But none of that requires Hindutva as an explanatory factor. India has a disputed border with China and repeated standoffs. India's trade and energy routes pass through vulnerable sea lanes. Strategic balancing makes sense based on geography, not ideology.

Now Israel. Official Indian representations frame India–Israel relations as a strategic partnership with cooperation across defense, innovation, agriculture, and counterterrorism concerns.⁴³ India's own official reporting describes joint working group meetings on defense cooperation.⁴⁴ Turning “India cooperates with Israel” into “Hindutva is Zionist far-right fascism” is not analysis. It is slogan-stitching.

The Gulf partnerships further weaken the “far-right alignment” story. Reuters reports on India–UAE agreements emphasizing energy supply deals and commitments to enhance trade and defense cooperation.⁴⁵ That is typical behavior for rising powers. They diversify energy security and investment flows. They collaborate where interests match. They avoid entanglement when costs are high. It is multi-vector diplomacy, not ideological bloc formation.

TNI's deeper strategy is to turn power into guilt. When India acts as a significant global player, it's called “imperial alignment.” When India forms coalitions, it's labeled “far-right networking.” When India engages in counterterrorism cooperation, it's seen as “Islamophobia coordination.” This is not a neutral analytical pattern. It's a rhetorical tactic meant to cast India's rise as morally tainted.

Security partnerships do not undermine rights. They don't suggest that surveillance cooperation shouldn't be regulated, that arms deals shouldn't undergo ethical scrutiny, or that India should or shouldn't avoid involvement in external conflicts. These criticisms are specific and based on constitutional principles. What they do not call for is the exaggerated claim that India's strategic geography proves that Hindu identity politics is fascism.

Section 9: “Akhand Bharat,” Cartographic Symbolism, And the Lazy Conversion of Rhetoric into Annexation Doctrine

This is where TNI reaches for the most combustible symbol it can find and uses it as a shortcut to incite fear. “Akhand Bharat” is treated as proof that Hindutva is inherently expansionist: a civilizational ideology that cannot accept modern borders and thus threatens neighboring states.⁴⁶ The rhetorical advantage is clear. Once “undivided India” is framed as an annexation plan, the reader is encouraged to stop asking “what is meant” and start imagining tanks.

But symbolism is not doctrine, and provocation is not policy.

The controversy over the mural and map displayed in India’s new Parliament building demonstrates how quickly cartographic symbols can spark regional anxieties. Nepal’s foreign ministry directed its embassy in New Delhi to raise the issue with India, and Nepali media described it as a serious irritant because the depiction appeared to subsume parts of contemporary Nepal.⁴⁷ International coverage explained why neighboring countries felt offended and quoted hostile interpretations from Pakistan as well.⁴⁸ Indian coverage included the government’s explanation that the mural represented the historical reach of the Mauryan Empire rather than a territorial claim.⁴⁹ During a bilateral visit, the Ministry of External Affairs faced questions about it and responded in a briefing, indicating that this was seen as a serious diplomatic issue.⁵⁰

Those facts are important because they reveal what this episode truly is: a symbolic dispute with diplomatic repercussions, followed by official clarification and ongoing debate. That is not insignificant. But it is not the same as a state doctrine committing to border revision.

TNI, however, relies on collapsing these categories. It treats a symbol as a program and considers the most hostile interpretation of that symbol to be the only meaningful one.⁴⁶ That approach is intellectually convenient because it eliminates the need to demonstrate policy intent. If symbolism is enough, proof becomes optional.

The risk is that it establishes an asymmetric standard. South Asia is a region where identity and map politics are routinely weaponized by multiple states. If we view every provocative map or slogan as a potential plan for annexation, then nearly every country in the region could be seen as expansionist by implication. But that’s not analysis. It’s paranoia disguised as writing.

There is also a kind of interpretive laziness in how “Akhand Bharat” is approached. The phrase has multiple meanings depending on who is speaking and the context: for some, it is cultural nostalgia for civilizational unity; for others, it is imagined as economic and cultural integration; and for still others, it becomes a maximalist political ideal. TNI

encourages readers to accept the maximalist interpretation because it bolsters the “fascism” frame.

If the claim is irredentism, then the evidence needed is clear: formal territorial claims, military doctrine, policy documents, or official statements committing to border revision. Without those, a more cautious conclusion is appropriate: this symbolism can be diplomatically challenging and should be approached carefully because it may be exploited in neighboring countries. However, the annexation narrative is sensational and weak. TNI report blurs the boundaries between irredentism and cultural narratives because its goal is not regional stability. Its goal is to make Hindu civilizational language appear inherently dangerous.

Section 10: “Lawfare,” NGOs, CAA, and the Difference Between Institutional Critique and Civilizational Indictment

TNI’s “lawfare” chapter is among the most serious parts of the report because it highlights genuine institutional worries: citizenship law conflicts, NGO regulations, sedition-like laws, and the use of investigative agencies.⁵¹ It is also where the report’s approach becomes most harmful, as it turns procedural disputes into proof of a civilizational enemy.

Start with CAA. Regardless of one’s opinion of it, the controversy is not theoretical because the law became practically relevant again when the government announced implementing rules in March 2024 — an event widely covered in international summaries and legal analyses.^{52 53} Reuters reported that the CAA’s fast-track citizenship pathway for non-Muslim minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan drew criticism for excluding Muslims, which many see as discriminatory. The government defended it as a targeted humanitarian measure.⁵⁴ That is the main debate: a contested policy justified as humanitarian and criticized as discriminatory.

TNI aims to merge this human rights law with NRC fears into a single framework for disenfranchisement.⁵¹ Precision is crucial here. The CAA is a specific legislation and formal rule framework. NRC has regional implications and a history that extends beyond Hindu–Muslim binaries, including significant anxieties in Assam involving multiple communities. The TNI report conflates these two distinct laws to generate fear among Indian Muslims. This approach is rhetorically powerful and analytically sloppy.

A constitutional critique does not require exaggeration. It can be argued that any citizenship system must uphold principles of equality, must not be applied discriminatorily, and must include clear criteria, appeal processes, and protections against arbitrary exclusion. That is a legal argument, not an ideological slogan.

Now, regarding NGOs and civic space. TNI characterizes NGO regulation as a form of institutional capture.⁵¹ Human Rights Watch has argued that India’s laws have been misused to suppress peaceful dissent and has highlighted patterns, including FCRA restrictions and their chilling effects.⁵⁵ This is a serious charge. Civil society plays a crucial role as a primary shock absorber in a democracy, and when it is restricted, the state’s power becomes less accountable.

But it is also true that NGO regulation exists in most countries, including democracies, and the proper standard is proportionality and non-arbitrariness. FATF’s India mutual evaluation process is often cited in debates over how governments justify NGO oversight in the name of countering terrorist financing risk.⁵⁶ Monitoring groups have pointed out that Recommendation 8, which concerns non-profits, can be misused worldwide if it becomes an excuse for overly broad restrictions rather than targeted, risk-based oversight.⁵⁷ The point is not to launder state repression through FATF. The point is to show why “NGO

regulation exists” is not the same as “fascism exists.” The key issue is whether regulation is transparent, proportional, and applied consistently rather than selectively.

Sedition and offenses against national integrity highlight the need for precision. In 2022, India’s Supreme Court effectively put sedition proceedings in abeyance pending reconsideration and instructed caution in new cases.⁸ That was a meaningful judicial intervention. Then the new criminal codes removed the old sedition offense while creating a new one related to acts threatening sovereignty, unity, and integrity. Legislative analysis has expressed concerns that elements similar to sedition-like reasoning might still remain.⁹ This is a nuanced situation, but reform has taken place.

Courts continue to shape that boundary. Reporting in 2025 noted the Supreme Court’s remarks that journalistic content does not, by itself, amount to an act endangering national unity and integrity, and warned that even “good laws” can be misused.⁶⁰ Again, this does not mean abuse cannot occur. It means legal contestation is ongoing, which complicates the “total capture” narrative.

Finally, investigative agencies. TNI treats agency actions as political weapons meant to discipline opponents.⁵¹ This is a serious accusation that should be debated with data and transparency. The Indian Express, for example, has reported ongoing opposition concern about ED actions and referenced earlier reports suggesting that a significant portion of politically linked cases during certain periods involved opposition figures.⁶¹ That kind of material should inform reform proposals: clearer evidentiary standards, time-limited procedures, independent oversight, and safeguards against political advantage.

But here is the key difference between institutional critique and civilizational indictment. If you declare the core problem to be “Hindutva fascism,” you invite fatalism, not reform. You turn procedural guardrails into moral theatre. Punish misconduct, demand transparency, establish guardrails, and refuse selective enforcement. That is how democracies work. TNI prefers the label because labels mobilize more effectively than reforms.

Section 11: “Hate as Political Capital”: Treating Hindu Concerns as Legitimate Without Endorsing Collective Suspicion

TNI’s “hate as political capital” section aims to be emotionally impactful. It presents communal polarization as the main political tool of Hindutva.⁶² Lynching, moral panic, and demonizing rhetoric are seen as the movement’s core, leading the reader to a single conclusion: the ideology is inherently supremacist.

Human Rights Watch argued that hate speech featured in the 2024 campaign environment and urged stronger protection of minority rights and accountability for violence.⁶³ UN experts urged corrective action to protect rights and end attacks during the election period.⁶⁴

The constitutional anchor here is crucial. India’s Supreme Court, in the Shaheen Abdulla matter, directed police to register FIRs suo motu in hate speech cases and made clear that action must be taken regardless of the religion of the speaker; subsequent reporting notes extension of that direction across states and Union Territories.^{65 66} Whatever one thinks about enforcement on the ground, this is an explicit articulation of the principle a plural society needs: hate speech law must not become selective theatre. It must be religion-neutral in enforcement.

Now, the “love jihad” cluster is where TNI’s analysis is weakest because it treats the whole issue as manufactured panic.⁶² TNI’s refusal to recognize a different reality is why it fails to convince anyone outside its ideological circle: there are repeated allegations across multiple jurisdictions of identity concealment, fraud, coercion, blackmail, and pressure to convert in specific cases involving Hindu women. It is entirely reasonable that the number of these allegations causes fear and protective action among Hindus. The moral line is clear: fear should not turn into vigilante justice, but fear itself is not inherently irrational.

Recent reporting highlights the fact patterns driving this concern. Hindustan Times detailed a Gurugram case where a woman alleged she was deceived into marriage through fraud, later uncovering identity deception and prior marital facts, and subsequently facing pressure and assault accusations linked to conversion demands.⁶⁹ The Times of India also reported on the same set of allegations.⁷⁰ Additionally, the Times of India covered an Indore case involving alleged identity fraud, sexual assault claims, threats to reveal private material, and alleged pressure to convert.⁷¹ These are allegations that must be examined in court. However, they are not imaginary, and they are not simply “moral panic” as such.

So what is the correct position?

The constitutional position has three parts:

Prosecute coercion, fraud, trafficking, extortion, and violence thoroughly when evidence exists. Punish harassment and vigilantism against interfaith interactions. TNI’s weakness is its one-sided narrative: claiming love jihad is propaganda, thus dismissing Hindu

concerns as irrational, and framing the entire discourse as fascist mobilization.⁶² Such refusal to acknowledge recurring allegations of deception is precisely why many Hindus see the entire “anti-fascist” label as dishonest. A plural society cannot thrive by pretending abuses never happen.

If TNI truly aimed to reduce hate, it would emphasize this constitutional approach. Instead, it uses hate as a moral quickening to justify worldwide mobilization against a civilizational identity. That is why the report stirs more conflict than it creates change.

Section 12: Textbooks, “Rewriting History,” and the Hindu Case for Decolonizing the Syllabus

TNI considers curriculum revision one of the clearest signs of “Hindutva capture.” It claims that the classroom is being turned into an ideological factory: history is being altered to promote Hindu victimhood, demonize Muslims, and justify majoritarian politics.⁷⁵ This accusation resonates easily with Western audiences because it fits a familiar pattern: “nationalists rewrite textbooks.” However, it only holds if you accept a premise that many Indians, especially Hindus, reject: that the older syllabus was an objective standard.

For many Hindus, the previous baseline was not just neutral history; it represented a layered inheritance.

The initial layer was colonial. British-era historiography did not just document India; it classified and judged it. James Mill’s *History of British India* is often referenced for its influential periodization and its civilizational stance, which shaped how generations were taught to think in terms of ruler-and-religion frameworks. Scholars have examined Mill’s framing as part of a broader colonial project of knowledge that created hierarchies of civilization and justified rule through moral judgment. Even when later Indian historians dismissed Mill’s contempt, the categories and storytelling habits persisted.

The second layer involved post-Independence ideological gatekeeping. Indian school history was heavily shaped by a limited academic ecosystem that, for extended periods, considered its interpretive tradition the only valid one. The history of NCERT textbook controversies, including disputes over authorship and ongoing politicization, illustrates how fiercely contested “official history” has been across different governments.⁷⁸ Academic research has pointed out that the early post-Independence secular textbook tradition was shaped by historians influenced by Marxist approaches.⁷⁹ It demonstrates that the old syllabus was not an objective, ideology-free shared resource.

This is the Hindu view TNI refuses to take seriously. For many Hindus, the older “neutral” history often felt like a narrative where Hindu civilization was mainly portrayed as a site of caste oppression and superstition. At the same time, civilizational trauma and the long arc of temple desecrations, iconoclasm, and coercive episodes were discussed carefully, sometimes defensively, as if clarity itself posed a communal risk. That is why “rewriting” is not how supporters of revision see the moment. They see it as rebalancing.

This also explains why the question isn’t whether revision should occur. Revision is unavoidable. The real question is whether revision is done with academic transparency, diverse review, and safeguards against presentism bias.

Even the recent textbook controversies illustrate why TNI’s certainty is exaggerated. Reporting on the revised Class 8 social science textbook highlights sharper language about Mughal-era violence but also includes an explicit footnote warning students not to blame

current communities and to study history objectively.⁸⁰ This does not prove that every revision is flawless. Instead, it shows that the state's own textbook system acknowledges the risk of communal projection and, at least officially, tries to set boundaries against it.

And the process itself is not just covert capture. NCERT's National Curriculum Framework portal describes the development of the NCF as consultative in design.⁸¹ Government reports on the NCF-SE 2023 process also explicitly mention Indian Knowledge Systems as part of the framework context.⁸² This indicates that there is an official pedagogical rationale that is not reducible to "indoctrination."

The correct constitutional stance is therefore stricter than TNI's: not "old syllabus sacred, new syllabus fascist," but "no monopoly should own national memory." An Indic civilizational rebalancing can be legitimate yet poorly executed. The solution is transparent sourcing, and a balanced insistence that the full scope of the past be taught: violence and pluralism, oppression and reform, conquest and syncretism, temple desecration where evidenced. That is how a civilization matures in self-knowledge.

TNI frames Hindu civilizational reclamation as inherently illegitimate because, if it admits legitimacy, its "fascism" label loses power. The simple counter-narrative is that teaching a more accurate Indian history is not fascism. Instead, it's a democratic correction to centuries of narrated self-alienation.

Section 13: Elections, “Leader Cult,” and why the “Managed Democracy” Script Collapses Under Outcomes

TNI’s concluding argument asserts that India maintains a democratic facade while undermining its democratic substance. Modi is portrayed as a messianic figure, institutions as easily influenced, and elections as mere staged events.⁸³ It’s a familiar pattern: label the ruling party as authoritarian, view every institutional flaw as evidence of complete control, and then ask international audiences to see the country as a democracy on the surface.

But reality is not a script, and 2024 did not cooperate. In 2024, the BJP lost its single-party majority and had to depend on coalition allies. Reuters described the outcome as a surprise compared to expectations of a sweeping mandate; the Associated Press also described the coalition result alongside BJP setbacks and a stronger opposition presence.^{84 85} If elections were just theater, this is an odd plot twist. It shows that voters still have influence, and that the ruling party can be constrained without being removed.

Global indices have criticized democratic backsliding in India. Freedom House has cited concerns, including those around the Election Commission’s independence.⁸⁶ V-Dem’s report describes long-term autocratization trends and classifies India harshly in its schema.⁸⁷ Indians are entitled to challenge the assumptions and coding behind these indices, and they often do. But the deeper point is that the presence of critique is not proof of fascism. It is evidence that the democratic struggle remains contested and visible.

TNI also relies on EVM distrust narratives to support the idea of a 'managed democracy.' But here too, the institutional record complicates the situation. In April 2024, India’s Supreme Court rejected petitions seeking significant changes to vote-counting and declined to require full VVPAT slip verification, reaffirming the current EVM–VVPAT framework while discussing safeguards.⁸⁸ Reuters reported this as the top court declining to order changes.⁸⁹ The Election Commission continues to publish technical FAQs defending the system and its safeguards.⁹⁰ Critics disagree and call for higher verification. That debate should go on. The point is that the debate is alive, adjudicated, and public.

A constitutional critique would emphasize specific reforms: transparency in appointments, safeguards against agency misuse, clearer enforcement of campaign conduct, prompt resolution of election complaints, and stronger action against hate speech regardless of the perpetrator. TNI instead views institutional friction as evidence that the system is inherently illegitimate, and then leverages that illegitimacy to support a global campaign stance.⁸³

India’s democracy is tense, noisy, and often inconsistent, but it remains challenged by voters, courts, and coalition politics. Fascism is not simply the result of institutional struggle. If TNI wants the fascism label, it must demonstrate a level of total control that India’s own electoral and judicial unpredictability regularly undermines.

Section 14: Who Is Speaking: TNI's Advocacy Posture, the Author's Pakistan Base, and Why the "Global Fascism" Frame Is Not Neutral

Before accepting TNI's invitation to view Hindutva as a global far-right movement needing worldwide confrontation, it is worth applying a basic journalistic rule: scrutinize the messenger.

TNI is not a neutral research organization. It describes itself as a research-and-advocacy institute that connects engaged scholars, social movements, and policy communities, explicitly framing its work as ideas linked to movement.^{91 92} It is also transparent about its finances and donor network, highlighting a Transparify rating and publishing audited accounts and annual reports that include major funding agreements.^{93 94} The existence of donors does not "prove" an agenda. It does mean the institution operates within a Western NGO landscape that has preferred vocabularies and incentive structures. "Global far-right," "anti-fascist solidarity," and "movement confrontation" are not merely descriptive there; they are programmatic frameworks that mobilize audiences and coalitions.

This matters because TNI's report reads like a mobilization. It ends by asking what confronting Hindutva demands from "the left worldwide."⁸³ That is not an analytic conclusion; it is a political call.

Now consider the authorial perspective. TNI lists Shayan Shaukat as the author, and his public affiliations connect him to Lahore's academic and media scene, including Forman Christian College.^{95 96} This is not a personal attack; it is context. Pakistan does not remain an indifferent observer when it comes to Hindu civilizational assertion in India.

And Pakistan's curriculum record is a relevant context because it shows how a state can consciously engineer identity while denying its civilizational roots. A landmark SDPI study documented how curricula and textbooks in Pakistan have fostered intolerance and constructed identity through religion-first nationalism.⁹⁷ Brookings described Pakistan's official curriculum as saturated with ideological dogma, half-truths, and conspiracy narratives, teaching that Pakistan's ideology is Islam and depicting India and Hindus as perpetual enemies.⁹⁸ USCIRF has documented religious bias in Pakistani public school textbooks, including stigmatizing portrayals of non-Muslims and hostile depictions of Hindus.⁹⁹

This structural context helps explain an asymmetry in TNI's moral posture. From within a Pakistan-based ideological environment that has long normalized civilizational denial and "othering" of Hindus, an India that re-centers Indic civilizational memory can be seen as automatically illegitimate. Hindu civilizational reclamation is seen as "propaganda" by default, while identity engineering elsewhere is treated as background. This is not about personal motivation. It is about interpretive assumptions shaped by national narratives.

And this is why Section 14 matters in a counter-narrative: it reminds readers that the "global fascism" frame is not neutral scholarship arriving at a reluctant verdict. It is advocacy language designed to justify global mobilization against a civilizational identity

project. In practice, such framing can also foster suspicion and discrimination against ordinary Hindus abroad.

A democracy should be evaluated by constitutional standards and evidence-based critique, not by a foreign NGO narrative that regards majority identity as inherently extremist and views global confrontation as the solution.

Final Synthesis: What Remains After The Labels Are Stripped Away

TNI's report is powerful as rhetoric because it functions like a moral machine. It broadly defines fascism, declares Hindutva as globally significant, and then draws connections across diaspora politics, digital harassment, security law, cultural production, and curriculum revision to make the label seem unavoidable.^{1 75 83}

India is indeed a resilient constitutional democracy that manages the typical challenges of size, diversity, and ongoing security concerns. The straightforward path is clear: consistently enforce laws against hate and incitement, quickly punish vigilantism, protect civil liberties even when confronting terrorism and organized crime, keep investigative and regulatory agencies free from partisan influence, demand platforms to prevent incitement and targeted harassment, and carry out transparent, inclusive, decolonized curriculum reforms that restore a genuine Indic civilizational narrative while guaranteeing equal dignity for all citizens.

But when the labels are stripped away, what is left is not a story of fascist dominance. What remains is a report that is framed through an anti-Hindu, anti-Hindutva, anti-India lens: The report, written by a Pakistan-based author and published by a Western advocacy outfit that often defaults to colonial-era categories when interpreting Hindu civilization, should be read as ideological messaging rather than neutral analysis.

The most dangerous part of the narrative is the one TNI normalizes, where Hindu civilizational self-assertion is treated as a crime and global mobilization against it is treated as a virtue. A billion-person civilization cannot be put on trial by insinuation. It must be evaluated by evidence, symmetry, and constitutional standards.

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