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The Saffron State: An analysis of Bureaucratic and Administrative Development of India Under Modi from 2018-2022

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Abstract

The Modi government reorganized internal state structures, going further than traditional cultural frameworks in exercising ideological influence through the path of governance. This research looks into saffronisation in India from a new angle. It looks into how lawless but Hindutva-friendly activities undermined constitutional policing, legal, and bureaucratic neutral governance through strategic appointments, parliamentary manoeuvring, and unofficial support structures. Evolution of saffronisation in governance is understood in terms of political science and governance frameworks of embedded autonomy, executive aggrandizement, institutional theory. It portrays incremental institutional capture through case study, legal history, and data of the employment of UAPA and the pendency of cases in judiciary. This study serves as a sign of democratic regression, the institutional decline also serves as the indicator of the structural reconstitution of the Indian administration.

Keywords: *Saffronisation, Modi, Administration, Hindutva, UAPA.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The term saffronisation is derived from the saffron robes of holy men and essentially refers to linguistic and semiotic actions of right-wing nationalists in enforcing a reversion to the ancient Hindu way of life (Bhatia, 2020). However, in the past decade, especially with the rise to power of Narendra Modi and the BJP in 2014, the meaning and scope of saffronisation changed greatly. Now, saffronisation is no longer confined to pedagogy and culture. Rather, it signifies a far-reaching ideology-instituting renovation in the modes of governance and statecraft. It is the everyday inscription of the Hindutva ideology in the bureaucratic, legal, and repressive parts of the Indian state. Saffronisation is no longer spontaneous, nor is it merely rhetorical; it is a strategic and purposeful restructuring of the Indian State.

In this research paper, Saffronisation is examined as a form of political engineering where institutions like the civil services, judiciary, and police, which are supposed to operate autonomously, are being ideologically streamlined and co-opted into the mainstream bureaucratic practices. The research essentially focuses on the extent to which the Modi government has systematically and actively altered the functioning of these institutions through direct policy measures and through more subtle means like selective appointments, structural reorganizations, legal and moral harassment, and moral policing. The analysis goes beyond the consequences of such intervention to include the processes through which legitimacy is constructed for the encroachment of ideology under interventionist rule.

Indian democracy, often celebrated for its diversity, faces today the era of democratic form being continued while the substantive attributes of pluralism, institutional independence, as well as rights of minorities are being eroded. Development and national security rhetoric are commonly utilized in defence of institutional excessiveness. When laws like the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and sedition are exercised in discrimination, the culture of fear as well as conforming is promoted in the ranks of the bureaucratic as well as judicial elite. Law enforcement agencies, meanwhile, have emerged as the forceful tools in the repression of dissent as well as management of the political system in favour of the governing establishment.

This paper argues that Modi's governmental policies diverge from older governance frameworks. Saffronisation is not some brand of populism or centralization, but some covert business of ideological statecraft redrawing institutional neutrality's frontiers and state legitimacy's vistas. Tracing such changes through qualitative analysis and empirical realities, the paper contributes to existing debates regarding democratic backsliding, authoritarian consolidation, and secular governance's uncertain future within India.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is based on a multidisciplinary theoretical foundation that draws on classical sociological models of bureaucracy, recent political science frameworks on democratic decay, as well as neo-institutional analyses of state capture. Max Weber's model of bureaucratic neutrality gives us the starting point of the ideal-typical structure of the bureaucracy a system of rank that is defined by the merit-based recruitment of bureaucratic, operation of the rules, as well as functional impartiality (Weber, 1946). In our ideal case, state officials act autonomously of political ideology to carry out the broader purposes of governance as well as public welfare. The degradation of such neutrality under the Modi government constitutes the empirical foundation of this research.

In describing the shift from democratic government to ideological control, the model points to Nancy Bermeo's (2016) concept of "executive aggrandizement," which describes the manner of elected executives systematically eliminating institutional checks on power but doing so without eliminating liberal democratic institutions from power themselves. Such aggrandizement, for India, includes phenomena that are observable through the taciturnity of the judiciary about overturning executive

action, political appointments to autonomy-granting institutions, as well as extra-legal but effective networks that influence bureaucratic conduct.

Moreover, *Levitsky and Way (2010)*, in their concept of “competitive authoritarianism” tell us how democracy is being combined with authoritarianism. Elections keep happening and formal democratic institutions keep functioning in India but ever more keep getting hollowed out as administrative structures get coordinated to rule party ideology. Saffronisation of the judiciary, police force, and bureaucracy is what results institutions look to be operating but are locked in ideology. Peter Evans’ (1995) “embedded autonomy” is also used in examining the critique of the modernization of the Indian state. Bureaucracy in a good democracy is autonomous but embedded in the social networks of society, a presumption of which is that it works well without political capture. This is the reverse of what is occurring in the present Indian situation, the state institutions are embedded, but more so in homogeneous, non-formal networks that privilege the RSS and other such groups in the Hindutva movement. This is followed by some sort of ideological embeddedness, which substitutes autonomy with political alignment. Neo-institutionalism also has another account by virtue of how formal institutions get altered by changing informal norms and elite capture (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). Though legislations and constitutions never change, institutionalized daily norms change significantly. That also explains why saffronisation goes forward without any direct change to the constitution.

Overall, the theoretical backdrop of this research relates earlier theories of bureaucratic functioning to newer theories of institutional decline and political capture. They particularly draw the examiner’s attention to the fact that saffronisation by Modi is far from being a cultural process but is a part of the political policy of common practices in institutional reengineering.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is qualitative and combines process tracing, content analysis, and comparative analysis of cases in order to study institutional changes in India from 2018-2022. In order to explore these changes, official records, court rulings, staffing information and relevant secondary sources were examined, which made it possible to track the patterns and causal process systematically over cases. Sources of data included parliamentary replies, judicial directives, publicly accessible Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Forest Service (IFoS) and High Court appointments and the scientific literature on political science, sociology and institutional theory. Human rights organisations and media reports such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and The Indian Express provided further context to institutional behaviour and the societal discussions.

Three cases were chosen because of their connection to institutional neutrality and ideological conditioning of state institutions: the abrogation of Article 370 and the governing of Kashmir, the 2020 Delhi riots and tendencies in policing, and the restructuring of higher education and ideological co-option. The analysis was carried out in the form of process tracing to visualize the institutional decision-making, theoretical coding in order to identify the recurring themes, and cross-source triangulation in order to complement results using other materials. Only the data that could be confirmed in several sources were selected, and the interpretations were supported by the peer-reviewed literature to be reliable.

In as much as the research is limited by the limited access to internal bureaucratic discourses and overreliance on secondary sources, the research has managed to address this by means of triangulation and selection of good sources. Altogether, this methodology offers a strict structure for conceptualizing the mechanisms and trends of institutional change in modern India.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Bureaucratic Alignment through Recruitment and Appointments

Saffronisation is a deliberate attempt to reshape institutions to reflect Hindu majoritarian ideals (Huju, 2022). One of Modi's major institutional saffronisation agents in India has been the use of an astute hiring and appointment strategy. Instead of openly rewriting rules, the BJP government has set its ideological sympathizers to head significant administrative positions within ministries, state universities, watchdogs of media, and regulatory institutions (Jaffrelot, 2021). This reflects the neo-institutional idea that informal norms can reshape formal institutions over time.

Recruitment to the civil service, still technically meritocratic, has experienced a transition in which educational content, institutional tradition, and informal selection have been altered. Memoranda show candidates who belong to or have affiliations or associations to Hindutva narratives have implicit priority in selection, particularly in sensitive districts or culture ministries (Jaffrelot, 2021). The government's initiative to introduce lateral entry for senior bureaucratic positions has been met with criticism regarding its potential to bypass established reservation policies and the traditional UPSC examination process (Venkataraman, L. N., 2018). This might create avenues that could favour ideologically aligned candidates. What follows is a parallel bureaucracy more unresponsive and ideologically tight-knit. The lateral entry and the change in the practices of the preparation of UPSC, the internal instructions to recruit candidates according to their cultural affiliation are all signs of an informal but orchestrated abandonment of Weberian ideas of meritocracy. The application of merit has been filtered ideologically though the regulation of the civil service formally has not changed. This trend can fit into the concept of executive aggrandizement proposed by Bermeo (2016), according to which the Modi regime fails to dismantle institutions but fills them systematically with the people who are likely to converge ideologically.

This has been operationally associated with increased bureaucratic responsiveness to ruling-party interests, less internal opposition and reduced professional autonomy. Bureaucrats get to understand that objectivity means career risk and ideological proximity results in promotion, visibility and strategic posts. These processes can be seen as connected to the erosion of embedded autonomy of Evans in which bureaucratic networks are embedded not in the larger society but in homogeneous ideological formations that are associated with the Sangh Parivar.

Such deployments weaken institutional neutrality as officers act from ideology-induced devotion, not from constitutional ethos. For example, in judiciary, selection of judges demonstrating a display of respect to executive priorities amounts to side-lining of arm's-length principle (Lawful Legal, 2025). Practically, even the very bureaucracy becomes extension of party machinery, blurring difference between the state and the ruling party. The overall effect, however, isn't mere politicization, but transformation of statecraft governance no longer mediated by neutral institutions, but by ideological allegiance.

4.2. Judicial Accommodation and Chilling Effect

Indian judiciary, formerly worshipped to be a shield to prevent excesses by executive, has all along shown institutional compromise vis-à-vis Modi government. Though, judiciary remains stern within limits of constitution, inability to resist executive power, more so affairs relating to civil liberties, minority rights, and dissent, indicates a chilling effect upon judicial independence (Peak Point, 2025). Compromise never happens by direct suppression or coercion, but by subtle silence, deferment of hearing, and judgments falling to the government narrative.

The judiciary constitutes a very important example of institutional degradation, writing as informality. Instead of blatantly violating constitutional standards, courts resort more and more to silence, delay, selective urgency, and narrative accommodation to go along with the wishes of the

executive. This practice is a case of competitive authoritarianism whereby the courts operate but over time, they lose the ability to limit the ruling party.

These high-profile examples such as extended detention of UAPA-charged activists are exposing a bias of the judiciary to uphold national security at the expense of basic rights without scrutiny of state charges (Sahoo, 2024). While concurrent, the quick interventions of the court in majoritarian-supported cases such as permission for the construction of Ram Mandir are betraying selective haste and exposing ideological partisanship to majoritarian initiatives (Jaffrelot, 2021).

This gives a chilling doctrine effect, that is, the lower courts absorb cues of the highest court and bow down to the government even in cases where the law would otherwise call for action. Such judicial evasion then is a sort of institutional capture: formally independent, but in practice, the courts are serving executive interests.

4.3. Police as Enforcers of Ideological Order

The police service of India has increasingly been utilized as a tool of ideological enforcement by Modi's regime, more openly positioning itself within ideals of Hindutva. That positioning can be traced not merely within its policing of communal conflict, but further within its law enforcement and suppression of opposition. Amnesty International (2022) noted that under the governance of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), hate crimes against Muslims and other minorities have surged.

One of its most glaring examples occurred when, in 2020, over 53 people were killed, and hundreds displaced, most of them Muslims, during religious violence between members of Hindu and Muslim communities in Delhi (Amnesty International, 2022). Investigating and arresting were more biased against Muslim victims and anti-CAA protestors, including activists and students, than against members of right-wing Hindu groups who were themselves actively culpable of instigating violence. Such inclinations indicate not just ineptitude but institutionalized bias by affinity to the ideology of the regulative establishment.

This is a switch with the Weberian principle of equal dispensation against partisan policing that is in line with ideals of the majority. Such policing, motivated not as much by official dictates as by internalized norms, ideological cue-giving, and professional incentives, promotes majoritarian discourse, constitutes selective impunity as a matter of course, and transforms the operational definition of what constitutes the nature of public order to accommodate ideological agendas. It therefore contributes to the democratic deficit because it narrows the protest and mobilization of civil society.

Independently, BJP-state governments have applied oppressive legislation such as UAPA, sedition, and anti-conversion laws indiscriminately, further solidifying views of politicized police (Jaffrelot, 2021).

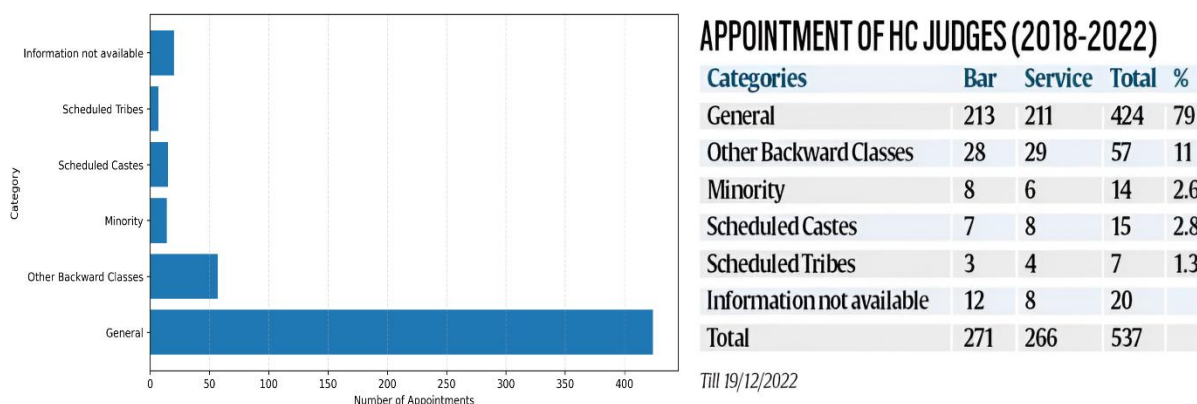
In reality, police officers were no longer custodians of neutral law but transmitters of a culture-politics ideology. Capture by ideology works to dismantle the rule of law and to normalise discrimination by virtue of the language of legality.

4.4. Minority Representation and Institutional Capture

One of the most striking features of the saffronisation trend in India under the Modi regime has been the deliberate and systematic exclusion of minority groups, such as Muslims, Dalits, Adivasis, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), from major political, administrative, and intellectual spaces in the country. This trend has not happened as a random incident or a chain of random events; instead, it has resulted from a deliberate policy aimed at the recruitment and appointment of people who support Hindutva ideology while methodically excluding others with different or minority viewpoints.

The lacunae visible in the judiciary are growing more accentuated. Muslims number more than 200 million and constitute more than 14% of the national population (Nair, 2025) but hold less than 7% of district court positions (Ash et al., 2022). Similarly, representation of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and members of the Other Backward Classes in higher courts is significantly low compared to their demographic share in the country, even though there are reservation policies in place for various central and state services.

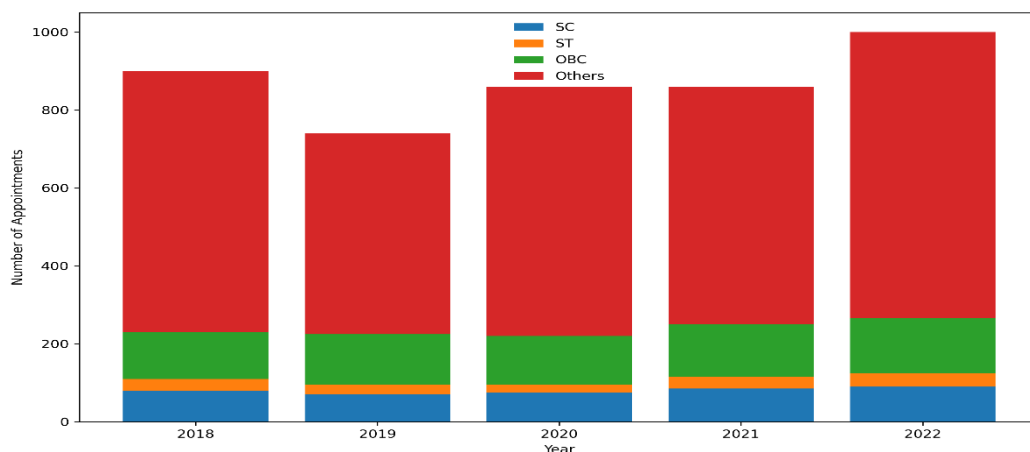
Figure 1: Appointment of HC Judges (2018-2022)



Source 1: Government of India via Parliamentary reply published in The Indian Express, 2022

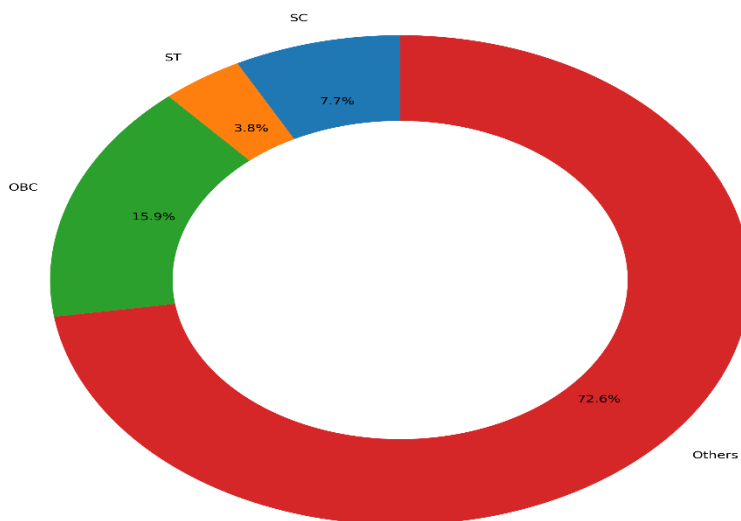
According to the above given data, 537 judges were appointed to various High Courts between 2018 and December 19, 2022, of these, 2.6 percent belonged to the minority, 11% to other backward classes, and 79% to the general category along with a percentage of 1.3% and 2.8% for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes respectively, also twenty judge’s social backgrounds were unknown to the Ministry (Vishwanath & C G, 2023). Since the choice of judges for the higher judiciary takes place through the publicly visible collegium process, the glaring absence of minority community judges indicates a disproportionate reliance on conventional elite networking and highlights the failure of the system in ensuring distributive justice. The civil services also reveal a similar mismatch. Despite reservation policies theoretically guaranteeing quotas for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC), upper-caste Hindus remain dominant in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and the Indian Forest Services (IFoS).

Figure 2: Representation of SC, ST and OBC in IAS, IPS & Forest Services (2018-2022)



Source 2: Government of India, Rajya Sabha Reply (via Telegraph India, 2023)

Figure 3: Overall Category Share (2018-2022)



Source 3: Government of India, Rajya Sabha Reply (via Telegraph India, 2023)

According to government records from 2018 to 2022, 4,365 individuals were directly recruited into the Indian Forest Service (IFoS), Indian Administrative Service (IAS), and Indian Police Service (IPS) where just 334 (7.65%) of them belonged to the SC community, 166 (3.8%) to the ST community, and 695 (15.92%) to the OBC community (Basant Kumar Mohanty, 2023). Under Modi’s government, the trend of “selective elevation” has assumed prominence, where officers who reflect proven convergence with the ideological framework of the ruling party are granted high-profile jobs, while those who dissent against policy directions remain side-lined. This system not only denies minority officers opportunities for promotion but also fosters an administrative culture where impartiality is seen as political disloyalty.

In the context of Indian higher education, the idea of saffronisation can be understood through an analysis of changes in recruitment processes and the reshaping of academic curricula. Leading central universities like Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi University, and Banaras Hindu University have inducted vice-chancellors and senior administration staff linked to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (Alt News, 2017; Newslick, 2024). Moreover, members of Dalit and Adivasi groups are far from adequately represented in tenured professorships. Alongside these personnel changes, the institutional support of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)” coupled with a sequence of informal changes affecting higher education, expressed through a pedagogy of knowledge production rooted in Hindu civilization, which is often communicated through an RSS ideology (H. Srikanth, 2024), thus bypassing diverse and minority perspectives. All these contribute to the building of a deleterious academic milieu where critical voices are redirected towards greater adherence to the ideological goals of the state. In political science, the amendments under reference symbolise a regression about representative bureaucracy (Mosher, 1968), since the organs of government fail to reflect the demographic profile of the constituents it purports to represent. In the Indian context, the poor representation of minority groups represents a great threat to the integrity of democratic process and enables exploitation of institutional mechanisms, which exist for the purpose of maintaining the existing ruling ideology through the instrumentality of the government apparatus.

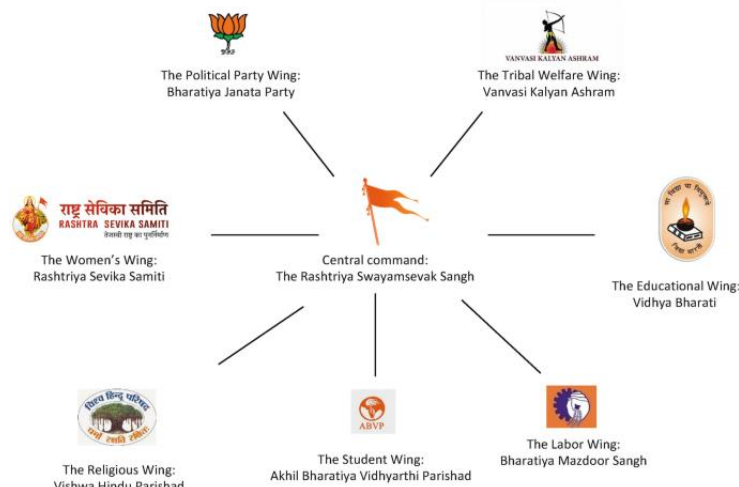
Once instrumentalized for service, these mechanisms have one purpose and one purpose only: to strengthen deliberative process through policy execution and judicial interpretation rather than challenging majority ideology and thereby sustaining a process of marginalization that becomes auto-propelling. These dynamics have implications far beyond the immediacy of the issues at hand. In judicial forums, the absence of proper representation of minority groups undermines their ability to set legal

precedents on issues of minority rights. In terms of the institutional theory, this creates a cycle of self-reinforcement in which absence of diversity influences the norms of appointment hence perpetuating marginalization. The theory of competitive authoritarianism also describes how the ruling party gains advantages out of such demographic changes and how they strengthen a loyal administrative core at the expense of the groups that were in the historical past loyal to pluralistic politics. Correspondingly, within administrative bodies of government, the failure of proper representation manifests as policies that ignore the interests of these groups. At an intellectual level, this represents an attenuation of the possibilities of alternative perceptions and an inversion of avenues of meaningful discourse. All these come together as a self-perpetuating dominance ideology in which the failure of alternatives becomes both an enabler and a driver of saffronisation.

4.5. Parallel Institutional Frameworks

Another significant tool of saffronisation of new India has been constructing and sanctifying parallel institutional networks functioning outside or in parallel to institutionalized state institutions. They comprise members of Sangh Parivar such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which is the core and from RSS the Sangh Parivar stems from, Sewa Bharati, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), and Bajrang Dal, who more and more dictate public discourse, policy formulation, and social mobilizations without official accountability (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

Figure 4: The organization of the Sangh Parivar (not all members are pictured)



Source 4: Upadhyay, (2022)

These bodies tend to function as “moral police,” upholding cultural values in alignment with Hindutva ideology by attacking interfaith relationships, religious conversions, and intellectual freedoms. In all instances, state institutions have been found either entrusting some of their coercion-related jobs to such bodies or acknowledging their existence by offering symbolic and political patronage to them (Jaffrelot, 2023). These networks have a strong influence on state practices and act as a shadow system of governance since they operate beyond constitutional accountability.

In addition to this, such networks rely upon local mobilization, educational outreach (through Saraswati Shishu Mandirs), and ideological preparation of prospective political cadres and bureaucrats. Such parallel governance sanctifies saffronisation within the framework of extra-official state architecture, institutionalizing it within the domain of society itself.

This institutional parallelism obfuscates the difference between state and civil society, further, and constitutes also non-democratic pluralism, as the groups promote a mono-religious, majority discourse ever more against India's secular constitution. This procedure is parallel to the pattern of incremental institutional change modelled by Mahoney and Thelen (2014) through which informal norms transform formal structures sluggishly.

5. CASE STUDIES

In a gesture towards locating the abstract argumentation in the concrete sphere of daily life, the following section has three case studies where it reveals how bureaucratic neutrality and administrative praxis have been undermined with saffronisation under the Modi regime. They all come together to where in institutional arenas ideological convergence gets entrenched: the judiciary, the police, and education.

5.1. Kashmir Post-Article 370 Abrogation (2019-Present)

The revocation of Article 370 which removed the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir was a watershed moment in the saffronisation project embarked upon by the Modi government, showing both symbolic and institutional shifts in governance (Sudha Ramachandran, 2024). By revoking the special constitutional status already accorded to Jammu and Kashmir, the Union government altered the constitutional relationship between the union and the state, while at the same time putting in place an administrative reorganization consonant with the ideological vision of a unitary, culturally integrated nation-state, in line with the imperatives of Hindutva ideology (Jaffrelot, 2021).

Politically, this move represents a shift from “asymmetrical federalism” which is a form of federal organization in which constituent units have unequal levels of power and diverse degrees of autonomy, usually granted to accommodate ethnic, cultural, or historical diversity (Sahadžić, 2023) and move towards a more centralized unitary system, where bureaucratic structures are reformatted to advance the political ideology of the ruling party at all costs, instead of advancing regional autonomy. The rapid imposition of a telecommunications blackout, the longest endured within a democratic framework, along with the earlier preventive detention of more than 5,000 people, including three former Chief Ministers, demonstrates the state's resort to extraordinary legal powers to contain political opposition and civil uprisings (PTI, 2019). These actions are reminiscent of Giorgio Agamben's description of the “state of exception” in which regular legal safeguards are bypassed in the name of security (Agamben, 2004); however, these bypasses seek to conform political and social institutions to the existing ideology.

The idea of bureaucratic neutrality came under review and was oftentimes compromised within this process. Members of the civil service who disagreed or simply showed passive opposition toward the new policies faced punishment in the form of transfers, marginalization, or forced resignations. The case of IAS officer Shah Faesal is a telling example, once celebrated for his meritocratic success, Faesal resigned in protest over the Kashmir violence, was later found detained under the Public Safety Act, and later retreated from political engagement (PTI, 2022). His career illustrates the way opposition within the bureaucratic system had been institutionally insulated.

The judiciary, constitutionally charged with the protection of fundamental rights, showed a pattern identified by legal commentators as judicial evasion postponement or avoidance of vital decisions on constitutional objections to the annulment and prolonged detentions. Through the adjournment of hearings for a prolonged period, the Supreme Court de facto legitimized the existing conditions, allowing the new administrative order to increasingly take root. This inaction provides a pertinent example of the phenomenon of judicial accommodation, where the courts desist from confronting the executive in election periods, especially when the latter enjoys considerable electoral legitimacy.

The Kashmir issue illustrates saffronisation as something more than an abstract political ideology shift but as an instrumental approach towards governance. These changes of policy, sacking of bureaucratic officers, and absence of judicial review all worked towards integrating an area with a distinct historical identity into the framework of Hindu nationalism. The scrapping of Article 370 thus represents the fusion between political ideology and administrative decisions and forms the very definition of institutional saffronisation.

5.2. Police Bias During 2020 Delhi Riot

The 2020 Delhi riots, which coincided with protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), revealed a disturbing alignment of law enforcement with majoritarian political narratives. While communal riots in India have historically exposed police partiality, the Delhi case under the Modi regime is distinctive for the systematic and data-backed nature of this bias.

Various investigative reports such as those by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, have suggested that the Delhi Police actions targeted anti-CAA protesters disproportionately, who were predominantly Muslim, and ignored or downplayed violence initiated by Hindu nationalist groups (Limaye, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2020). The trends revealed in the FIRs clearly indicate this bias: PUCL's analysis of FIRs in connection with the riots showed that in the infamous FIR59/2020, 16 out of the 18 accused were Muslim persons (Narwal, 2023). Additionally, several inflammatory speeches delivered by ruling party officials, particularly the ultimatum delivered by Kapil Mishra shortly before the violence erupted, were conspicuously left out of the Delhi Police chargesheets. These reports avoided mentioning any incitement of hatred and focused solely on assigning blame to the anti-CAA protesters (The Quint, 2020).

Politically, this phenomenon is of great pertinence when considering the evolution of law enforcement agency formation, which evolves to become not just visible guardians of public security but tools of enforcing ideological conformity. This development sums up what can be termed "partisan policing," where the interests of law enforcement and prosecution discretion are aligned with the interests and agendas of dominant political actors, as opposed to simply upholding the rule of law (Miller, 2023). Tactical choices, such as the slow police response in Muslim-majority neighbourhoods and the swift arrest of student leaders under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the Delhi scenario, show a policing approach that is openly intended to disable opposition while at the same time protecting political allies.

Political partisanship penetrated not only the behaviour of the police but was also embedded in the judicial process. The charges regularly echoed the government's depictions of protests as "anti-national" plots and hence substantially skewed the witnesses' testimonies coming from people from various communities. Legal proceedings instituted for the victims of violence caused by Hindu nationalists were delayed by procedural technicalities of law or were simply rejected, thus entrenching a culture of impunity for advocates of the dominant political ideology.

These 2020 riots in Delhi represent the way in which saffronisation occurs through the instrumentalization of legal codes. Even though the provisions of the UAPA represent relatively new legislation, these codes are not exercised towards maintaining public order in an objective manner but rather towards supporting the ideological dominance of Hindutva. At this point, policing shifts from the Weberian ideal of neutrality towards one which Antonio Gramsci might describe as designed for maintaining "hegemony," where coercion and consent act in tandem as methods of ensuring the dominance of the existing power architecture.

5.3. Comparative analyses between the two case studies

The Kashmir and Delhi riots represent two different yet related instances of saffronisation. For the Kashmir instance, the central government wielded its administrative and constitutional power in reorganising the political order at the sub-state level within the framework of Hindu nationalist ideology. In the Delhi instance, state power emerged through the execution of criminal law as a tactic of muzzling opposition and protection of its ideological backers. In the former instance, we see saffronisation through structural reordering while in the latter one we find saffronisation through repeated legal and order-related interventions.

The common thread seen through all these cases is the gradual erosion of institutional neutrality over the passage of time. Bureaucratic dismissal in Kashmir and discriminatory conduct of police officers in Delhi indicate an intent-based reshaping of the operations of the government along the lines of ideology promoted through the ruling political party. All these cases taken together reflect an underlying maxim within political science: institutional capture is not only possible through direct changes in jurisprudence but also through the systematic adoption of discriminatory policies, strategic personnel decisions, and wilful omissions.

6. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The evidence presented across judicial, bureaucratic, law enforcement, and educational sectors reveals a systematic pattern of institutional saffronisation under the Modi regime. These developments indicate a decisive departure from the ideals of neutrality, pluralism, and secularism enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

6.1. Key Findings

- i. **Ideological Institutional Convergence:** The case studies and the statistics lend credence to the degree to which the various state apparatuses the police, the bureaucracy, the academia, and the judiciary are being steered incrementally towards the ideological ideal of Hindutva. The trend, not invariably with the aid of the overt changes or the apparent changes to the law, is induced by the backdoor mechanisms of selective appointment, procedural deferment, and judicial inertia, which is the phenomenon of executive aggrandizement discussed by Bermeo whereby institutional norms are transformed without necessarily dismantling institutional structures, creating the hollow-state effect that is described by Levitsky and Way.
- ii. **Soft Capture of Bureaucrats and Incentives:** Those who favour the ruling regime such as bureaucrats and academics are promoted, posted in high areas and given other materialistic benefits while dissenting voices are relegated or transferred. It is a change in the direction of a patronage system replacing Weberian meritocracy, a realization of the theoretical connection between political capture and the undermining of bureaucratic neutrality.
- iii. **Judicial Reticence and Judicial Legitimacy:** Judicial restraint or intervention selectively on matters within the purview of civil liberties, religious violence, or executive overreach has legitimized democratic erosion of norms. The deterrent value of silence deters voices of dissent, impunity for the state becomes the rule, and silence on the affairs of the state becomes the virtue.
- iv. **The Police as Ideology Gatekeepers:** The police response to conversion raids-related incidents or Delhi riots incidents is not bigotry, but complicity. Their preference in enforcement is a redefinition of 'order' on behalf of majoritarian forces, not constitutional requirements, legitimizing, and aggrandizing executive power and institutional restraint over power and validating the predictions of competitive-authoritarian theory on the functional compromise of democratic institutions.

- v. **Parallel Structures of Governance:** The legitimization of the Sangh Parivar as the guardians of culture and morality further blurs the line between the state and civil society. The organisations become the modalities for imposing the ideology of Hindutva without being accountable to democratic principles or popular criticism.

6.2. Implications

- i. **Degradation of Democratic Institutions:** Subtle but profound saffronisation of the state machinery weakens the democratic regime by disturbing checks and balances. The state in which all the institutions bear the imprint of the ideology of the ruling party inclines towards a hegemonic party-state from a democratic state.
- ii. **Dilution of Rule of Law:** If the policing and judiciary are dictated by ideological biases, rule of law is replaced by rule by law, legal tools being utilized as a tool of domination, not justice. This undermines civic confidence and unequally affects the vulnerable groups.
- iii. **Normalization of Majoritarianism:** With the capture of institutions, Hindutva ideology is no longer an available political choice but a structural feature of governance. The more the institution is captured, the more the Hindutva ideology gets incorporated into the administration systems, diminishing ideological pluralism, which results in a less tolerant governance system. Normalization of majoritarian values in the administrative process only results in an intolerant space for minorities and critics.
- iv. **Long-term Institutional Scarring:** Institutions after being reshaped on ideological lines do not return to their previous self. The reorganization, practices in recruitment, altering the curriculum, and refurbishing the legal norms bring enduring ideological congruence that is hard to overturn. This confirms neo-institutionalist arguments that informal norms have a permanent potential to change institutional behaviour without necessarily formally changing the law.
- v. **Opposition Parties and Civil Society Challenge:** If the regime co-opts both informal and formal institutions, the opposition parties, together with the civil society, lack a level playing field. Democratic challenge becomes more challenging when the media, scholars, police, and courts share the same ideological bent with the ruling authority. Due to the lopsided playing field and as a theoretical expectation that any competition-based authoritarian regimes would uphold the facade of democracy and ensure the ideological and political dominance is consolidated.
- vi. **Foreign Opinion and Diplomacy:** Even India's worldwide image as the largest democracy in the world is jeopardized. The reports gathered by global watchdogs, human rights organizations, and academic circles document democratic retrogression. That can affect diplomacy, foreign aid, and commerce with other countries.

It is not an electoral agenda but an epistemic and institutional transformation, eventually, where the character of the public institution is redefined not as a neutral intervener, but as an instrument of ideology. The response to the process entails not a mere transformation of the electoral order, but an institutional revival on the principles of constitutional morality and democratic survival.

7. CONCLUSION

The Modi government's saffronisation is a qualitative shift in the modus operandi and trajectory of the Indian state. The analysis for the current has demonstrated how the process is not symbolic or superficial but structural, with the intent of the ideological reconfiguration of institutional pillars. From the bureaucracy to the judiciary, from police to schools, to the cultural establishments to the unofficial government networks, the extent of saffronisation is deep and systemic.

What is striking about this process of institutional transformation is how protracted it has been. By highlighting ideological biases within recruitment, promotion, courses, media coverage, and the legal architecture, the Modi government has aimed to build a stable transformation of Indian democracy. The transformation is not maintained with authoritarianism or coercion but with legitimacy, a sense of purpose to the policy, and populist nationalism.

Another significant finding is the erosion of constitutional morality and the emergence of cultural nationalism as the determinative order of governance. The previous governments may have had ideological biases, but not a single among them embedded them to this level and magnitude the present government has done so. The transformation of the secular administrative state to an institution saturated by ideology is a paradigmatic transformation within Indian polity.

This shift also tests traditional assumptions about state neutrality and democratic consolidation. The BJP's withdrawal of the judiciary, politicisation of the bureaucracy, and police as ideological enforcers are all exemplars of a blurring of state and party interests, a characteristic of competitive authoritarian regimes. More concerning is the establishment of parallel civil society organizations dominated by the BJP and its offshoots, the Sangh Parivar, which acquire significant influence outside the purview of democratic control.

Implications of the change are profound and lasting. Within the country, it de-legitimizes democratic competition, stifles dissent, and alienates minority groups. Internationally, it alters the image of India as a pluralist democracy to possibly influencing world alignments, the system of investments, and geopolitics.

But, somewhere within this institutionalization, challenge and resistance dominate the space. Civil society actors, non-aligned media, dissenting voices within the judiciary, and the opposition parties unperturbed by coercion form the recipe for democratic revival. Such points of strength offer disparate narrative to the reigning ideology and ought to be amplified by legal, academic, and citizen activism.

To undo or water down the saffronisation will not be achievable through electoral correction. The saffronisation has to be countered with a bottom-up institutional transformation. That would include the reaffirmation of values of neutrality by government functionaries, the re-establishment of independence of the judiciary, the re-establishment of the constitutional boundaries of the police and administrative power, and the institution of buffers against ideological incursions into education and the arts.

And so, it is not merely the question of the future of Indian democracy but the kind of state India wants to be, whether it becomes an ideological republic ruled by majority morality or whether it can rediscover the founding promise of justice, equality, and pluralism. The choice depends less on the politician's intentions than on the combined strength of its institutions, intellectuals, and citizens to take back the republic from within.

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