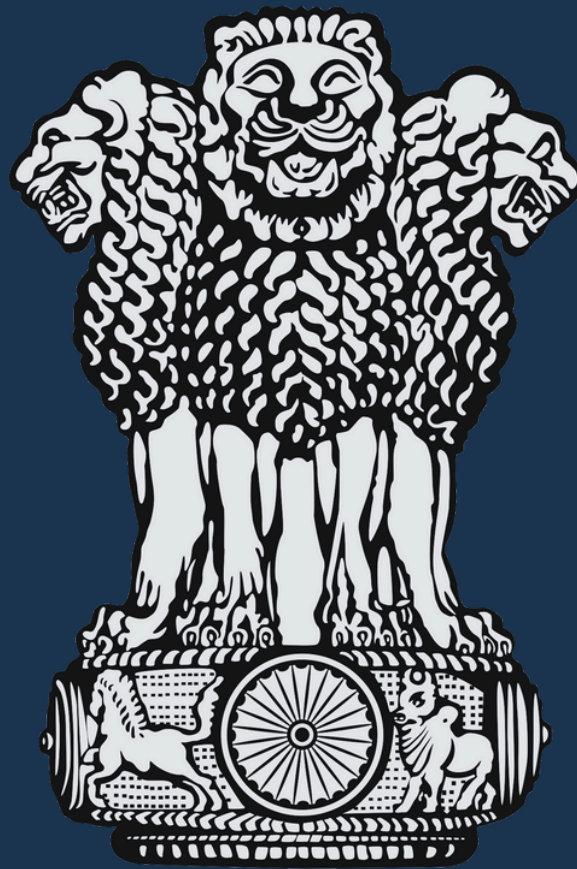




FISMUN'24

LOK SABHA-BACKGROUND GUIDE



Deliberating upon the surge of religious extremism impacting the social pluralism of elections with special emphasis on constitutional principles of separation of state and religion.

Speaker – Vedant Panamgipalli

Deputy Speaker – Sankalp PL

Rapporteur – G Shanmukha

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Dear Members of the Parliament,

My name is Sankalp Lalgoudar and I will serve as the deputy Speaker of this Lok Sabha, alongside Speaker Vedant P, and Rapporteur G Shanmukha. The surge of religious extremism in the political landscape presents a pressing concern, significantly impacting the social pluralism of elections worldwide. This phenomenon, characterized by the instrumentalization of religious identity for political gains, threatens the foundational principles of democracy and secular governance.

the very fabric of India is built upon its diversity, religious extremism creates polarization and communal disharmony. The exploitation of religious sentiments for electoral advantage undermines the democratic ethos. the instrumentalization of religious identity is inherently against constitutional principles

So, how does one succeed in such a committee? A key component contributing to success is understanding the innate goals and characteristics of the politician one represents. Just because the MP belongs to a particular party does not imply that one has to be fully committed to the party's vision – they have to be committed to their vision, and how it fits in the party's vision. If another political party offers a more agreeable stance, it is not only the MP's duty, but his need is to switch to this party. After all, the main policy objective of a politician is re-election – which is done by pandering to their personal and party-wise objectives

Furthermore, I urge you to prioritize collaboration and consensus-building throughout the deliberative process.

By working together, transcending differences, and finding common ground, you should forge effective solutions that address the root causes of religious extremism while safeguarding the principles of secularism and the constitution , In conclusion, we are confident that your contributions to this conference will be invaluable in advancing our collective understanding of the complexities surrounding religious extremism

*Signed,
Sankalp Lalgoudar*



Introduction to the Agenda

The concept of divisive politics is not new to the Indian polity. A fundamentally communal, casteist and/or identity-based political approach has been the cornerstone of Indian politics for most of the past 75 years. As such while community-based politics are not new, the community of basis being Hindu and communal identity being the prime polarization method is a relatively newly popular device. Hindutva, the thought process is old but its electoral popularity and power is quite relatively recent. Its origins are old and deeply rooted in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and various other organizations approach of emphasizing an Indian identity deeply rooted in “Bharatiya” that has been defined as religious, cultural and social differently by different individuals. The basis for said ideology has consistently been the desire to create a ‘national identity’ from India’s ‘glorious past’. It is a quest to create a national identity that includes the majority of this country but according to some, is inherently alienating to those who cannot be co-opted into this cultural identity without losing their religious, cultural or other social customs/traditions/beliefs/practices. The use of religion in politics however is just as nuanced as the evolution of the Hindutva ideology itself, which has traditionally never openly resorted to ‘tiraskar’ (rejection) of minorities, nor the ‘puraskar’ (appeasement) they say is practiced by the congress.

This policy of 'neutrality' not 'appeasement' as advocated by congress, was the public shining light of the Bharatiya Janata Party under both Vajpayee and even the more actively 'Hindutva' L.K.Advani. This culminated in the Ayodhya Ram Rath Yatra by the latter in 1990, which was the first massive Hindutva electoral project that changed the Indian political landscape and made the Hindu religious identity a potent source of electoral gains.

However, this historical background whilst useful is not how the scene seems to be now. A series of speeches, ads and other media released near the 2024 elections have seen the BJP not only pushing forth the Hindutva national identity harder than ever but also signifying a stance shift from the public 'neutrality, closer to the 'tiraskar' of minorities once rejected by the party. This religious factor has increased in prominence also due to the recent Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya that has served to celebrate the culmination of Hindutva efforts and Hindu interests in general, as the Bharatiya Janata Party would say. Whilst officially, the BJP continues to reject notions of communalism and bigotry, the INDIA opposition and others have continuously pointed out what they feel are subtle messaging tropes or recently more blatantly communal views and politics especially in this election season.

This is one side of the coin that is the Indian discourse on divisive and especially communal politics. There is also the other string of allegations substantiated by the ruling that the opposition and primarily the Indian National Congress in it's 40+ years of ruling at the central level has promoted the unfair 'appeasement' or 'supporting' of minority communities and in particular very few, specific individuals amongst those or some communities amongst the whole group of minorities.

Speeches, policy decisions including views regarding a Uniform Civil Code and other 'Anti-Hindu' decisions and views, taken or aired by the INC or other members of the I.N.D.I.A alliance have become evidence as per the BJP to prove that it is not them who are playing the divisive card but rather the opposition block which has traditionally sought to employ a 'secular image' to obtain electoral results through the obtaining of 'minority vote banks' which consistently vote for them. Historically, too cases like the Bilkis Bano Case and the entering of the Golden Temple in the 80s have been used by individuals to present a case to portray the INC and the INDIA alliance headed by them as entities that do not respect 'Sanatana Dharma' (particularly against the DMK party as well) or 'Dharmic religions'. These allegations of aforementioned partiality and favoritism towards specific communities or members of minority groups has been used to portray them as the 'real divisive' and a 'polarizing, elitist' force. There is also the general employment of Caste banks and caste itself as a factor, largely thought to be more prominent or notable in election discourse by the opposition. To put it mildly, the Opposition's goal to build a rainbow coalition of minority communities, backward castes, the poor, tribals and rural individuals has been a subject of criticism as to dividing the Hindu community on the basis of caste and contrasted with the other approach of a unified 'Dharmic' vote-bank, that is unperturbed by caste loyalties and other internal fissures. These opposing strategies to identity politics are the primary cause of the massive polarization amongst the people, particularly in terms of Religion.

The Lok Sabha as such will be eager to listen to Members of Parliament discuss increasingly divisive issue of Religious polarization and communal divide in the polity of India whilst standing and fighting for their ideological and political beliefs that they have built their entire careers on top of and also to win the ultimate battle of perception that determines the much-awaited outcome of every election in the country.



Political Positioning in this Lok Sabha

The political parties of the Lok Sabha have a range of opinions on the pressing agenda that is the impact of religious polarization during campaigning. This political positioning aims to present a general ideological and political overview of their opinions and views regarding the agenda. This is not an all-encompassing research document but rather a brief starter. It is as follows:–

The Bharatiya Janata Party (& N.D.A Block)

The prime accused as per the opposition bloc and the ‘culprit’ in their eyes on the topic of divisive campaigning, the Bharatiya Janata Party is steadfast in its defense. It claims its campaigning has been not divisive but rather aimed at strengthening the Hindu community, being truly secular, anti-appeasement politics and for opposing casteism in favor of religious unity. It must prepare to defend itself regarding allegations of its campaigning videos, speeches and other politically charged claims. The Party is ideally going to come out of the Lok Sabha, successful in reversing any narrative that it is the divisive party and instead show that it’s a unifying, truly progressive, Hindu-first but not fascist force that is triumphing against the corrupt, actually communal/casteist opposition.

Other members of the N.D.A such as the JD(U), TDP, NCP will likely need to present a similar defending campaign against both their biggest coalition partner as well as any similar allegations against themselves. These parties need to prove their ability to integrate the Hindutva political narrative with their generally secular credentials, which means picking a center-right stance that backs the BJP but keeps a healthy distance from overtly political narratives.

The Indian National Congress (& I.N.D.I.A Block)

The main opposition will seek to build upon the narrative of the BJP being a “Hindutva Fascist” party as they have tried to portray in the media. They would seek to defend accusations of appeasement and appear idealistically tolerant to all faiths including the Hindu faith, whilst fighting for the true principle of secularism. There is a history of statements, laws and other allegations that needs to be vehemently combated. They would likely try to ideally end the Lok Sabha session as a spirited opposition taking shots at the ruling government and destabilizing it through exposing its allegedly blatantly communal agenda while protecting their own image of justice or impartiality and not being communal themselves through ‘vote-bank politics’.

Allies such as DMK, CPI(M), etc have very similar priorities and may need to be just as critical or if necessary even more critical of communalism and also defend their own allegations of being anti-Hindu, not truly secular and communal on the other side.

The Neutral Parties

The Neutral Parties are in a unique position of having the choice to counter both the ruling and opposition. The BJD, YSRCP, etc must be alert to criticize the misgivings of both blocs while defending themselves. They have the advantage of being neutral which gives them more flexibility in their criticism. However, they are not allegation-less either. They must ideally increase their political stature or voice through proper debate in the Lok Sabha. They may have their own specific regional interests as pertaining to the agenda.

Note: Coalition Politics is a powerful tool which is all the more strengthened because of the inability of any one party to get a clear majority. The ability of Parties to switch is certainly present but remember to switch only if the portfolio/party in question is likely to have such choice or make such a decision in reality. This would mean that a die-hard INDIA bloc party would not simply leave and similarly for the NDA. This however doesn't restrict regional players with looser loyalties from flowing with the political discourse or defining it for the sake of their own interests. Coalitions can indeed be made and broken through the duration of the Lok Sabha.

Lok Sabha - Procedure

The Lok Sabha, or House of the People, is the lower house of the Indian Parliament. India, having adopted for a bicameral (2-house) system of legislature, decided that the members of the Lok Sabha would be elected by universal adult suffrage/franchise and simple majority voting from their respective constituencies for a period of 5 years or lesser (if the body is dissolved by the President upon the request of the Council of Ministers).

The Lok Sabha is the main organ of national legislation in India, which is also the only house of the bicameral parliament which can introduce 'Money Bills'. In this committee, the passing of any motion, resolution, bill, and otherwise voting procedure, will require greater than 50% of the committee to agree to pass. However, as this committee possesses a number significantly lesser than the actual size of the parliament, two voting mechanisms will be used:

1. Procedural Voting –

- a. Motions to introduce and set agenda, to set up a moderated caucus, Right to Reply etc.
- b. These motions are voted on purely by the MPs present in the committee.

2. Non-Procedural Voting –

- a. Voting on a bill or resolution, No-Confidence Motions, etc.
- b. These motions are voted on by the MPs present in the committee, although if the committee is evenly balanced, the Speaker may cast a vote.
- c. This is based on the allocated vote share to each MP at the start of the committee.

Certain motions in a Lok Sabha are different from Conventional MUN motions, such as:

1. *I, **name**, would like to propose the motion that this house expel a certain MP for (certain verified substantial proof with source as results of the actions of the MP).* – Note that if such a motion contains inaccuracies or fallacies, it will be immediately discarded, or it may be tabled for later usage if the committee prefers to discuss the proposed motion via a moderated caucus or special speakers' list.
2. Any resolution or amendment is considered a motion.
3. PRIVILEGE MOTION –
 - a. This is a motion raised by a private member of parliament.
 - b. This charges a minister with committing a breach of privilege by distorting or withholding facts from the house.
 - c. This can be raised at any point of time and does not require a majority to pass. However, for the benefit of saving committee time and refuting illegitimate motions, the EB will check the motion to ensure that it stands and has any potential.
4. ANTI-DEFECTION MOTION –
 - a. If an MP votes against (or abstains) against the whip issued by his/her party, the member stands to be disqualified on grounds of defection if such a request is made to the speaker by the leader of the party in the house or in case of the leader standing on defection– any member of the house belonging to that party.
 - b. However, in the case that 1/3rd of the party members vote the same way as a split party, or 2/3rd of the party members vote differently as a merging party, this disqualification will be repealed with instantaneous effect.

5.NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

- a. A no-confidence motion is a special motion which is provided to only the LS, as it is constitutionally expressed that a minister may only remain in his position so long as he possesses the support of the majority in the LS.
- b. This motion is basically a contest of majority against the standing government. In ordinary circumstances, on the passing of this motion, the PM and his Council of Ministers must all collectively resign.
- c. To pass such a motion, it must first be seconded by 1/6th of the House's strength.
- d. Once passed, for the benefit of saving committee time, two members from both sides to speak on the motion.
- e. First 2 members will be selected to state the charges against the government and the need for the motion. One of the members will be the one who raised the motion.
- f. Then 2 members, including the PM, will be asked to reply to these charges and defend the government.
- g. To these statements, a short reply may be granted, at the discrepancy of the EB, to the members who spoke for the motion.
- h. Once the speeches are finished, the committee will vote on the motion.

In addition, all days of committee will begin with a protracted Question Hour.

1. The MPs will be required to send their questions in a written format alongside the MP to whom they address the question to the EB prior to the beginning of the session, of which they will have been informed previously.
2. Each MP will be required to submit at a minimum 1 question and at a maximum 2 questions.
3. As this is taken to be a closed-doors session of the LS, written answers will not be permitted, and all members must reply to questions orally or decline to answer.
4. Each MP may be asked at most 4 questions, exceeding which the EB will choose questions at their discretion.
5. The sending MP may be allowed to ask supplementary questions.

The main types of documents, which are different from those in conventional MUN Committees are Bills and Resolutions.

1. Bills

1. A Bill is the expected final document of this committee.
2. It is the basic mode of documentation through which a legislative proposal may become law, once it has been passed by both houses of the parliament and has received the presidential assent

FORMAT:

NAME Bill, YEAR

A

BILL

A short one-line summary of what the bill proposes

BE it enacted by Parliament in the ____ Year of the Republic of India as follows: –

Your operative clauses. There are no punctuational constraints such as a limit on using full-stops, commas, semi-colons et cetera.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

A summary of the bill, a short one page summary of the needs and expected results of the bill, to provide clarity to the committee.

2. Resolutions

1. Resolutions are a way of expressing a private member or government's opinion about a matter. They can be used to express any idea, or thought, or state facts as well. They may also be a tool to get the government to act in a certain way.
2. However, unlike a conventional MUN resolution, a resolution must be passed by the house (only the Lok Sabha) as a recorded statement and can be referred to during the rest of the committee and even in the official legislation.

3. There is no highly standardized format for a resolution. However, it comes in the format of one long sentence which is interjected with commas and semicolons for clarity. An example is:

This House expresses its unequivocal condemnation of the heinous terrorist attacks in Mumbai by terrorist elements from Pakistan claiming hundreds of innocent lives and seeking to destroy the values that India stands for; Notes that this outrage follows acts of terror committed since the beginning of this year in various places across India and on the Indian Embassy in Kabul; Notes with deep concern the fact that Lashkar-e-Toiba, a terrorist organization that is listed in the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 and is banned in Pakistan, has continued to operate and launch terrorist attacks against India; Notes the Government's declaration to review circumstances leading upto the attacks on Mumbai and to take further measures as may be necessary to safeguard national security; On behalf of the people of India, firmly resolves that—

- * India shall not cease her efforts until the terrorists and those who have trained, funded, and abetted them are exposed and brought to justice;

- * India shall firmly counter all evil designs against its unity, sovereign, and territorial integrity;

- * India shall remain resolved and shall be victorious in its fight against the barbaric menace of terrorism; and

- * That the ideal of a secular and democratic India shall prevail.

— *This was a unanimously adopted resolution moved by Dr.Manmohan Singh*

