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‘INDIA: THE MODI QUESTION’: ANSWERS FOR THE APPREHENSIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF SECULARISM

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Abstract: World politics is slowly turning towards ultranationalism and the disagreements between the world's superpowers are familiar. In the meantime, the British Broadcasting Corporation released a two episode documentary, India: the Modi question, accusing the PM of India as the culprit of the Gujarat communal riots of 2002 and portraying him as the divider of Indian secularism. The ban for the documentary in Indian platforms created an immense uproar in the political environment. The article scrutinises the issue keenly by analysing the consequences after the ban and the responses of the world leaders towards it. The author observes, the documentary, without any bias, illustrates the role of Modi in the Gujarat riot and his Hindutva notion, which threatens secularism in the world's largest democracy.

Key words: BBC documentary, Propaganda, Sovereignty, Secular, Hindutva.

INTRODUCTION

The chaos raised by the controversial BBC documentary, India: The Modi Question, lit a fire for new debates and concerns in world politics. The trial of the prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, the holding president of the G20 forum, is a hot potato not only in India but the world countries. The documentary fiercely observed, based on the responses from the victims of the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat and the British investigation report on it, that Modi is 'directly responsible' for the communal polarization which is constantly terrifying the world's largest democracy, and he is 'highly divisive'.

An indirect ban by the Modi government towards the documentary to air on Indian social platforms, stating it's a 'vile propaganda' of BBC, paved the way for outspread violence in different states and campuses in India, as the students protested against the atrocious prohibition of the freedom of press and media in the democratic state. Here, the author scrutinises the political strategies hidden behind the documentary and the consequences of Indian politics.



Two faces of 2002 Gujarat riots

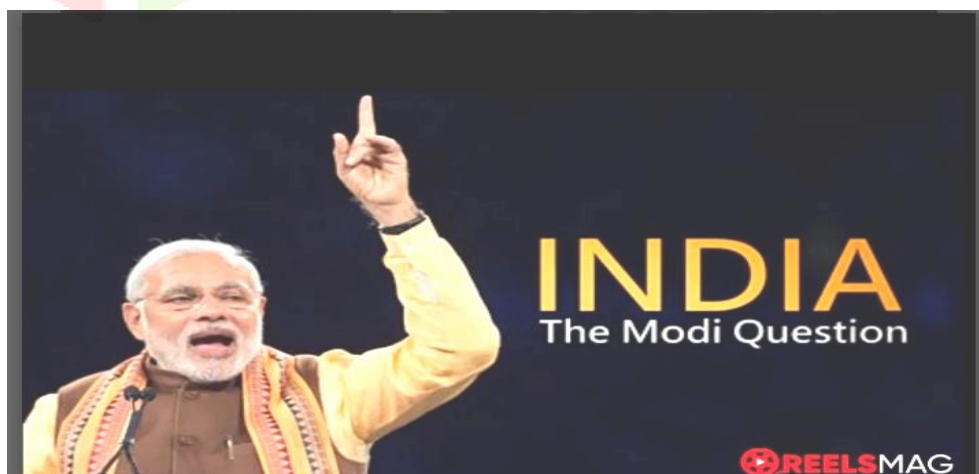
WHAT DOES THE RESPONSES TOWARDS THE DOCUMENTARY SIGNIFIES?

The controversies started when the government of India, led by the BJP, banned the film by implementing the special emergency IT rules of the country and forbade even sharing among individuals. Kanchan Gupta, a senior advisor of the Indian government, announced on [Twitter](#), that the documentary is ‘propaganda’ and it’s menacing the ‘sovereignty’ and ‘integrity’ of India which has the potential to affect its friendly relations with foreign countries.

[Rahul Gandhi](#), the charismatic face of INC, responded: “The truth always comes out”. The Congress leaders affirmed there is nothing more in the documentary other than what they have been exposing for the past 20 years. [Dr. Shashi Tharoor](#), known for his strong arguments against the west colonial mindset towards India, observed that India's sovereignty is not in jeopardy in any way and condemned the past.

The British PM [Rishi Sunak](#) defended his counterpart, stating he doesn’t agree with the ‘characterization’ of the gentleman while replying to the question raised in the parliament by Pakistan-origin British MP, Imran Hussain. [Maria Zakharova](#), the spokeswoman of the Russian foreign ministry, replied that the BBC is acting as a tool of some caucus against other countries, such as they are reporting the Russia-Ukraine war on a different front. Condemning the ban on exhibition in India, the U.S. state department underlined Washington supports free press around the world and it’s a matter of uttermost importance to highlight democratic principles like freedom of expression and press.

However, the BBC came up with an explanation later. As they stated; “we have to bring out the truths about incidents from all over the world in front of the people”. The British Broadcasting Corporation has been criticised for its ‘liberal’ stand within Britain and its ‘colonial mindset’ outside. ‘The Kashmir coverage’, based on scrapping article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, and ‘India’s daughter’, a film on Delhi gang rape and murder of a 22-year-old student in New Delhi in 2012, were banned in India for being ‘disagreeable content’ before this.



HOW THIS DOCUMENTARY BECOMES MORE THAN A 'REMINDER OF GUJARAT' AFTER THE BAN IN INDIA

The documentary, without any bias, envisages the 'Hindutva' notion of Modi and how he climbed his political positions in India, as the first episode included the responses from both the victims of 'ethnic cleansing 2002' and the proponents of the PM of India. The prime question raised by secularist people was, 'how it becomes against the sovereignty of India'?

By creating controversies, the BJP government aims to protect the '*Vishwa guru*' face of Modi among foreign countries, the manipulation of 'Indian sovereignty' is an indication of it, and creates another communal uproar in the current Indian environment. 'Bharat Jodo yatra', led by Rahul Gandhi, gained an efficacious acceptance among the people and is coping to the coalition of the opposition parties before the next Lok sabha election in 2024. The divisive strategy of the BJP government behind the ban is crystal clear here, as the Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, who is one of the accused in the Gujarat riot case, himself made use of it in the legislative assembly election of Gujarat, in 2022. The positions taken by the opposition leaders in India, including Rahul Gandhi, indicate they are determined to recover secularism in the biggest democracy of the world.

The western leader's laxity towards the issue, as long as China is their prime target, indicates that India is no longer taking the stance of rivalry.

Citation: the author

URL to the images; <https://images.app.goo.gl/yKmaooyucmk3NK4d9>
<https://images.app.goo.gl/rCEPXCKe4z7DTSH56>

