

Cow Protection Discourse: Categories and National  
Identity

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on contemporary cow protection discourse that Hindu nationalist (Hindutva) groups produce. In an Indian context, the phrase ‘cow protection’ broadly refers to social, political, and religious movements concerned with promoting the welfare of cows and their progeny. These movements seek to enshrine the value of both actual cows and the cow as a symbol through laws, governmental bodies, social movements educating the public about cow products and welfare, and religious movements promoting cow-related rituals and the spiritual importance of cows. Hindu nationalist groups have been invested in the cow protection movement from their origins and commonly include it in their discourse.

This thesis proposes three categories of cow protection discourse based on the the kinds of evidence each uses: environmental, social, and religious arguments. Despite the substantial difference between the categories, these arguments are often mixed together to provide broad support for cow protection. As cow protection is an essential characteristic of so many different aspects of Hindu society, concern for cow welfare becomes an integral aspect of Hindutva formulations national identity. Four specific cases will demonstrate the categories, the pattern of mixing, and its effect for national identity. A test for the concepts of Hindutva, based on *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* by V.D. Savarkar, will be applied to each case, indicating their participation in formulating national identity. This thesis will classify the cow protection discourse that has recently become more visible and impactful within the Indian public sphere and provide an analytical map for further study.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Within the state of India, the phrase ‘cow protection’ broadly refers to social, political, and religious movements concerned with promoting the welfare of cows and their progeny. While sometimes bulls, bullocks, calves, and water buffalo are included, the phrase most often refers to female cattle. These movements focus on breeds that are unique to the Indian subcontinent, almost all of which have a hump on their backs, just below the neck. Cow protection movements consider these breeds, often called ‘desi’ or indigenous cows, to have a closer connection to Indian culture, society, religion, and health than other dairy breeds, e.g. Jersey or Holstein. These movements seek to enshrine the value of both actual cows and the cow as a symbol through laws, governmental bodies, social movements educating the public about cow products and welfare, and religious movements promoting cow-related rituals and the spiritual importance of cows.

Cow protection movements have a complex history in the British Raj and sovereignty movements from the 1800s through to the first half of the 1900s that includes, among other activities, political agitation and rioting. Cow protection movements have not been exclusive to any particular political affiliation in the past. This has changed more recently with the political success of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) following the 2014 Union election. They formed a majority government in the lower house of Parliament, the Lok Sabha, and formed governments in the state legislatures of many northern states, notably Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. The BJP was created from a network of related organisations, broadly referred to as the Sangh Parivar (family of organisations).

These organisations generally subscribe to a social, political, cultural, and religious worldview that promotes particular criteria for Hindu identity: common blood, ancestry or race; land, generally the Indian subcontinent, sometimes including neighbouring regions; and culture originating in the subcontinent, including language, religious traditions, style of dress, and manners among others. These groups hold that Indian citizens must see the land of India as their holy land. These parameters for Indian identity and the worldview they generate are commonly referred to as Hindu nationalism or Hindutva (lit. Hindu-ness), after the eponymous treatise written in 1923 by V. D. Savarkar. This worldview forms the foundation of the cow protection discourse that will be the focus of my thesis. I will be using the terms Hindu nationalist, Hindutva, and Sangh Parivar to refer to individuals and groups who share this specific

worldview.

Especially since the BJP's 2014 electoral success, there has been a remarkable proliferation of cow protection discourse from Hindutva sources that argue for the movement's importance. This thesis will demonstrate that these arguments can be sorted into three distinct categories, environmental, social, and religious, according to substantive differences in content. Further, Hindu nationalist discourse freely mixes these different kinds of argument together, providing cow protection with a broad range of discursive support. The effect of this mixing results in a discursive scaffolding that supports and reinforces the strength of their common aim: convincing their primary audience that cow protection is important. The cumulative force of these arguments elevates the status of cow protection within Hindu nationalist discourse to an essential element of Hindu identity.

Four specific case studies will illustrate this pattern. The first two case studies, the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and the National Commission on Cattle's Report, will illustrate the subcategories of environmental arguments. The third case study, the Muslim Rashtriya Manch, will illustrate social arguments. The fourth and final case study will illustrate religious arguments for cow protection. Before discussing the particular categories of cow protection discourse, a brief history of each kind of argument will be discussed. Then, the case study will be introduced with a general description of their website in order to give the reader a sense of the user experience. A conceptual test will be applied to each case, indicating the presence of Hindutva concepts in each source and its consequent eligibility for inclusion within the scope of this thesis. The conceptual test will also indicate each source's participation in the Hindutva formulation of national identity. Subsequently, the ways in which the case studies mix the different categories together will be discussed. Finally, the effect of these arguments on national identity will be discussed by expanding on two case studies, the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and the National Commission on Cattle's Report. These cases, the conceptual test, the categories, their pattern of mixing, and the effects on national identity will provide an analytical map for cow protection discourse and track the increased relevance of the movement for Hindu nationalist articulations of national identity.

As a specific topic, cow protection provides an ideal test case for contemporary Hindu nationalist constructions of Indian/Hindu identity in several respects. The cow protection movement has a long history in the subcontinent's public sphere. It have not lost relevance since



2014, unlike many of the other Hindu nationalist social and political campaigns (Jaffrelot 2018, 56). It has clear limits, marked by the particular focus on cows and issues related to their welfare. It also occurs at a kaleidoscopically diverse range of contexts. It has ‘grassroots’ support and responses, as the groups patrolling roads for suspicious cow-related activity testify. It has a range of local, national, and international NGOs involved, alongside less formal voluntary associations that are focused on cow protection. There are governmental bodies and state ministers that are passionately dedicated to promoting cow welfare. The current Prime Minister of India has received significant pressure over cow protection issues. The Constitution of India mentions prohibiting cow slaughter and promoting cow welfare. The Supreme Court of India has also dealt with cases devoted to cow protection. The range of locations where cow protection discourse and activity occurs, the extent of its boundaries, and its currently-expanding state make the movement and its discourse an excellent candidate for examining Hindu nationalist formulations of national identity.

The majoritarian tendencies of Hindu nationalist thought and activity are also particularly visible in the cow protection movement. This movement and its discourse clearly call for protections for the majority’s concerns and values. In this thesis, it can be seen most obviously in the vulnerable status essential element for Hindutva discussed in chapter two and subsequently in each case study. These special measures for cows are premised on the ground that the majority’s identity is threatened and *ought* to be protected by the Indian state and society. Consequently, the state should not be neutral and the socio-political power of the majority in a democracy is not sufficient. The cow protection movement, then, provides clear evidence for the majoritarian turn away from public values such as a neutral, even-handed state and rights primarily protecting minorities and other vulnerable humans from the coercive power of the state and majority. The majoritarian tendencies can also be seen in the elision between Indian identity and Hindu identity. In calling on the Indian state to protect the values and concerns of the Republic’s majority, the nation-state is comprised of Hindus and other, likely threatening, communities. The most meaningful, potent, and legitimate articulation of Indian identity is squarely identified as Hindu. Hence, the Hindu nationalist discourse discussed below frequently neglects the category of ‘Indian’ identity and expounds ‘Hindu.’

The primary aim of this thesis is to accurately understand and represent Hindu nationalist discourse about cow protection, through the discourse’s internal relationship and cumulative

effect. Cow protection has become a topic of global interest for policy makers and human rights watchers alike. In their perspective, the human right to freedom of religion is directly endangered by contemporary cow protection activists in India. The entire movement and the discourse it produces are then interpreted to correspond to a fundamental clash between the religious belief and practices of Indian Muslims and Hindus. Analysis informed by this perspective reduces the multiplicity of topics and concerns involved down to religious conflict.

This reading of cow protection coincides with an increasing interest in freedom of religion on the part of various global powers. A notable example of this is the United States' Commission for International Religious Freedom. The purpose of this Commission is to provide analysis of the state of religious freedom in other countries and, through that information, support the USA's explicit foreign policy commitment to ameliorate global religious freedom (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom n.d.). Each year the Commission publishes a report that tracks developments in religious freedom around the world. Their reports have featured cow protection in its chapter on India, representing it as an issue basically about the exercise of religious freedom for Indian Hindus and Muslims. This thesis will demonstrate that this perspective on cow protection accounts for neither the breadth of issues present in Hindu nationalist discourse nor its increasing importance for national identity; a fuller analysis that is rooted in the discourse itself provides a more accurate and useful map.

While this thesis does not focus on the role of violence in cow protection and its analytical map is not intended to be used for examining violence, the occurrence of violence related to cow protection can be taken as a general indicator of the topic's escalating relevance in India. The incidents of violence related to cow protection disputes have been rising since the BJP came to power in 2014 (Abraham 2017). In terms of reported incidents, there have been 280 people injured and 44 people killed, 36 of whom were Muslim, in violence related to cow protection between May 2015 and December 2018 (Bajoria 2019, Summary). The Hindu nationalist cow protection movement has already generated significant contestation inside and outside of India's borders. The movement displays no signs of slowing down or waning salience. This thesis aims to contribute an accurate map of Hindu nationalist discourse on cow protection in order to provide a better grounding for understanding the contemporary situation and its attendant policy, legislation, litigation, campaigning, and activism among other things.

## 1.1 Theoretical Orientation and Method

Throughout the researching and writing of this thesis, I have been following Thomas Tweed's theoretical frame for religious studies. He insists on the importance of position, of both the researcher and the object(s) of study, for a robust, useful, and honest theory. He describes his own theory of religion as "a positioned sighting" intended to illumine and explain the terrain (Tweed 2008, 54). This means practically that he must be honest about his own limitations as a researcher and the context from which he is working. It also means that his theory is intended to be actually useful in understanding and accounting for the 'terrain' or object(s) of study. The boundaries of both the researcher and the study itself determine when a theory should be altered, abandoned, or maintained. The application of this theoretical orientation to my own thesis means that I must also disclose my position as it is constrains my 'sight.'

As my last name suggests, my family is from the former Portuguese colony in Goa. Although my father was born and raised in India, my family has no particular place in the Hindu nationalist worldview. My family anecdotally maintains that they converted from Hinduism to Catholicism some time after the Portuguese arrived. I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada without any particular connection to Indian socio-political developments. I do have family members living in Mumbai; however, almost all of my immediate family has lived in Canada for several decades. As far as I know, no one in Canada or India has been involved in politics or social activism on any level. My status as a millennial with easy access to the internet is perhaps the most relevant aspect of my position. My familiarity with navigating the internet and my comfort with spending many hours staring at a screen, searching through dense and often badly organised websites, and bookmarking the information were necessary aspects of finding and analysing the arguments.

Tweed's frame and commitment to theory reflecting the terrain also inform my insistence on reading the boundary between religious and political activities as extremely porous at most. The map that this thesis proposes, therefore, should correspond to the actual terrain it seeks to explain, here Hindutva discourse on cow protection. The free mixing between categories of argument discussed in chapter six supports the interpenetration between the different areas. This insistence produces the simultaneous commitment to the substantive differences between categories of argument as well as their strong interrelationships. Therefore, the discourse should

not be read as ‘purely’ religious or political, but a mixture of a broad range of concerns.

The method used in this thesis takes inspiration from the work of Deepa Das Acevedo. Her work, self-described as legal anthropology, focuses on the social relationships as found in and conditioned by legal proceedings in India. The method she employs rejects the jurisprudential norm of thinking about and discussing legal history and theory in a vacuum. This norm is operative in most legal judgments and constitutes a significant boundary for what can and cannot be explicitly addressed by the author. Das Acevedo’s method moves in precisely the opposite direction, explicitly analysing the social, political, religious, colonial, and historical dimensions of legal proceedings (Das Acevedo 2018). Of course, this thesis is not restricted to Indian law. However, the method of explicitly connecting discursive sites that reproduce each other’s concepts but lack deliberate references was used throughout the researching and writing of this thesis.

Following Tweed’s insistence on the constant movement and itinerancy of both religion and theory (Tweed 2008, 54-79), I am not claiming a rigidity or even strict coherence for the ideas present in the case studies. My primary object is to better classify the cow protection discourse that has recently become more visible, popular, and impactful within the Indian public sphere. The categories, pattern, analytical map, and consequences for national identity that come from this discourse are based in the conceptual reproduction that links them; they can only reflect the coherence that connects them. In other words, this thesis does not address the validity or cogency of cow protection arguments.

All of the case studies’ sources used below are publicly available at the time of writing. They are either produced by the Government, such as the National Commission on Cattle or the Supreme Court of India’s proceedings, or produced by general members of Indian society, such as those associated with the Muslim Rashtriya Manch or the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti. In both circumstances, the case studies materials are intended to be engaged by the general public, either as a consequence of the public nature of the proceedings or as a consequence of the intention to inform and persuade Indian society at large.

The public availability of these sources is not accidental but also connected to their digital availability. They are all intended not only for public access, but to be engaged through digital media. The digital boundary indicates the accessibility of sources, both to a researcher in Canada who only has an internet connection and also to the more immediate, intended audience

of people living in India. Despite the persistent obstacles for impoverished sections of society, Indians constitute the second largest online market in the world (Statista 2017). Increasing amounts of Indians are able to access the internet and the governmental and civil materials available there. So, the immediate intended audience of the case studies below, and cow protection discourse more broadly, is already a large audience and will only continue to grow.

This reflects, in part, the changing fora of public discussion, debate, and governance. Policy decisions and official reactions from elected ministers are increasingly mediated not only by digital media but by social media. The encouragement to engage with these materials immediately and publicly is built into the platform's infrastructure. In this way, the public and digital aspects of the case studies also maintains the 'contemporary' boundary of this thesis in that they are both individually changing and effecting change on each other.

In order to clearly and succinctly refer to the case studies, I have assigned each source a letter (A, B, etc.). The source material for each case has been organised alphabetically and assigned an Arabic numeral (see Works Cited). Most of the case studies do not allow for more precise references as websites are largely devoid of page numbers. However, some of them do allow for more precision and specific references to paragraph or page numbers are included.

## 1.2 Boundaries

There are several boundaries that limit the scope and applicability of this thesis. The first boundary is linguistic; considering my fluency in Indic languages, this thesis is limited to sources available in English. It is also limited to the sources' discourse; this thesis does not reflect the opinions of intended audiences (other Indians and Hindus) or those espousing these positions and/or arguments beyond the discourse itself. Consequently, the utility of the thesis, and its analytic map, is limited to the discourse itself. This thesis does not include the discourse of cow protection advocates of any community, religious or political affiliation who are not Hindu nationalists. Other instances of cow protection discourse are similarly beyond the border. The incidents of violence that the sources below sometimes exhort are similarly beyond the bounds of this thesis.

## **Chapter 2: Conceptual Definition of ‘Hindutva’**

This section will detail the specific contents of the term ‘Hindutva’ as it will be used in this thesis. This term receives a more intensive definition on account of its much-contested meaning and usage. Currently, the term is used by social, political, and academic authors from many parts of the globe and many shades of the political spectrum for a remarkable array of purposes. These diverse, and often conflicting, uses of the term make explicit definition crucial to theoretical coherence and utility. In order to meet that need, this section will exclusively focus on the meaning of Hindutva for this thesis and the source used to determine that meaning. This section will detail the conceptual test that establishes the presence of Hindutva in specific cases. It is a ‘test’ in the sense that if the elements of Hindutva ideas are not present in a source’s discourse, the source does not fall within the scope of this thesis. It is ‘conceptual’ in the sense that it is comprised of specific formulations, or concepts, of national identity, what it should be, and the reasons it has not been actualised in India.

This conceptual test will be applied to each of the four case studies, demonstrating the presence of Hindutva and therefore their participation in Hindu nationalist formulations of Indian identity. This kind of Hindutva sets out parameters for the ideal national identity and advocates action to actualise it. So, demonstrating its presence in each source of discourse examined in the thesis sets the foundations for analysis of how cow protection arguments form part of the way these sources conceptualise the ideal national identity, the focus of chapter 7.

While most discussion of how Hindutva relates to identity formation and activist discourse will be excluded until chapter 7, it is important to note that my definition and use of Hindutva are not attempts to claim canonical authority for all uses of the term ‘Hindutva’ or other kinds of Indian public discourse. Hindutva in this thesis is restricted to the definition specified below and the reproduction of those elements in contemporary public discourse. Another important note relates to the source used to build my definition of Hindutva, V. D. Savarkar. I exclusively use his discourse to build my conceptual test because it is a succinct discussion of the term and, more importantly, the elements of his term are actually reproduced by contemporary Hindu nationalists, both in the case studies below and in other locations (Jaffrelot 1996, 25). I am not ignoring other thinkers who are foundational to the Hindu nationalist movement in order to give Savarkar canonical authority. My thesis does not attempt to engage

the origins, history, or development of Hindu nationalist formation in any original way; the primary object is contemporary discourse and the effect it has.

Conceptual Test: Savarkar's *Hindutva*

The particular document that will form the foundation for my criteria of Hindutva is Savarkar's 1923 *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, first published during his incarceration at Nagpur (Jaffrelot 2007, 85). V. D. Savarkar was born to a Maharashtrian Brahmin family in 1883 and died in 1966 in Mumbai. He had a varied public career that included advocating violent means of colonial resistance, connections to two different assassination plots, incarceration, and leading the Hindu Mahasabha in advocating for Hindu interests. This publication, *Hindutva*, is often cited directly or its contents are reproduced in substance by many Hindu nationalists, providing a kind of ideological charter or doctrine for the kaleidoscopically diverse groups involved (Jaffrelot 2018, 52). In his project of defining the limits of 'Hindu,' Savarkar specified the essentials of Hindutva, without which a person cannot legitimately claim to be Hindu. These were common geography, ancestry, and civilisation (Savarkar 1969, 100-101).

There are two additional elements that he did not include in his list of essentials yet still constitute important ways of marking national identity for Savarkar: the valorisation of the Vedic tradition and the perception of Hindus as vulnerable in Indian society. Although these additional elements are explicitly and pervasively present in *Hindutva*, scholarly discussion of the publication tends to focus on the essential elements that Savarkar groups together: geography, ancestry, and civilisation. I have included the additional elements in order to better reflect Savarkar's criteria for ideal national identity. All five elements will be analysed below, producing the identifying markers of Hindutva.

The first essential element, geography, defined the land of the Hindus as the entire territory from the Indus river to the seas surrounding the southernmost part of the subcontinent (Savarkar 1969, 11-12). Savarkar specified that the name 'Hindu' originates as an exonym, referring to the people who "inhabit the other [Eastern] bank of the Indus" (Savarkar 1969, 117). However, he immediately contradicted this by claiming that both banks are "implied as a matter of course" (Savarkar 1969, 117). The notion of a contiguous 'Hindu' territory that is nationally and politically united through the "loving allegiance" of everyone living therein was the foundational and enduring aspect of this essential element (Savarkar 1969, 12).

The second essential element, common ancestry, is marked by both mixing and separation. Savarkar claimed that the mixing of Aryan and non-Aryan blood is critically important to the Hindu people (Savarkar 1969, 12). This mixing contributes to the affective perception of unity pervading or underlying the measurable differences within the subcontinent. The separation of Hindu blood from non-Hindu blood is exemplified by the caste system, designed to exclude foreign blood and promote racial unity (Savarkar 1969, 65-66). As in the case of the first essential element, the 'internal' unity of the Hindu people is emphasised alongside their difference from other people.

The third essential element, common civilisation, contains more components than the previous two. Savarkar helpfully provided a definition of civilisation for his readers: "the account of what man has made of matter" (Savarkar 1969, 92). So, the Hindu civilisation refers to the "account" of the relationship between humans and "matter" that was common to the subcontinent. Interestingly, the only commonalities that these accounts need to share is geography and ancestry. Accounts and the habits derived from them common to the geography and ancestry of the subcontinent are all deemed Hindu (Savarkar 1969, 92-98). The only people excluded from this common civilisation are those who promote, propagate or profess allegiance to an external or foreign (by geography or ancestry) account or habit. The geography of the subcontinent becomes a critical marker of legitimate Hindu identity. This notably excluded Muslims and Christians from being legitimately included in the Hindu category. Despite fulfilling the first two essentials, both groups promote, propagate, and profess allegiance to accounts and habits originating from outside the subcontinent. However, 'common civilisation' does encompass Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, Arya Samajists, Dalits, and tribal groups, among others. These groups, despite the wide variety among them, all locate their accounts and habits within the subcontinent. The essential of common geography, then, functions to distinguish between the 'indigenous' and foreign, including the former within while excluding the latter from claiming full inclusion in national identity.

Throughout all three essential elements, Savarkar included the fourth essential element, valorisation of the Vedic tradition. Hindutva's common geography is rooted in the oldest Veda. Savarkar used the Rig Veda to define the original borders of the nation (Savarkar 1969, 5). He wrote that "All Hindus claim to have in their veins the blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the Vedic fathers" (Savarkar 1969, 85). The generative origin of Hindu



racial unity stemmed from the Vedas and the people who produced them. The element of common civilisation were also anchored in the content and traditions of the Vedas (Savarkar 1969, 93). Even the diversity of cultural and religious traditions of groups that fall within these elements can be accounted for with the Vedas. Here, Savarkar claimed that even groups who do not acknowledge the Vedas as an authority, such as the Jains, still maintain a share in the texts as common cultural property (Savarkar 1969, 96). Of course, this inclusion was to be read against Savarkar's exclusion of 'foreign' groups, such as Muslims and Christians, who fail to meet all the essential elements.

The Vedic tradition is also notable in another example Savarkar employed: the caste system. *Hindutva* points to the caste system as an example of the exclusion of foreign blood and consequent racial unity of Hindus. The caste system itself specifies a hierarchy for ordering society that demarcates deep differences amongst Hindu groups, valuing the upper caste groups and disadvantaging the lower caste and non-caste groups. Savarkar's *Hindutva* reproduced the concern to privilege and protect values through his discussion: "All that the caste system has done is to regulate its noble blood . . . rightly believed . . . to fertilise and enrich all that was barren and poor, without famishing and debasing all that was flourishing and nobly endowed" (Savarkar 1969, 86). According to this, the caste system protects the purity of Aryan or Vedic blood, culture, and values while incorporating the lower caste groups into its racial group (Bhatt 2001, 94-95). Savarkar prioritised the unity of Hindu people while grounding that Hindu identity in Vedic concepts.

The valorisation of such concepts and the above definition of the three essentials were done with reference to a particular account of history in the subcontinent. This account began with Hindu unity, a kind of eternal society that is beyond the reach of recorded time, that is brought to an end through foreign invasion and subsequent oppression (Savarkar 1969, 15). The present time requires reclamation of identity grounded in that eternal society and reasserting it against foreign oppression. Savarkar identified the beginning of this period with Muhammad of Ghazni's crossing of the Indus (Savarkar 1969, 42). Soon, all of Asia came to attack the Hindus, "quickly to be followed by nearly all Europe" (Savarkar 1969, 43). This foreign oppression lasted for centuries, the British Raj simply being the most recent in a long line (Savarkar 1969, 44). The current "victim" status of Hindus required a return to the formative components of their

national identity, their Hindutva, in order to successfully and finally fend off foreign aggression and restore their rightful place in the world (Savarkar 1969, 43, 17).

Savarkar presented five essential elements that define Hindutva and form the basic criteria for a conceptual test. The essentials are common geography, blood, and civilisation. The elements I have added are valorising the Vedic tradition and the “victim” status of Hindus. Preoccupations with these elements form the referents for the use of the term Hindutva below. While Savarkar’s *Hindutva* is separated from the case studies discussed below by time, they are substantially reproduced in each case’s discourse. These elements will form the criteria for determining whether or not a source can be considered to have Hindu nationalist discourse and establishing a source’s participation in imagining ideal national identity.

### **Chapter 3: Environmental Arguments**

This chapter will discuss the features of environmental arguments for cow protection within Hindu nationalist discourse. This category of argument is chiefly marked by using numerical data, empirical research, and mundane causation to demonstrate the value of the Indian cow. Environmental arguments commonly use scientific rhetorical strategies to bolster their claims. The hallmarks of scientific rhetoric include using numerical data and empirical research to build arguments (Freddi, Korte, and Schmied 2013, 222). This scientific rhetoric does not appeal to divinity or spiritual significance and instead makes reference to mundane causation. Proponents of this view might mention the place of the cow in Indian religious traditions but do not use it as independent evidence of the cow's value. These arguments focus on the role that bovines already occupy in the environment and the potential benefits that can be derived from it. These benefits centre on agriculture. Bovines provide labour and products, such as milk and manure, that can either be used to run the farm itself or can be sold for profit that also contributes to the farm's existence. Environmental arguments frame these contributions in two ways: benefiting the environment by avoiding more harmful agricultural practices and benefiting human welfare. Here, two subgroups of arguments can be identified.

The first subgroup, climate change arguments, emphasises the cow's positive effect on the environment without mentioning the benefit to humans. These arguments aim to convince the reader or audience of the cow's importance solely through its benefits to the environment. These arguments will be analysed through the website of the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS), an organisation that was founded in 2002, advocates for a wide range of Hindu issues, and aims to educate Hindus about Dharma and protecting both Dharma and the Nation (Case A, 3). They provide posters and other educational material that is used by their members and other interested individuals all over India.

The second subgroup of environmental arguments consists of humanist arguments. These arguments focus on how the cow's contributions serve human welfare. The primary method of persuasion is that cows can and/or do provide significant benefit for the quality of human life and society. This subgroup of arguments will be analysed through the 2002 Report of the National Commission on Cattle, a committee created by the Union Government to survey the state of bovine welfare across India and make recommendations for improvement. The Report is available on the website of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Case

B, 5). This second subgroup is more prevalent amongst Hindutva cow protection advocates than the first.

### 3.1 History

The originary circumstances of cow protection arguments that display the characteristics of this category are difficult to trace in the historical record. This is largely due to a scholarly explanation of cow related ritual and sentiment in India that points to the agricultural usefulness of bovines as the origin of their ritual importance and divinity. This explanation rereads any historical cow protection argument to be based in the animal's agricultural utility. One major proponent of this view was P. V. Kane (1880 - 1972), author of *History of Dharmaśāstra*. He explained that the animal's contributions to agriculture in Rig Vedic times were the root of the aversion to killing bovines, which subsequently grew into sacred status for the animals (Kane 1968, 772-3). The animal's divinity, then, is actually a safeguard for agricultural productivity and the group's consequent survival.

Kane's explanation allows arguments based in the cow's mundane benefits, such as agricultural labour, to be read into older arguments for cow protection that are made from substantially different grounds. The older, often religious, arguments are reduced to the status of an early point in the development of society; their language and grounds are 'really' about the animal's scientifically measurable products, not divinity. This explanation causes many individuals, scholars and politicians included, to read arguments from the animal's mundane benefits for humans and the environment into significantly older discourses about cow protection.

As the originary circumstances of environmental arguments are obscured, we will briefly discuss how arguments of this category occur in the discourse of a prolific figure in the Indian public sphere. M. K. Gandhi (1869-1948) is an important figure for most, if not all, contemporary expressions of nationalism in India, whether he is adored or reviled. He was also vocal about the cow protection movement and its role in Indian society. One of his most popular quotations on cow protection is from 1921 and normally includes "The central fact of Hinduism . . . is 'Cow Protection'. 'Cow Protection' to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in all human evolution" (Margul 1968, 64). Sometimes Gandhi is cited further: "the cow was in India the best companion. . . Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible" (Margul 1968, 64). Here, Gandhi pointed to the cow's potential to contribute to human

flourishing, by ensuring that food production and agriculture are possible, as the source of the animal's actual and symbolic sanctity in Hinduism. The source of the animal's value is in the environmental role it occupies and the effects that it produces. Gandhi's claim only mentioned mundane processes and causes. Bracketing out the Hindutva requirement, this argument would be classified within the humanist subgroup of arguments for cow protection. Gandhi's cow protection discourse indicates that at least by 1921 environmental arguments of this kind were circulating.

### 3.2 Climate change arguments: The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and Hindutva

Before discussing the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti's climate change arguments, we will apply the conceptual test to establish the presence of Hindutva ideas in their discourse. Their website is relatively easy to navigate. There are three language options: English, Hindi, and Marathi (Case A, 2). The website's colour scheme is saffron, yellow, beige, and blue. The home page is split between articles appropriate to upcoming religious festivals and news articles with more space devoted to the latter (Case A, 2). They produce a "Daily News Feed" and a separate newsletter that are both emailed to interested parties (Case A, 2). The footer, pervasive throughout the website, includes links to the HJS Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, Youtube, Instagram, and Pinterest accounts (Case A, 2). Every news and religion article includes buttons at the bottom that support sharing across Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, and Whatsapp. The range of social media platforms through which readers are encouraged to spread the HJS's discourse together with the range of social media accounts run the HJS itself indicate that the level of interaction that readers are tempted to engage with is high. Similarly, the existence of two different email lists, one of which is produced daily, indicates a large volume of potential information and a high level of engagement from subscribers.

The HJS displays a number of Hindutva markers on its website. Their discourse displays the geographical expanse that Savarkar described. They offer educational materials on a series of subjects alongside support for using them throughout the page (Case A, 9). In order to accomplish their "mission of establishing the Hindu Nation [to] reach every corner of the country," they offer these materials are available in 9 languages: Hindi, English, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam (Case A, 9). The usage of these languages spans the Indian subcontinent and many of the regional differences therein. It should be noted that they do not include all linguistic diversity within their educational materials.

Particularly, the Urdu language is conspicuously absent. This is likely related to the script Urdu uses, the Perso-Arabic alphabet, and the longstanding identification of both language and script with Muslim identity (King 2001).

The essential element of common blood is also present in their discourse. One of their pages is very simply titled “Hindu Dharma” and includes a section explicitly titled “Who can be called a Hindu ?”(Case A, 6). On this page, the first and foremost definition of a Hindu individual is “one who accepts the *Vedas*, *Vedangs* and the *Purans* and their corresponding sects and who is born in a traditional Hindu family” (Case A, 6). The correct ancestry is necessary to be a Hindu. If someone accepts the relevant scriptural authorities but does not descend from a Hindu family, then they are only “Hindu by initiation” (Case A, 6). However, Hindus who accept scriptural authority but do not descend from a Hindu family make an inferior marriage candidate (Case A, 6). Ancestry overrides any kind of belief conviction one might have. Common blood as a criterion for Hindu identity cannot be matched by personal convictions within the HJS’s discourse.

The most pervasive essential elements are common civilisation and the valorisation of the Vedic tradition. The HJS consistently identifies ‘correct’ national culture with the Vedic tradition. Their website includes a list of sixteen different pages that detail the meaning and relevance of “Dharma” (Case A, 7). One page is titled “What is the true meaning of [the] word Dharma (Righteousness) ?” (Case A, 10). While most of the page is devoted to explaining how Dharma correctly orders the development of society, the individual, and their interrelation, the term Dharma is defined as “deduced from the Scriptures” (Case A, 10). The entire contents of Dharma, then, is dependent on the Hindu Scriptures, defined on a different Hindu Dharma page as the “combination of 18 *Purans*, the *Smrutis* and all the *Vedas*” (Case A, 4). The *Vedas* are further defined as “The most sacred Hindu scriptures” (Case A, 4). The authority of Hindu Scripture is critically important to Dharma. The correct ordering of society and development of the individual are all elaborated from Hindu Scriptures, the core of which is the *Vedas*. The HJS quite clearly hangs the meaning of Dharma on the contents and authority of the *Vedas*. Within their discourse, the Vedic tradition is valorised when the importance of Dharma is emphasised.

The HJS’s activities are entirely focused on the promotion and protection of “Nation and Dharma” (Case A, 9). The examples discussed below are taken from the first link on their “About Us” tab: a page listed as “HJS Activities” and titled “What is HJS doing for

establishment of Hindu Rashtra ?” One of the ways that “we can work throughout the year for [the] awakening of Nation and Dharma” is to “Abide by Hindu culture” and desist from participating in Western culture, customs, clothing, greetings, and holidays (Case A, 9). The HJS positively identifies the content of “Hindu culture” with the Vedic tradition and rites that it prescribes (Case A, 9). For example, the HJS has created several series of posters intended to be displayed to Hindu crowds and educate them about the content of Hindu Dharma, its importance, and how Hindus should act to protect it. One of their poster series centres on the worship of deities (Case A, 9). Although it does not give specific references, the description of this series explicitly informs the reader that in order for worship to support the “Nation and Dharma,” it must follow “our scriptures.” In order to effectively establish and protect the “Nation and Dharma,” Hindus must follow these forms of worship in their daily routines. The HJS’s discourse explicitly grounds the benefits of daily worship in the Hindu household in the Vedic tradition and extends its meaning to include identifying and propagating “Nation and Dharma.”

Throughout the HJS’s discourse, the categories of Indian and Hindu are presented as completely synonymous and in a vulnerable position. For example, the HJS sends daily notifications to subscribers about “onslaughts on . . . society, Nation and Dharma” (Case A, 9). Anti-national and anti-Dharma movements, actions, and forces simultaneously attack both. Referring to the “Hindu Rashtra” in this way reproduces the “victim” status of Hindus from Savarkar’s *Hindutva*. This can also be seen in the major theme of the page: educating Hindus about their Dharma so that it can be protected. The purpose of this education is to rectify the vulnerable state of Hindu “Nation and Dharma.” The HJS is not only concerned with this vulnerable status on this page; the need to protect the Hindu Rashtra and Dharma is also mentioned in the “About Us” sentence that appears at the bottom of every page on the website (Case A, 9).

However, the category of ‘foreigners’ or ‘invaders’ is presented as a gloss for Christians and Muslims with negative connotations. One example reads: “Names of invaders given to a village or a town are a symbol of slavery (For example, Aurangabad, Usmanabad)” (Case A, 9). The former is a city in Maharashtra that was given the name Aurangabad by Mughal rulers. The latter is also in Maharashtra and derives its name from the last ruler of Hyderabad, whose family gained control of the area as a viceroy of the Mughals. Another example that includes both Christians and Muslims occurs in a list of measures Hindus can take “for self-defense, protection

of your village and Dharma” (Case A, 9). The HJS claims that some of the dangers are “anti-Hindu sects” that abduct “Hindu girls through ‘Love Jihad’” and “Christians [who] convert Hindus through lure, deceit or force” (Case A, 9). ‘Love Jihad’ is the alleged process by which Hindu women of marital age are seduced by Muslim boys, converted to Islam, and then abused, having been effectively isolated and trapped (Strohl 2018, 2). The fear of Christians converting Hindus, especially those that Brahmanic Hinduism has historically oppressed or marginalised (e.g. Dalits), commonly relate to fears about Christians enacting nefarious or deliberately destructive strategies (Osuri 2013). Fear of these processes and advocacy of corrective action have had a surge in publicity in recent years amongst news outlets and social media catering to or reporting on conservative Hindu circles, including Hindu nationalist ones. This kind of representation of Christians and Muslims reproduces their exclusion by Savarkar on the grounds of their ‘foreign’ loyalties, providing confirmation for the Hindutva worldview of the HJS.

### 3.3 Climate change arguments: The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and Cow Protection

The HJS has a page on their website titled “Importance of Indian Cow” included in its “Cow slaughter - A conspiracy to destroy the seat of faith of Hindus !” section (Case A, 8). Here, they make a number of arguments in support of cow protection based on the animal’s positive impact on climate change. These arguments take the form of claims about the potential effect of cows and cow products on the environment. These claims use only numbers and mundane causation to demonstrate the benefit of cows and their products.<sup>1</sup> The first series of claims focuses on the potential of cow dung. Using this kind of fuel instead of firewood would help stop deforestation, specifically 60 million tonnes “every year” if the dung of all 300 million cattle in India were used (Case A, 8). Burning cow dung additionally “balances atmospheric temperature and kills germs in the air” (Case A, 8). If cow dung is used to coat the insides of buildings, it can protect people from gas leaks, atomic radiation, extreme heat, and harmful bacteria (Case A, 8). The HJS claims that “Atomic power centres in India and Russia even today use cow dung to shield radiation” (Case A, 8). The last kind of claim about cow dung is more non-specific as to the operating mechanism: “We can reduce acid content in water by treating it

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<sup>1</sup> The relationship of the arguments in this category to scientific, empirical, common-sense or testable truth is not within the scope of this thesis. The object of this thesis is to produce an analytically useful map of Hindu nationalist cow protection arguments. So, analysing the truth, scientific or otherwise, of these arguments will not be discussed below. Whereas, the kinds of rhetorical strategies that these arguments reproduce are relevant and inform the boundaries of this category.



with cow dung” (Case A, 8).

The other series of claims involves how cows and their products are capable of producing oxygen. The animal itself is the only one in the world that “emits a major amount of oxygen” by breathing instead of carbon monoxide (Case A, 8). One of the cow’s products is clarified butter or ghee. Pouring “one spoon of pure ghee . . . on the burning dung cakes . . . can produce” one tonne of oxygen (Case A, 8). Both series of claims use numbers to give an impression of specificity and reflect empirical authority. By naming specific units, giving particular numbers, and appealing to observable, or mundane, processes, the HJS’s claims appeal to exclusively empirical sources and take on the authority that comes from them. These claims aim to convince readers that the value of cows is supported by empirical, mundane, and observable evidence. The first series of claims present the range of environmentally negative processes that cow dung can ameliorate. The second series of claims present the positive contributions of which cows and cow products are capable. Both series of claims are presented in order to convince the reader that cows, in their current role in the environment, can have a significant and positive impact on natural processes.

A distinctive characteristic of these kinds of arguments is their end, or *telos*. Climate change arguments take the non-human world as the end, or *telos*. For example, the argument that cows positively impact the world by producing oxygen presents the production of oxygen as the positive end. The process is not contextualised by how humans benefit or explicitly related to human concerns in anyway. This is the chief difference between these arguments and those examined in the section below, humanist arguments.

### 3.4 Humanist arguments: The National Commission on Cattle and Hindutva

The National Commission on Cattle was formed by the Union Government in 2001 and their report was published in 2002. The text of the Report is available on the website of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, itself within the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Case B, 5). The website itself is also available in Hindi and generally has a white background and black text. However, the text of the Report appears in English even when the website is in Hindi. The website’s header includes links to the Department’s Twitter, Google Plus, YouTube, and Facebook accounts. The Report itself is not accessible from the website’s “Reports” directory (Case B, 1). This directly contradicts the navigation path indicated at the beginning of the page that hosts the actual Report (Case B, 5). This means that the actual

text of the Report is functionally inaccessible unless specifically searched for using the website's search function or Google. Additionally, the Report is only partially accessible once the central page has been found. The different chapters are accessible through links on a central page. Only some of these links bring the user to an actual chapter; many simply redirect back to the Report's central page (Case B, 5).

In this section, I will be reviewing the document's introduction, accessible from the Report's central page through a functional link, and analysing the presence of Hindutva there. The entire introduction was authored by the Commission's Acting Chairman, Guman Mal Lodha (1926-2009). Lodha was an MLA in the Rajasthan State Legislature and part of the leadership of the Jan Sangh, the BJP's predecessor, until becoming a judge, first in the Rajasthan High Court and then as the Gauhati High Court's Chief Justice (Case B, 6). He was also elected to three successive Lok Sabhas, from 1989 to 1996, as a BJP member from a Rajasthan constituency (Case B, 6).

In the introduction to the Commission's Report, Lodha consistently presented the history of cows in India as a conflict between native Hindus, fighting for cows and their role in society, and foreigners, first the Muslims and subsequently the British. All of the elements of Savarkar's *Hindutva*, as identified above, can be explicitly identified in Lodha's account of this conflict, except geography. The elements of common blood, common civilisation, valorisation of the Vedic tradition, and the "victim" status of Hindus will be identified before turning to the more complex case of common geography. Discussion of these identifications will show that Lodha follows Savarkar in conceptualising Indian identity.

The element of common blood is most easily seen in Lodha's use of pronouns. While tracing the subcontinent's prehistoric attitudes towards cows, he frequently used the phrase "our Scriptures" to introduce a quotation from ancient Sanskrit texts. For example, he used "our Scriptures" as evidence for punishments given to those "guilty of killing cows," specifically quoting the Atharva Veda and Manusmriti (Case B, 3, para 16). His phrase reflects his view that the Hindus of today's India are the same people as those who compiled those texts. They have common ownership over the texts because of the historical continuity between them. In Lodha's view, Indian Hindus legitimately claim the Vedic tradition based on their Vedic descent. This common ownership also indicates the common civilisation of Hindus. Lodha explicitly identified the cow and those who valorise the animal as emblematic of "our culture" (Case B, 3,

para 13). This adds a qualification to the group of people who claim Vedic descent. Groups who do not reflect commitments to the cow and the values embodied by the animal cannot be included in the common culture. The valorisation of the Vedic tradition can also be seen in the sections where Lodha relied on Sanskrit texts for early Indian history. While providing a comprehensive account of the cow in the subcontinent, he only referred to Sanskrit texts and scholarship that positively evaluates their importance and authority (Case B, 3, para 1-22). This exclusion of other sources, both primary and secondary, gives the Sanskrit tradition unquestioned and unqualified authority over the subcontinent's early history. Consequently, the tradition's value is proportionately unquantifiable and universally accepted.

The "victim" status of Hindus is visible throughout Lodha's account of the history of cow slaughter. He tied the beginning and original meaning of cow slaughter to foreign oppression and victimization of Hindus. He wrote that the "Islamic invaders" arrived and "started sacrificing cows . . . more to humiliate the natives . . . and establish their sovereignty and superiority rather than for food" (Case B, 3, para 25). The oppressive practice correspondingly disappeared alongside "the dominance of Islam around 1700" (Case B, 3, para 26). After a period of relative peace for Indian cows, British rule brought about a sharp increase in oppression for Hindus and cows. Lodha measured this increase in cow deaths: fewer than 20,000 cows killed in a year during Islamic rule and 30,000 a day under the British (Case B, 3, para 28). The British outperformed the Muslims again by bringing in foreign bovine breeds, based on the assessment that Indian cows were inferior to foreign ones in the same way that Indian people themselves were inferior to Europeans (Case B, 3, para 29). Given this perspective on cow slaughter, it was originally an instrument used by foreigners to oppress Hindus. Reading Indian history in this way also charges each instance of cow slaughter with anti-Hindu and anti-national violence. Lodha read this meaning into contemporary cow slaughter as well. He identified "Vote-greedy politicians, a few Money-greedy Hindus and fanatic fundamentalist Muslims" as the insidious forces that prevent prohibiting cow slaughter (Case B, 3, para 62). In the opinion of the Chairman of the National Commission on Cattle, Hindus are in a vulnerable position that dates back to the "Islamic invaders," continues into the present, and can be measured by incidents of cow slaughter.

The essential element of geography has a more complex presence in Lodha's introduction. He did not refer to particular ideal boundaries of the Hindu nation or the lands over which they should have sovereignty. However, one of the functions of this particular essential in Savarkar's *Hindutva* is to exclude Indian Muslims and Christians from full membership in *Hindutva*; as their religions are non-Indic in origin and require continuing loyalty to a non-Indic source, they cannot be Hindu. Lodha included the function of this essential element in his introduction: 'us' includes Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists alongside Hindus whereas Muslims and Christians are excluded. Sikh support for and approval of cow protection garnered an independent mention while Lodha recounts the history of cow slaughter under British rule (Case B, 3, para 31). The first Jain Tirthankara's devotion to cows was mentioned in the account of early history (Case B, 3, para 7). Buddhists, however, are not mentioned until the religious demographics of India are given in order to demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of Indians are "PRO-COW" (Case B, 3, para 163). Lodha quoted the 1991 census to establish the population percentage of each community separately. He then grouped Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs together with Hindus, as they "are all culturally akin," to produce "nearly 86 per cent of the population" as a "PRO-COW" bloc (Case B, 3, para 162). Clearly, Lodha made the same distinction between Indic and non-Indic religious communities that Savarkar did, despite the absence of explicit mention of geography. Indic religious traditions are grouped together and included in 'us'; non-Indic religious traditions are excluded from 'us.'

From these examples, it is apparent that Lodha reproduces the core elements of Savarkar's *Hindutva*. The common descent, common civilisation, common geography, valorising the Vedic tradition, and the vulnerable status of Hindus are all substantially present in this account of the history of cow protection in India. This document is not only the opinion of a politically powerful man in India; it is the official report of a Government Commission and intended to reflect the real state of cattle in India and offer concrete recommendations to the Union Government (Case B, 3 para 169-170). At least for the Commission's Chairman, the issues surrounding cow protection are informed by this particular view of history, nation, and justifiable future action.

### 3.5 Humanist arguments: The National Commission on Cattle and Cow Protection

The Report included a chapter on the uses of cow products for different areas of human life. All of the Report's findings were explicitly grounded in scientific authority (Case B, 3, para 169; Case B, 4, para 10, 23, 25-26); the listed uses of cow products are said to have been established by scientific studies. While references to specific studies are absent from the chapter, the reliance on scientific authority marks these claims as environmental arguments. The explicit description of how each product can ameliorate human life identifies them as humanist arguments.

The Report discussed a wide array of cow products and grouped them according to the area of human life they support. Six different areas are mentioned: agriculture, nutrition, the environment, medicine, cosmetics, and energy (Case B, 4, para 36). Three of these categories, agriculture, nutrition, and the environment, are basically related in their positive effect for human welfare and so will be treated together here. The Report listed two different kinds of compost, fertiliser made from cow horns, insect repellent made from urine, and nitrogen-fixing urine as cow products that positively effect agriculture (Case B, 4, para 9, 36.1). These products, especially the fertiliser and insect repellent, are based in organic farming practices that the Report also promoted (Case B, 4, para 1-21). The Report included a description of their specific components, examples of their use, and references to their scientific credentials (Case B, 4, para 36.1).

The Report's discussion of cow products that support nutrition was centred on milk and the scientific break down of its contents. The Report claimed that milk from indigenous cows includes "almost all the ingredients essential for body growth" (Case B, 4, para 36.4). This includes vitamin A, the vitamin B complex group, vitamin C, flavones, sterols, phenols, lactic acid bacilli, carotenes, steroids, fatty acids, and amino acids (Case B, 4, para 36.4). The cow products that benefit the environment are interesting in that they could have easily been climate change arguments but instead consistently take human welfare as their telos. The Report focused on the negative effects on human health that pollution, through pesticides and fossil fuels, has (Case B, 4, para 36.5). From there, the organic alternatives that cow products offer, and consequently the possibility of ameliorating these problems, were their chief environmental contribution. The loss of soil productivity from "the irrational/uncontrolled use of chemical fertilizers" is also an environmental problem that cow products can solve (Case B, 4, para 36.5).

Again, the identified problem and solution were discussed primarily as a problem for human welfare: humans need productive soil for survival and cow products can guarantee the soil's future fertility. The Report's list of cow products' contributions in medicine was quite extensive. Ghee can be used for a memory enhancer, healing wounds, and suppositories (Case B, 4, para 36.2). Urine preparations can be effective in treating renal disorders, skin infections, and vitiligo (Case B, 4, para 36.2). A urine and dung preparation can treat psoriasis (Case B, 4, para 36.2). Milk can be effective in treating immunological disorders like AIDS and cancer (Case B, 4, para 36.2). Finally, buttermilk can be used to treat food poisoning (Case B, 4, para 36.2). Like the agricultural contributions, the Report described all of these preparations by referencing scientific terms, concepts, and studies without giving verifiable references.

Cow products can be used for cosmetics as well. The Report specifically listed treating dandruff, general cleansing, and emollient preparations as cosmetic functions of cow products (Case B, 4, para 36.3). There was also a list of particular cosmetic products that can be made from cow products: skin care cakes, anti-dandruff shampoo, tooth paste or powder, and skin care cream (Case B, 4, para 36.3). The production methods of these products are also described with scientific terms and concepts.

The contribution of cow products to energy were also part of the Report's findings. Research into using cow products fueling generators was discussed in two different scenarios. The first involves draught bovines powering a generator in the same way draught animals power machinery like mills (Case B, 4, para 36.6). The second involves using the fuel made from cow dung to power a generator via combustion (Case B, 4, para 36.6). The Report mentioned another interesting method of producing electricity. "A small amount of electricity can be generated by placing two electrodes in cow urine . . . Duration can be increased by putting some fresh cow dung in [the] urine" (Case B, 4, para 36.6). Research into this method of producing energy was also promising (Case B, 4, para 36.6).

The Report consistently discussed the potential contributions of cow products to these six areas with reference to scientific terms, concepts, and research, identifying the claims as environmental. All of these contributions also explicitly served to support human welfare, marking them as humanist. These arguments are aimed at convincing the reader, the Indian public, and specifically the Union Government that these contributions to human welfare are part of the role that bovines already occupy in the environment.

### 3.6 Environmental arguments: Conclusion

Both the HJS and the National Commission on Cattle's Report display the characteristics of environmental arguments for cow protection: numerical data, empirical research, and mundane causation. Both examples emphasise the cow's position in the environment as the source of the animal's value. Neither appeals to the cow's divinity or spiritual significance in religious traditions. The HJS's arguments demonstrate the climate change arguments by focusing on the cow's benefit to the environment without mentioning human welfare. The focus on the environment as *telos* marks these arguments as part of the climate change subgroup. The arguments in the National Commission on Cattle's Report emphasised that the benefit cows provide to human welfare is the reason they should be protected and their products promoted. The primacy of human welfare marks these arguments as part of the humanist subgroup. The arguments in both subgroups refer to and reproduce the rhetorical strategies of scientific language. In some cases it is an appeal to numerical data, in others deploying scientific terms and concepts. All cases bolster their arguments with scientific authority and restrict themselves to mundane causation.

## **Chapter 4: Social Arguments**

This chapter will analyse the social arguments of Hindu nationalist cow protection discourse. This category of argument is fairly straightforward in definition. Social arguments for cow protection are aimed at convincing the reader that the value of bovines derives from their role in both creating and safeguarding social prosperity. These arguments make the claim that cows contribute to the good of society. The actual contribution that particular arguments attribute to cows varies across a wide range. The most popular version of this argument claims that because the cow is so important to the majority population, Hindus, protecting cows provides harmonious and peaceful relations between the many religious communities in India. These arguments share the basic form of ‘cows contribute to the good of society and should therefore be protected.’ They do not use empirical or numerical evidence, refer to scientific studies, cite Sanskrit scriptures or other religious authorities, mention the number of deities believed to be physically present in each cow’s body or bring up Krishna’s work as a cowherd. Instead, they rely on the idea that cow welfare is necessary for the prosperity of Indian society.

Social arguments for cow protection occur in two varieties: positive and negative. Positive arguments contend that cow protection is good for society and so more Indians should be engaged in it. Whereas negative arguments claim that cow slaughtering and beef eating is detrimental to society, engaging in either of them is antisocial or anti-national, and individuals doing so are concretely harming society. These kinds of arguments tend to occur when referring to non-Hindu communities, such as Muslims, Christians, Marxists, and Dalits among others. Both varieties of social argument will be discussed below.

### 4.1 History

A significant, if not originary, period of history for social arguments for cow protection is late colonial North India, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period saw a number of protests, riots, the formation of cow protection associations (*gau raksha samiti*), and cow protection arguments printed in pamphlets and newspapers. One enduringly popular form of cow protection discourse that was articulated in this period is the symbol of Gau-mata, or Mother Cow. As a symbol, Gau-mata functions in a similar way to Bharat-mata or Mother India (Ramaswamy 1998). Gau-mata could overcome linguistic and regional differences to represent, in part, a unified national identity (Gupta 2006, 114). However, Gau-mata also set boundaries on who was included within this identity. The discourse and



imagery developed around her relied heavily on the Brahminic tradition: low-caste Hindus should not be allowed to protect or care for cows (Gupta 2006, 115). Despite these limits, Gau-mata and cow protection movements drew support from a wide range of caste groups and regions (Tejani 2008, 74). These activities and the symbol of Gau-mata brought high and middle caste Hindu men into “a shared political space” (Gupta 2006, 74-75). This, in part, produced a public space for agitations, contesting values and expressing collective identities (Freitag 2005, 218-219). The wide appeal of this discourse created the circumstances for “larger ideological statements about imagined communities” (Freitag 2005, 220).

Gau-mata also provided an index of Indian society’s health: the existence of cow slaughter was an example of colonial oppression, a method of systematically harming the nation’s “cow wealth” that both Muslims and the British employed (Freitag 2005, 113, 115). The phrase “cow wealth” refers to the textual trope of measuring a group or individual’s prosperity or wealth in the number of cows they own. So, Gau-mata also pointed to the state of national vulnerability and the means by which the vulnerability was perpetuated. The metaphor of ‘mother’ also proved to be a potent resource. In the United Provinces (today’s Uttar Pradesh), the late colonial cow protection movement was mostly led by upper-caste men who mobilised support from the (male) public by explaining that their ‘mother’ required protection from her ‘sons,’ emphasising the cows’ vulnerability (Freitag 2005, 114). The killing of Gau-mata was framed as a deeply personal tool of oppression: the foreigners were repeatedly violating the Hindu family by murdering its ‘mother’ (Freitag 2005, 115). In this way, the symbol of Gau-mata engaged with and strengthened ideas about ideal Hindu and national masculinity (Freitag 2005, 115). This symbol also strengthened the conceptual connections and causality between family, community, and nation for nationalist public discourse (Freitag 2005, 115). These functions of Gau-mata produced upper-caste men with a humiliating awareness of their subjugation and motivation to rectify it.

The symbol of Gau-mata, then, precipitated the social and political mobilisation of the Hindu community through its wide appeal, providing a unified sense of group identity on a new scale, a cause to fight for, and identifiable enemies. Of course, the factors that mobilised anti-national movements in the subcontinent were much more varied and complex than cow protection discourse and the emergence of Gau-mata. The changes discussed above were only a part of the myriad circumstances and groups that found expression and action in late colonial

North India. However, it does constitute a significant period for cow protection discourse because it marks the origin of the discourse's upper-caste, Brahminic inflection and the emergence of Gau-mata, both of which endure into the present day.

#### 4.2 Social Arguments: The Muslim Rashtriya Manch and Hindutva

Our case study for this category of argument will be the Muslim Rashtriya Manch's (MRM) discourse on cow protection. Their discourse will be analysed as it appears on their website and through journalism platforms. The MRM's website is relatively easy to navigate; the pages are organised according to its respective contents through tabs that appear across the website's header. The header also includes links to the MRM's Google Plus, Twitter, and Facebook accounts. The site has no language options. However, all of the documents in the "Publications" tab and all the images in the "Press Reports" tab appear to be in Hindi. The website's colour scheme mirrors the Indian flag: saffron, white, and green.

This organisation poses an interesting divergence from other Hindutva voices. It is commonly billed as an organisation run by Muslims and for Muslims with a mission to bring the Muslim and Hindu communities together (Case C, 9; Case C, 11). It is affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), holding regular meetings to coordinate their activities (Case C, 10). One of the ideological leaders of the organisation and co-founders is Indresh Kumar, a senior RSS worker who also sits on the RSS's National Executive (Case C, 1). His official Facebook page describes him as a 'patron' of the MRM (Case C, 1). According to the MRM's own website, Kumar's preoccupation with the divide between Indian Hindus and Muslims and his corresponding answer are framed as foundational and continuing inspiration (Case C, 6).

Besides the close ties between this organisation and the RSS, the MRM's discourse itself classifies it as Hindutva. Their "About us" page contains a number of assertions about the Indian Muslim community and its relationship to the Indian Hindu community. These assertions are framed as part of the discussion that sought out "the path of nationalism" for Indian Muslims and led to the founding of the MRM (Case C, 6). This discussion and "path" are occupied with the problem of cultivating Indian Muslims' loyalty to the nation. In order to solve this problem, two strategies are proposed that include Indian Muslims within the legitimate scope of 'Indian' and promote their loyalty to the nation. This problem mirrors the questions that Savarkar framed and answered above. How does one define the nation, who can legitimately claim membership,

how can these boundaries be monitored? Of course, Savarkar encompassed all of this under the term ‘Hindu’ whereas the MRM uses ‘Indian.’ However, the analysis below will demonstrate that when the MRM uses ‘Indian,’ they are referring to the same content as Savarkar did with the term ‘Hindu.’ This reproduction of Hindutva discourse classifies the MRM as part of that movement.

The MRM’s discourse explicitly includes Indian Muslims within the five essential elements of Hindutva. The elements of common civilisation, blood, and geography are visible at two locations. The first discursive site is attributed to the RSS’s Supreme Leader from 2000 to 2009, K. S. Sudarshan. The MRM describes him as confused about the gap between Indian Muslims and Hindus as both communities share the same culture, race, and ancestors as Hindus (Case C, 6). The second discursive site is attributed to Kumar and designates Indian “ancestors, culture and motherland” as the common property of Indian Hindus and Muslims (Case C, 6). Both sites include Indian Muslims within the bounds of legitimate national identity. The content of both reproduce the content of Savarkar’s common blood, civilisation, and geography. Indian Muslims are claimed to be of common descent through their ancestors. They are included in the civilisation through sharing the same culture as Hindus. They are included within the common geography through having the same “motherland.” This last point is interesting as it was the criteria that Muslims failed in Savarkar’s opinion.

Savarkar’s chief objection to Indian Muslims being included within his definition of Hindutva was their loyalty to a foreign holy place. The MRM answers this objection by minimizing the extent of the ideal Muslim’s loyalty to the Islamic holy land and Muslim-majority countries. Indresh Kumar, performing his role of articulating the MRM’s discourse, explained: “A true Muslim will go to Hajj but will sacrifice his life for India [and] not any other country” (Case C, 8). This means that if a Muslim man is true to his religion and morals then he should fulfill his religious duties, like visiting Mecca on pilgrimage. But that religious duty is restricted from authorising solidarity across religious lines. Indian Muslims should only fight or die for an Indian cause; they have no business harbouring loyalty towards any other state besides India.

The MRM also valorises the Vedic tradition in their discourse. The group organised a conference in Jammu in order to educate attendees about the territorial unity of India and how the region should not separate from the Indian Republic (Case C, 7). One of the speakers, a Col.

Khalid Hussein, at this conference advocated for increased education among Muslims. According to the MRM's description of his speech, the Vedas should be translated into Urdu to increase Muslim's access to their "treasures" (Case C, 7). He seems to have advocated a kind of interfaith dialogue that aims at mutual understanding and respect. However, the measures he proposed focus exclusively on Muslims cultivating knowledge of Hindu tradition. Both his diction and the means themselves ascribe value to the Vedas and affirm their exceptional importance. The Vedic tradition's value and authority in the Hindu tradition are expanded to apply to all Indians.

The last aspect of Savarkar's *Hindutva* that the MRM reproduces is the "victim" status of Hindus. The organisation's then-National Organisation Convener, Girish Juyal, commented on the role of cow slaughter in Indian history during a 2017 Iftar party in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. "He said that the British started cow slaughter to break the unity of Hindus and Muslims in India and the Congress and the seculars later continued it" (Case C, 4). Here, the Muslim community is included with Hindus as recipients of colonial oppression. Both communities share in the vulnerable position created by foreign oppression and perpetuated into the present day. Through this account of cow slaughter's history, the Indian Muslim community is connected to the Hindu community and shown to share in their experiences of vulnerability and victimisation.

The MRM reproduces the content of Savarkar's *Hindutva* throughout its publications and activities. They define "the path of nationalism" by including Indian Muslims within the common blood, civilisation, geography, valorisation of the Vedic tradition, and "victim" status by which *Hindutva* demarcates legitimate national identity. This classifies them and their discourse as reproducing *Hindutva* discourse and sharing in the wider movement, despite their explicit focus on the Indian Muslim identity and community. Their advocacy of cow protection, therefore, falls within the boundaries of this thesis. Their social arguments for cow protection will be analysed below.

#### 4.3 Social Arguments: The Muslim Rashtriya Manch and Cow Protection

The MRM's advocacy of cow protection extends well into the organisation's history. Their first signature campaign in 2008 tried to convince the Union Government that the Indian people wanted a national ban on cow slaughter (Case C, 7; Case C, 8). They have undertaken campaigns and *yatras* (processions) to promote gau seva, acts of service towards cows, alongside

other activities for cow welfare (Case C, 3). They also began hosting regular Iftar parties throughout North India to promote cow products and condemn cow slaughter (Case C, 5). Such parties are held in the evening during the month of Ramadan to break the day-long fast. Their activities to educate Muslims about the importance of cow protection have been a significant portion of their work as an organisation. In this section, their social arguments for cow protection will be analysed. The first example will focus on a publication that the MRM promoted during the 2015 Ramadan season and exhibits the characteristics of positive social arguments for cow protection. The second example will focus on the comments made by an MRM leader during the same Ramadan season and will demonstrate the characteristics of negative social arguments for cow protection.

While making Bakra-Eid comments to the media from a BJP leader's residence, Indresh Kumar also distributed an MRM publication, *Cow and Islam*. An *Indian Express* article reported on the contents of *Cow and Islam* and outlined some of the arguments given in the publication. A prominent argument in that publication appealed to social harmony: as the cow holds special importance for the region's "tradition and culture" as well as the sentiments of Hindus, India cannot be reasonably or beneficially governed without banning cow slaughter (Case C, 2). As it is in the interest of society as a whole, steps to prohibit cow slaughter should be taken on the individual and governmental level. This argument and the others given in the publication were aimed at convincing readers on an individual level. Readers were also informed of a signature campaign to introduce an India-wide ban on cow slaughter (Case C, 2). This kind of social argument relied on the impression that a broad societal consensus existed on cow slaughter as support for the claim that such a prohibition would indeed be for the good of society. The core of this argument is that the slaughter of cows harms (Indian) society and therefore it should be prohibited. It relies on the idea that most Indians are Hindus and that Hindus attributed and continue to attribute significant meaning to cows. Only anecdotal evidence is presented; there is an absence of numerical or empirical evidence of the cow's benefit to society. These features classify this argument in *Cow and Islam* as a positive social argument for cow protection.

The MRM also used a social argument for cow protection at the Iftar party in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh mentioned above. At the time, a series of 'beef parties' were being held across Kerala in protest of a move by the Centre Government to ban selling cattle for slaughter across the country (Case C, 11). In response to these events, the MRM's then-National Convener,

Girish Juyal, is reported to have said that “ those who indulged in these heinous acts [were] enemies of communal harmony” (Case C, 4). “Communal harmony” is a phrase that refers to the various religious communities of the Republic of India cooperating and living together peacefully. It is contrasted with its opposite: communalism. If an action is described as ‘communal’ then it instigates or fuels conflict between those communities. The term is used most often with reference to conflict between Muslim and Hindu communities. In this context, Juyal’s phrasing identifies cow slaughter and beef consumption as negative forces in Indian society. This is the converse of positive social arguments for cow protection. Social good is still the object of negative social arguments. They promote social good by arguing that specific actions have a negative impact and should therefore be avoided and/or illegal.

#### 4.4 Social Arguments: Conclusion

The MRM’s discourse demonstrates both the positive and negative varieties of social arguments for cow protection. Their positive arguments claim that the cow is a significant contributor to the good of society by promoting social harmony. Their negative arguments claim that slaughtering cows and eating them is anti-social and anti-national; individuals and groups that engage in these habits are actively harming Indian society. The MRM’s advocacy work and position in Indian society, as a Muslim group of Hindutva activists, have produced many instances of social arguments for cow protection and will likely continue to do so in the future.

## **Chapter 5: Religious Arguments**

The cow and cow products are important for various Hindu rituals alongside their role in various myths (Batra 1986, 168-170). These rituals and myths provide material for religious arguments for cow protection. Using these materials and referring to their authority is the chief distinguishing characteristic of this category. The arguments commonly refer to myths about gods protecting cows (notably Krisna), and the teachings of sages or the Vedas, as evidence that Indians should be engaged in cow protection and condemn cow slaughter and/or beef eating. The specific evidence given is as diverse as there are rituals and beliefs about the divinity and/or ritual benefit of cows in the subcontinent. Therefore, this is not an exhaustive discussion of the history of religious arguments for cow protection or the range of possible evidence this kind of argument uses. The history section will discuss the rhetoric and images of Gau-mata in the late colonial period. The example from contemporary Hindutva will be a blog, *Hindu Existence*, that has a section exclusively devoted to cow protection topics.

### 5.1 History

The late colonial period in India catalysed a series of religious arguments about the relationship between Gau-mata, the Indian people, their present, and their future. Throughout this period her body, through discourse and images, was coded with a Hindu cosmology of nation (Pinney 1997, 841; Gupta 2006, 111). Below, the pictorial idiom of this ‘coding’ will be discussed. Specifically, the wide cohesion between certain Hindu traditions, the exclusion of Muslim and British groups, and the integral role of religion therein will be the primary focuses.

As discussed in chapter four, arguments around Gau-mata produced a movement that elicited supportive activity from a wide range of social groups across much of the British Raj by the late 1880s. The images and rhetoric proved to be quite enduring. Many of the images of Gau-mata circulated in the 1890s were widely commercially produced in the early 1900s (Pinney 1997, 841). These images specifically depicted the figure of a cow containing a multitude of gods from diverse Hindu religious traditions (Pinney 1997, 843). A group of human figures, representing different Indian communities, kneeling around the cow’s udders was also a common feature (Pinney 1997, 843). Through such images, Gau-mata gave a set boundary to the imagined community. Only those groups with a reverential attitude towards the cow could be included within or seen as ally for the Hindu community.

Conversely, groups who ate beef were necessarily opposed to both the Hindu community and general prosperity. Other images expanded on the scene of Gau-mata hosting Hindu deities within her body and providing milk to supplicant humans. Some prints included one or more figures, interpreted as Indian Muslims, poised to slaughter the divine mother (Pinney 1997, 844). Within the image itself, this threatening figure was identified as “Kaliyug,” the degenerate current age, and contrasted with a representation of Krishna protecting Gau-mata, labelled “Dharmraj” or the virtuous ordering of society (Pinney 1997, 846). While there are certainly a variety of observations that can be made from these images, the foundation of Gau-mata’s importance is the divinity ascribed to her body and by extension that of each particular cow.

Gau-mata, therefore, communicated a shared national space, defined by religious terms, that was inclusive of the cow-revering sections of the sub-continent’s population and simultaneously exclusive of Islamic and British beef-eaters (Pinney 1997, 844). Interestingly, the British determined that the cow protection movement was no longer religious and had become a fundamentally political movement (Robb 1986, 293-295). However, the religious grounds of these arguments, pictorial or otherwise, should not be discredited. The late colonial cow protection movement used explicitly religious terms to make demands of rulers, to define a common space, and to promote a devotional attitude towards both the imagined community and the actual cows themselves. These same patterns will be explored below in radically different surroundings. However, the similarities between this earlier period of religious arguments for cow protection and contemporary Hindutva ones are striking.

## 5.2 Religious Arguments: *Hindu Existence* and Hindutva

*Hindu Existence* is the title of a blog and discussion forum run through WordPress that promote Hindu interests all over the world with a particular focus on India (Case A, 13). Four individuals are credited for running the site: a Chief Editor, two Moderators, and a Forum Manager (Case D, 13). However, many of the individual posts and articles are either without a named author or from another source. This seems to be part of their stated goal of the blog being the common property of all Hindus, wherever they live (Case D, 13). As of 2018, the blog has just over 6,000,000 hits and runs a Facebook page with more than 18,500 likes and 18,450 followers (Case D, 12; Case D, 4). So, the content on the blog is publically available from multiple platforms and is being engaged by at least some people. The blog’s main page emphasises the fifteen most recent posts and has a list of tabs running down the left side. The



entire blog appears over a background of tessellated pictures of BrahMos missiles. There are two distinct pictures of the missiles that repeat down each page, meeting in the middle and stretching to fill the size of the browser window. The picture on the left shows a grouping of six missiles carried on a vehicle and pointing towards the top left corner. The picture on the right seems to be a different angle on the same six missiles, pointing towards the top right corner with a large crowd of people visible in the background. When open in a sufficiently large browser window, the missiles frame the blog's text and provide a striking tone.

The blog's content itself contains a number of posts that reproduce the criteria of Hindutva, thereby meeting the conceptual test for the purposes of this discussion. Before discussing their cow protection arguments, we will find that *Hindu Existence's* concept of Hindutva includes common blood, civilisation, and geography alongside the "victim" or vulnerable status of Hindus and valorisation of the Vedic tradition.

The essential element of common blood or descent is also present in the blog's discourse. It is particularly visible on the page titled "Above All Hindutva Agenda" that has a series of documents specifying the "Hindutva Agenda" (Case D, 9). The second document on this page is titled "Hindu Rashtra Darshan" and consists of a series of Hindu Mahasabha addresses that V. D. Savarkar gave between 1937 and 1942 (Case D, 9). As it appears on *Hindu Existence*, the document itself is over a hundred pages long. However, Savarkar's first address attends to "the Sacred Case of defending Hindudom and Hindustan" (Case D, 9, p.3). He quickly moved on to the definition of 'Hindu.' He emphasises that "It is not enough that a person should profess any religion of Indian origin . . . but he must also recognise it as his . . . Fatherland as well" (Case D, 9, p.4-5). The critical importance of blood is then illustrated by Buddhist Japanese and Chinese individuals. They follow a religion of Indic origin, Buddhism, but do not share in the "common fatherland" and are therefore excluded from "the Hindu fold" (Case D, 9, p.5). They do not qualify for legitimate inclusion within the scope of 'Hindu' because their blood, their descent is not of Indic origin.

The element of common civilisation can be seen on the blog's "Hindu Rashtra" page where a series of resolutions from the 2012 "All India Convention for [the] establishment of the Hindu Rashtra" (Case D, 15). One of these resolutions describes the content of common civilisation while urging the reader and Government to protect it with criminal penalties. It informs the reader and general Indian public that "Mockery and defamation of Hindu Holy texts,

Deities, Saints, great personalities, religious traditions and culture should be treated as cognizable and non-bailable offences !” (Case D, 15). The common civilisation of Hindus carries enough importance to defend it with criminal penalties. Calling for such measures includes the implied claim that the content of this common civilisation is also sufficiently important to warrant the support of a majority of the Republic’s population. This resolution, then, demonstrates both the content and commonality of the civilisation element.

*Hindu Existence* also develops the boundaries of Hindutva along the essential element of common geography. The blog claims that “We have to procure and establish our traditional Hindu land in India at any cost” (Case D, 13). This claim itself does not specify where exactly the “traditional Hindu land” is. However, the blog does specify in another place that “Bharat is the natural land of Hindus” and different corners of it include Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Case D, 2). From this, it appears that the “natural” and/or “traditional” land of Hindus goes beyond the sovereign borders of the Republic of India to include more of the subcontinent, reproducing Savarkar’s expansive vision of the size of the Hindu polity.

The element of valorising the Vedic tradition is evident in an article titled “Rigveda to Robotics - Exhibition focuses on [the] Historicity of ancient Hindu scriptures” (Case D, 10). The article reports on an exhibition curated by the Institute of Scientific Research on Vedas that was displayed in New Delhi for close to a week in September of 2015 (Case D, 10). The entire exhibition was reported to provide “astronomical references and scientific evidences [sic]” in order to establish the historical veracity of Hindu Scripture (Case D, 10). Evidence for the historical reliability of the Rig Veda is discussed in some detail. Researchers from the Institute examined “the first nine mandals of [the] Rigveda” and found that “All 22 rivers were mentioned in a geographically correct way with not a single mistake,” according to the Director of the Institute’s Delhi chapter, Saroj Bala (Case D, 10). Additionally, their research presented textual evidence from the Rig Veda’s tenth mandal as proof that the Saraswati dried up and the Ganges came to its contemporary route around 6000 BCE (Case D, 10). While the historical arguments made by this exhibition are interesting, the concern to affirm and perpetuate the authority of Vedic texts is expressive of the Hindutva ideas in *Hindu Existence*’s discourse. The tools and clout of scientific historical research are explicitly used to valorise a Vedic text, marking the presence of Savarkar’s concepts.

The perception of Hindus in a “victim” or vulnerable status occurs in several places on the blog. Two locations on their website display this perception: the “About” post, accessible through the first tab and signed by the four blog runners, and the first comment on that post, authored by the blog runners’ account itself. The comment seems to be a continuation of the post itself as it elaborates on the same themes. So, I will be reading the two as mutually constitutive of the same perception. In the comment, Charles Darwin, famous evolutionary scientist, and Vivekananda, famous Hindu philosopher, are both quoted to establish that if a group diminishes then it is a sign of the group’s impending disappearance (Upananda Brahmachari, 3 Sept 2009, comment on Case D, 13). Two factors are explicitly mentioned between these locations that indicate this diminishing and impending disappearance of Hindus and their culture. The declining population of Hindus is mentioned twice: first generally and then accompanied by a series of figures (Case D, 13; Brahmachari 2009, comment on Case D, 13). The other concern is the lack of political representation: “no declared Hindu Country and the only Hindu Country Nepal has now been turned as a Maoist State in 2008” (Case D, 13). These less direct indicators of Hindus being in a less than dominant situation is made unequivocally clear before the end of the comment: “Keep some actual weapons in your Puja Place. Worship them and use them against your enemies, enemies of Hindus. Try to have some legal fire arms for your security and the security of Hindu Society” (Brahmachari 2009, comment on Case D, 13). These recommendations demonstrate that the vulnerable status of Hindus is sufficiently concrete to require the preventative measure of owning weapons.

Through these articles, *Hindu Existence* demonstrates that the content on their blog reproduces the criteria of Savarkar’s *Hindutva*: common blood, civilisation, and geography alongside the “victim” or vulnerable status of Hindus and valorisation of the Vedic tradition. The presence of these elements, therefore, indicates that the blog’s rhetoric passes the conceptual test. This, together with the public availability and participation of their discourse, includes their cow protection discourse within the scope of this inquiry.

### 5.3 Religious Arguments: *Hindu Existence* and Cow Protection

There are three kinds of religious arguments for cow protection that can be seen in the blog *Hindu Existence*. The first consists of arguments that aim to convince audiences that religious texts prove cows are divine and thus worthy of protection. The second consists of arguments that present a scheme of concrete actions humans can take for cow welfare, giving

religious reasons and/or religious benefits for taking the proposed actions. The third kind of religious arguments consists of apologetics aimed at dismantling inaccurate perceptions of cow killing and cow protection. These apologetics try to convince the audience or reader that cow protection is a fundamental part of the Hindu religion. Although there are different authors discussed below, all examples are taken from posts on *Hindu Existence*. Given that they share a platform, editorial group, and readership, they will be treated as a single source of discourse.

The first kind of religious arguments for cow protection relies on religious ritual and authorities, both textual and anecdotal, to convince audiences that cows have divine status. The primary difference between textual and anecdotal authorities is the presence of specific citations. In *Hindu Existence*, these arguments are made throughout posts in the tab “Go Raksha.” One post, authored by Subramanian Swamy, uses all three varieties of religious authority in order to prove the claim made in its title: that cows are a “Sacred Asset Of The Nation” (Case D, 17). The author is one of the BJP’s members in Parliament’s Upper House, the Rajya Sabha, and a former member of the Janata Party (Case D, 6). He mentions a number of Vedic texts with specific citations, including the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda (Case D, 17). The post claims that all these texts are evidence that the cow has “the status of divinity” (Case D, 17). The popular figure of Kamadhenu is also anecdotally mentioned as evidence of the cow’s divine and miraculous origins (Case D, 17). At the end of the post, “the deep reverence and high ground reserved for the cow and her progeny in our culture” is also mentioned as further evidence. So, the cow’s divinity has been continuously ‘recognised’ by Hindus since the time of the Rig Veda through to the present day, as these texts and stories demonstrate.

A number of these kinds of argument also occur in the last post on the page. The post has no text outside of a series of images from the “National Conference on ‘Glory of Go-Mātā’” (Case D, 16; see Appendix I for images). Although the post describes the images as “posters,” I will be referring to them as images for clarity. Eleven images are included in total, all using the same footer that mentions the organisations involved in organising the conference and creating the posters. The “Sanskriti Foundation Mysore” is credited with the “Concept, Visualisation and Design” of the images (Case D, 16). According to their website, they are a NGO that funds research, education, and cultural activities that promote “Indian Knowledge Systems” (Case D, 8). Despite the poor resolution in which the images were posted, the organisers are listed as Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), Tirupati; S.V. Gosamrakshana Trust, Tirupati; and Sri

Bhashyakara Charitable Trust, Chennai (Case D, 16). The first organiser is a large organisation that primarily runs and constructs temples in Andhra Pradesh. The second organiser is a trust established and run by the first organiser, TTD, specifically for cow protection activities within the organisation's property and supporting activities outside (Case D, 18). The third organiser is an NGO that works to preserve and promote the Vaishnava tradition (Case D, 11). The footer also mentions the individual who sponsored the posters: B.S. Anand Singh, a Karnataka MLA who joined the Congress Party at the end of January 2018 after leaving the BJP (Case D, 7). Given that all the organisations and the individual mentioned in the footer are active in South India, it is probable that the actual conference occurred there as well. Despite a lack of information on the images' display and reception, the footer indicates a prestigious pedigree.

The content of the images themselves reproduce the forms discussed above. The second, fourth, and seventh images reproduce anecdotal evidence: quotations from mythology without specific citations (Case D, 16; *fig. 1*), anecdotes of Sages affirming the divinity of cows (Case D, 16; *fig. 3*), and a representation of the 'churning of the ocean' episode that links the Kamadhenu to five sages (Case D, 16; *fig. 6*). The fifth image includes textual evidence: Vedic verses with citations (Case D, 16; *fig. 4*). The third and eighth images attest to the cow's purity by detailing ritual uses of cow products: the five sacred substances accompanied by the promise that consuming it will burn "away all the sins that are in my body including the skin and bones" (Case D, 16; *fig. 2*) and six ritually useful cow products (Case D, 16; *fig. 7*). The sixth image also displays evidence for the cow's purity via an unusually detailed iteration of the claim that deities are present in all parts of the cow's body. The image itemises the cow's body into twelve parts and lists the corresponding deities (Case D, 16; *fig. 5*).

The images also use some arguments that are not present in Subramanian Swamy's article. The second kind of religious arguments for cow protection, schemes of actions for cow welfare that are motivated by the cow's divinity and/or produce religious rewards, occurs in posters nine and ten. The ninth image lists the rewards for donating a cow (Case D, 16; *fig. 8*). The image specifies eight kinds of giving and their respective rewards, with the cow's colour determining the reward. All the kinds of donations listed rely on the ritual mechanism of *dana* (charitable giving) and the transformative rewards it entails. Four of the rewards are comply with formal definitions of the "spiritual benefit" that *dana* normally produces (Kasturi 2010, 107). They are securing heaven, securing righteousness, extirpating sin, and securing salvation

(Case D, 16; *fig. 8*). However, the other four are much more materially beneficial rewards: beauty, wealth, children, and extending “the family tree” (Case D, 16; *fig. 8*). Both the material and less tangible rewards are dependent on the divine status of the cow to occur. The variety of potential rewards emphasises the breadth and potency of the cow’s divinity. The list of actions on the tenth poster relies on the same premises with a different focus. All ten items on this list answers the question “How should one treat the motherly Cow” given that the animal is divine (Case D, 16; *fig. 9*). The whole list is geared towards persuading individuals to “Realize the divinity of the cow” through everyday actions (Case D, 16; *fig. 9*).

The third kind of religious arguments for cow protection, apologetics concerning cow killing and protection, occurs prominently in a post in *Hindu Existence*’s “Go Raksha” tab. The post is an article reproduced from *Agniveer*, a blog and book publisher founded by Sanjeev Newar (Case D, 1). The blog is dedicated to reviving Hinduism, Dharma, and Nation, and to advocating empowerment, justice, and enlightenment for everyone (Case D, 1). This article, authored by Newar, expounds the apologetic argument that Hinduism does not, in fact, include beef eating. The *Agniveer* article use “Philology, Grammar and other tools critical for correct interpretation of the Vedic mantras” to argue that there are no mentions of cow sacrifice in the Vedas (Case D, 5). The Newar article also asserts that “Respect for [the] cow forms a core tenet of Hinduism” (Case D, 5). The primary consequence of “works of western indologists” and Indians who cite them is “to convince him [the Hindu] of flaws in the foundation of this core tenet and make him feel guilty, he becomes easy prey for the predatory faiths” (Case D, 5). One can be relatively confident that “the predatory faiths” refers to Islam and Christianity as foreign groups who rely on the conversion of Hindus. So, there are foreign groups interested in making Hindus feel their faith is indefensible, as their Scriptures contradict a central tenet of their faith, in order to convert them to Islam or Christianity. There are also Indian intellectuals who are, knowingly or unknowingly, actively spreading the insidious perception that ‘the Vedas include cow sacrifice.’ Newar’s entire argument assumes a close relationship between Scripture, ritual, belief, and history and seeks to correct the distortion produced by anti-Hindu elements. He defends true Hinduism by dispelling the false information disseminated by Westerners and Western-influenced Indians.

Apologetic arguments for cow protection focus on defending ‘true,’ ‘correct’ or ‘real’ Hinduism. They proceed by entirely excluding beef eating and cow slaughter from legitimacy

within the religion. Advocates of cow protection are therefore operating in a critically important discursive field; losing or being convinced by opponents results in the group's subjugation and humiliation.

#### 5.4 Religious Arguments: Conclusion

The blog *Hindu Existence* provides a range of religious arguments for cow protection. All three kinds of argument are present in their posts: appeals to textual, anecdotal, and ritual authorities; schemes of concrete actions for cow welfare that rely on religious reasons and/or benefits for motivation; and apologetic arguments that locate beef eating and cow slaughter firmly outside of legitimate Hinduism. Similarly to social arguments, these arguments often involve the consequences of not protecting cows, i.e. allowing and/or engaging in cow slaughter and beef eating. However, the kinds of authorities, motivations, rewards, and distinctions to which they appeal identify the arguments as religious.

## **Chapter 6: Mixing the Categories**

This section will focus on the relationships between the categories by returning to the examples used above. These sources of Hindutva discourse will show that arguments of different categories are often presented together, mixing the substantially different claims. Within the discourse itself, the different arguments are treated as equivalent statements. The examples below reproduce the cases discussed above, demonstrating how they mix arguments from different categories together and treat different claims as mutually and equally supportive of cow protection. This pattern of mixing explains the functional relationship between the different categories: particular paths to the same conclusion.

The case revisited first will be the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti's (HJS) discourse which mixes religious and social arguments alongside the climate change arguments discussed in chapter 3. Second, the introduction to the National Commission on Cattle's Report will be revisited, focusing on the social and religious arguments in their discourse. Third, the Muslim Rashtriya Manch (MRM), which was used above as a case study for social arguments, will be considered with a focus on the humanist and religious arguments in their discourse. Finally, the blog *Hindu Existence* will be revisited and will show that both humanist and social arguments are mixed together with the religious arguments discussed above that supplement its humanist environmental arguments.

### **6.1 The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti**

The HJS's page "Importance of Indian Cow" has a section titled "What do [the] Vēdās say about the cow?" (Case A, 8). This section includes a series of religious arguments for cow protection, occurring before the climate change arguments discussed above. Fourteen separate quotations from various Sanskrit texts are presented to inform the reader of the correct attitude towards cows. Three are attributed to the Atharva Veda, one to the Rig Veda, one to the Yajur Veda, three to the Manusmriti, one to the sage Yajnavalkya, and five to the Mahabharata (Case A, 8). These quotations are presented in enumerated chunks that group together quotations with interpretations in Hindi and English. Some of the chunks have interpretations in only one language while others have both. The first chunk is unique in that it does not give a direct citation to a Sanskrit text. The entire chunk is attributed to a 2010 calendar made by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. It combines the Atharva Veda, Krishna, and "ancient . . . Sages" all without references. The Atharva Veda is quoted at the beginning to establish that "33 crore



[330,000,000] Deities reside inside the cow” (Case A, 8). The second chunk directly cites the Atharva Veda, book 1, hymn 16, verse 4, provides the Sanskrit, and gives an interpretation in English and Hindi. The English interpretation reads: “If someone destroys our cows, horses or people, kill him with a bullet of lead” (Case A, 8). The other chunks follow these first two in either supporting the divine status of the cow or elaborating on the evil of killing cows. The chunks in this section are notable for their reliance on religiously important texts as well as the format in which they are presented. Except for the first chunk, the Sanskrit is presented before providing interpretation in a more accessible language, Hindi and/or English. The hermeneutical format of these chunks is emphasised by the marker that precedes each interpretation. The word “meaning,” capitalised, bolded, and followed by a colon, occurs before each explanatory English or Hindi sentence (Case A, 8). So, both the content and the form of these arguments indicate that they are religious arguments for cow protection.

In the article titled “Heinous act of Cow slaughtering,” the social arguments focus on the negative effects of cow slaughter and beef eating on Indian/Hindu society, identifying them as the negative form of this category. For example, the origins of cow slaughter are attributed to the British and their organised plan to control Indian society: “As a part of the Master plan to destabilize the India, cow slaughter was initiated” (Case A, 5). This perspective on cow slaughter is elaborated later on in the article. Incidents of cow slaughter are likened to the “slaughtering of Hindus, Mother and Nation,” producing a society that “can never be peaceful,” (Case A, 5). It follows, then, that voting for political parties that actively or passively allow this practice that is so insidious for Indian society is considered to be participating in the “heinous crime” of cow slaughter (Case A, 5).

There is an interesting point in this article where the destruction that cow slaughter wreaks on society is given an uncommonly detailed treatment. Most negative social arguments reference amorphous effects and/or mechanisms by which cow slaughter affects society. Otherwise, ‘Hindu sentiment’ is mentioned as directly injured, hurt or outraged without any further precision. This context is part of what makes the following quotation distinctive.

As per a report, money derived from selling bones of cows (approximately Rs. 2000 crore [20,000,000,000]) is used solely for the purpose of jihad. Jihadis don’t use this money for themselves. Every year a total of approximately one crore

[10,000,000] cows are slaughtered and the money earned from it is used for jihad by terrorists. (Case A, 5)

The assumption that Muslims are the individuals killing cows, or at least receiving the money from business associated with dead cow bodies, is implied in this argument. This fits with the socially popular stereotype of Muslims running slaughter houses and butcher shops that has endured since the 1890s (Pinney 1997). The socially destructive evil named here, terrorism, connects the stereotype of cow-killing Muslims with the more recent stereotype of Muslims with bombs. It is possible that the social evil made explicit here is implied or read into other negative social arguments, especially considering the prevalence of associating any and all Muslims with terrorism. However, considering that the association of Muslims with cow slaughter significantly predates the assumption that Muslims are funding violent extremism, the relationship between the social evil of killing cows and this specific explanation must be seen in this light. It seems more likely that this specific explanation is implied or read into more general negative social arguments in some cases, but not all.

## 6.2 The Report of the National Commission on Cattle

The Report's introduction, authored by Guman Mal Lodha, mixed together almost all the categories of argument. It includes negative and positive social arguments, as well as the three categories of religious arguments. Together with the environmental arguments discussed above in Chapter three of this thesis, the Report mixed all three categories of argument, neglecting only the climate change subcategory. Lodha's negative social arguments occur in his description of cow protection's origins. He identifies the "Islamic invaders" as the group who began slaughtering cows on special occasions, e.g. Bakra-Eid, with the primary goal being to "humiliate the natives of this country and establish their sovereignty and superiority" (Case B, 3, para 25). This means that acts of cow slaughter are originally insidious for Indian society. The primary goal of such actions was to display and enact the subjugation of those who held the cow as sacred, the land's indigenous population. The foreign "invaders" understood the actual negative effects of cow-killing on society and used it to their advantage.

Lodha's positive social arguments occur before and after the period of foreign "invasion" and subjugation. In the pre-invasion period, "The cow is the embodiment of non-violence, compassion and motherly affection for all beings, tolerance, gratitude and benevolence. Her nutritious milk, gobar and gomutra are great contributions to mankind" (Case B, 3, para 14).

The cow's existence contributed to a harmonious and prosperous society by embodying and teaching social virtues. Due to these contributions to human society and "in recognition of her virtues and contributions, she is given the status of the "Mother of the Universe[""] and declared as non-violable and incomparable." (Case B, 3, para 14). Here, Lodha links human respect for and cultivation of cow welfare to human respect for the social values she embodies. The status conferred on the cow is the result of humans recognising the animal's positive social contributions. Lodha includes a post-invasion example as well. He claims that when cows are respected by everyone, communities live together in harmony instead of rioting and killing each other (Case B, 3, para 26). This example continues the causal connection between social good and cow welfare into the mixed state of Indian society. It presents cow protection as the solution to mixed, plural society. The implication of this argument is that riots and communal conflicts occur because the cow is not being respected by all groups. Communal violence, then, is an indicator of cow welfare. The contributions and status are particular versions of the argument that 'the cow is good for society.'

Lodha includes several kinds of religious argument in the introduction. The first two, anecdotal and scriptural, focus on past evidence of cow welfare's importance for the subcontinent's inhabitants. The third kind, ritual, exclusively uses examples of contemporary practices. The temporal trajectory of these examples implies the primordial and enduring significance of cow protection; it leads the audience to conclude that whether or not they were aware of it, cow protection both has been and continues to be a critical feature of life in India. Lodha's anecdotal arguments begin with a summary of the role of cows in Hindu mythology (Case B, 3, para 3-5). He focuses primarily on the figure of Kamadhenu, describing the account of her birth from the 'Churning of the Ocean of Milk' episode, the origin of panchgavya, and goseva. He then refers to how Krishna "spearheaded the 'Cow worship and preservation' culture" through his career as a cowherd (Case B, 3, para 7). Through these mythological examples, the importance of cows is traced to the origins of human culture in the subcontinent.

Lodha's scriptural arguments contribute to the primordial origins of cow protection. They also explicitly draw on his equation between 'our culture,' non-violence, and the cow that determines much of the pre-invasion period's content. He produces a list of quotations that are introduced as evidence of the importance of non-violence for "our culture" and the synonymy

between the two terms (Case B, 3, para 13). All of the specific quotations, Manusmriti 6.75, Yajurveda 36.18, and Atharvaveda 17.14, expound the value of non-violence (Case B, 3, para 13). As two of these citations are Vedas and the other is a Dharmaśāstra, the evidence's provenance bolsters the argument's authority. In his evidence, Lodha includes another major category of Sanskrit literature: the epics. He directly references the Mahabharata to establish the cow's fundamentally maternal role in the universe (Case B, 3, para 15).

Lodha's scriptural arguments explicitly draw on a wide breadth of Sanskrit material to support the temporal trajectory he presents. He also includes evidence that indicates to the reader the importance of cows for pre-invasion society. The Atharvaveda 1.16.4 and Manusmriti chapter 9, verse 13 are quoted in English and prescribe lethal physical violence against cow-killers (Case B, 3, para 16). Lodha introduces these quotations as the normative attitude of the "Vedas and Smrities [sic]" towards cow-killers (Case B, 3, para 16). He also mentions "several references in our Scriptures" that exemplify this view, despite only giving two quotations (Case B, 3, para 16). This introduction continues the impression of breadth used in scriptural arguments above. The quotations and their provenance indicate the broad consensus on the value of cows, through both praise and lethal action, that existed in pre-invasion society.

Lodha's ritual arguments turn from the pre-invasion period to the post-invasion or contemporary situation. He describes a series of fixed days in the year "for [the] exclusive worship of the Cow" that center on Diwali (Case B, 3, para 11). He explicitly names three days when puja is offered to cows: Vasubaras, Dhanteras, and Balipratipada. He specifies that "Now not only cows, but bulls also, were, and still are, the objects of worship" (Case B, 3, para 11). The particular festival he names is Pola, occurring in mid-August. Bulls are decorated, publicly processed, and taken from house to house for particular puja offerings (Case B, 3, para 11). The next day, children emulate these activities with wooden bulls instead of actual animals (Case B, 3, para 11). These practices are presented as indicators of the high "esteem" for bovines (Case B, 3, para 11).

Lodha uses all of these practices as simultaneous evidence of past and present attitudes towards cows, calves, and bulls. The foundation of this simultaneity is the unchanged ritual calendar. As the rituals that were occurring contemporaneously with the Vedas, Śāstras, and epics are the same as those occurring today, current practice can be used as an accurate representation of the past, evidence of continuity into the present, and the legitimacy of

the present. These rituals, then, become a bridge that links pre-invasion society to the post-invasion period. In this way, Lodha's temporal trajectory does not progress in a linear manner. The past is not only significant for establishing what was going on then, but also establishes the meaning and purpose of contemporary activities. The simultaneity of past and present allows evidence proper to the past to be a witness for the present and evidence proper to the present to be a witness for the past. Lodha's narration of cow protection's history is, then, not only relevant for deciphering the diachronic development of Indian society but also for deciphering the meaning of present-day society.

### 6.3 The Muslim Rashtriya Manch

The MRM mixes both environmental and religious arguments with the social arguments discussed above. Many of the statements made by Indresh Kumar, an RSS worker and ideological leader of the MRM, are environmental arguments for cow protection. Commenting on the 2017 Iftar parties, Kumar appealed to mundane causation when he claimed that Muslims were pledging to avoid eating beef at these parties because they recognised that doing so causes disease (Case C, 5). Conversely, he claimed that cow milk and ghee are healthy and have medicinal value (Case C, 5; Case C, 4). In a different statement to the media, Kumar specifically emphasised the benefits and consequent importance of cows for the Muslim community's economic welfare (Case C, 3). Girish Juyal, the MRM's National Convenor in 2017, mixed arguments in the same way when he claimed "that Islam has accepted cow milk as medicine and beef as health hazard" (Case C, 4). The arguments made by both men can be identified as humanist arguments, given their focus on the benefit of cows and their products for human welfare. Both Kumar and Juyal consistently mixed these humanist arguments with the social arguments discussed in Part I.

In his earlier statement on Bakra-Eid 2015, Kumar mixed religious and humanist forms in his address to his "Muslim brethren" (Case C, 2). He reproduced the argument that milk and ghee are beneficial to health and beef causes disease, and gave it a religious attribution. The main thrust of his argument was consistent with both the MRM's general activity and the arguments discussed above: convincing Muslims not to eat beef. The mixing in this statement is particularly interesting for its mixed form and the source Kumar used. He claimed that the Prophet Muhammad "said that cow's milk is for your good, ghee is medicine, but cow meat is disease" (Case C, 2). The appeal to a religious source, the Prophet, in order to convince his

audience that cow protection is good and beef eating is bad marks the first part of his argument as being a religious one. The second part, that cow milk and ghee are healthy and medicinal whereas beef causes disease, appeals to mundane causation, indicating an environmental argument. The *telos* of this second part is, as above, human welfare, marking it as a humanist argument. The dense mixing in this argument is a good example of how closely associated the different forms of cow protection arguments are in Hindu nationalist discourse.

#### 6.4 Hindu Existence

The blog *Hindu Existence*, discussed above in terms of its religious arguments for cow protection section, also mixes different categories of cow protection discourse. In the Swamy article, “Cow Is A Sacred Asset Of The Nation,” there are also humanist arguments present. Swamy claims that there are “150 million cows today, giving an average of less than 200 litres of milk per year . . . these divine animals can give an average of 11,000 litres of milk” (Case D, 19) He goes on to emphasise the economic potential, and implicit prosperity for Indians, of more effectively cultivating and exporting Indian milk (Case D, 19). The numerical data, mundane causation present in these arguments, and *telos* of human welfare mark these arguments as humanist. They are directly mixed with the religious arguments presented in the same article.

The first post in the “Go-Raksha” tab is authored by the blog’s Chief Editor, Upananda Brahmachari, and narrates his personal journey of recognising the importance of cow protection for “Hindu activism” (Case D, 3). This article mixes religious apologetic arguments together with negative social arguments different kinds of arguments together. Brahmachari reproduces the argument that killing cows, eating beef, and convincing other Hindus of the moral permissibility of these practices concretely harm Hindu society and constitute anti-national behaviour. The “Hindu beef propagators” that engage in all three activities are actually the “victim[s] of [a] certain Anti Hindu lobby” and are “hurting . . . Hindu sentiment” in a “suicidal” manner (Case D, 3). These arguments contain the markers of the negative form of social arguments for cow protection: that cow slaughter and beef eating should be avoided and/or illicit because of the adverse effects on society/the (Hindu) Nation.

Brahmachari’s apologetic arguments expand on his social ones. His apologetics aim to correct perceptions around the divinity of “Go Mata” that the “Anti-Hindu lobby” have spread (Case D, 3). He argues that his opponents are incorrect in their claim that eating beef is “a basic foundation and heritage of Hindu Dharma,” pitting correctly believing Hindus against their

coreligionists (Case D, 3). Brahmachari's argument basically distinguishes between what beliefs and practices can be considered legitimate Hinduism. He aims to defend 'real' or 'correct' Hinduism from the false information that the "Anti Hindu lobby" perpetuates. His defense of Hinduism also indicates the ideas' deep connections to national identity. For Brahmachari, acting against the truth of Hinduism and cow protection is simultaneously acting against the good of the nation.

### 6.5 Mixing: Conclusion

The discourse of all four case studies mix different categories of argument together to convince the reader of cow protection's importance. The MRM's discourse mixes humanist and religious arguments together with the social arguments discussed in Part I. The blog *Hindu Existence* mixes humanist and negative social arguments in addition to its religious arguments. The HJS adds scriptural religious and negative social arguments to their climate change arguments. Lodha adds social arguments and religious arguments to his humanist arguments in the introduction to the National Commission on Cattle's Report. The remarkable range of substantive differences between the arguments do not prevent any of the sources from mixing them together.

Despite these actual differences in rhetorical strategies and sources, the different kinds of argument are treated as functionally equivalent, supporting the larger aim of convincing the reader that Hindutva's cow protection is critically important for society. The different categories, then, are mutually supportive in their discursive function. The close relationship between categories is not explained by the substance of the arguments themselves but by their usage. Together, they form quite a broad range of support for Hindu nationalist cow protection discourse, each category of argument providing strength from its own sources. The interrelation between the categories forms scaffolding for the imagining of national identity, the support from many different kinds of argument holding up the common conclusion that national identity includes a commitment to cow protection.

## **Chapter 7: The Effect of Cow Protection on National Identity**

The essential elements Savarkar outlined for legitimate national identity continues to be substantially reproduced in contemporary public discourse. These elements demarcate the boundaries and constitute the criteria for Hindu-ness. A Hindu must share in the subcontinent's common geography, blood, and civilisation. If someone satisfies these criteria but does not recognise the larger group's vulnerable status or the critical importance of the Vedic tradition, then they cannot be legitimately considered to be Hindu. Each of our four cases reproduces all five of these elements in their discourse. By doing so, each case participates in the activist dimension of Savarkar's ideas; they share in the conviction that this formulation of national identity ought to apply to the entirety of India.

This activism is also evident through their arguments for cow protection. All of their arguments are basically aimed at convincing the reader that cow welfare is important for the nation and should be proportionately valued. The intimate mixing between the different categories of argument present in each case indicates the rhetorical strength of their common conclusion. The significance of that conclusion extends beyond the Muslim Rashtriya Manch's pamphlets or *Hindu Existence's* readership.

This section will focus on two examples of cow protection discourse's effect on national identity. The first example is connected to the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and will demonstrate how cow protection has become another criterion for determining legitimate Hindu identity. The second is connected to the National Commission on Cattle's Report and will demonstrate how even when Savarkar's essential elements are not explicitly present, they can profoundly influence areas of public discourse. These examples represent the ways in which Hindu nationalist cow protection discourse has outgrown its boundaries and begun to claim a more pervasive authority within Indian public discourse.

### **7.1 Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and Adityanath**

The connection between cow protection arguments and national identity can be seen in the news articles that the HJS runs on their website. Besides the news articles that they run on the website itself, they email out a daily newsletter to their subscribers. One of the recent articles involved the BJP's Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister (CM) of Uttar Pradesh (UP) since 2017. As he is simultaneously the Mahant (chief priest) of the Gorakhnath Math in UP, he conducts his entire public life in saffron clothing, cutting an interesting figure. His views on cow protection



are very well known; he ordered the closure of illegal slaughter houses across UP less than a week after he was appointed CM and periodically restates his commitment to the protection of bovines (Case A, 12).

The HJS ran an article in January of 2018 that focuses on some statements Adityanath made about cow protection early in the month. According to the article, Adityanath questioned how Siddaramaiah, the CM of Karnataka from 2013 to 2018, can simultaneously claim to be a Hindu and promote beef consumption (Case A, 1). Karnataka's then-CM had previously defended the legality of beef eating and responded to Adityanath's attack by reiterating his position (Case A, 11). The HJS article, and likely also Adityanath, did not go into the details of why beef consumption is fundamentally contrary to Hindu identity. However, the HJS's discourse on cow protection and Hindu identity fills in the blanks: cow slaughter and beef consumption are deplorable activities that concretely harm society and the environment. From this position, Adityanath's view that one cannot be Hindu and be against cow protection is not only understandable but accurate and laudable. Politicians should publicly defend cow protection, oppose cow slaughter, and use all available means to ameliorate the situation.

This article concretely demonstrates how cow protection is a site for contesting the ideal limits of national identity. A responsible Hindu must publicly support cow protection and oppose cow slaughter. If he does not, then he cannot claim to be Hindu or supportive of national interests. Cow protection arguments, then, conclude with a concrete essential element of national identity. This criterion becomes a necessary part of the Hindutva boundary. Cow protection arguments mirror the explicit function of Savarkar's proposed elements of Hindu-ness. If a criterion is missing, then the individual or group cannot be considered a legitimate part of the imagined community. Within Savarkar's work, the example of Muslims and Christians demonstrates how failing to meet a criterion is grounds for exclusion. Adityanath reproduces this strategy with an individual, the CM of Karnataka.

## 7.2 The National Commission on Cattle and the Supreme Court

The National Commission on Cattle's Report is the case whose effects are the easiest to track as the Report is directly and extensively cited in the 2005 Supreme Court decision *State of Gujarat v. Mirzapur Moti Kureshi Kassab Jamat* (Case B, 7). This judgment examined the constitutional validity of Gujarat expanding their cow slaughter law to protect bulls and bullocks. Given the constitutional elements involved, the case was heard by a constitutional

bench of seven judges instead of the normal two or three. The majority judgment was authored by the then-Chief Justice R. C. Lahoti and found the expanded Gujarati law to be “in the interest of Nation’s economy” and constitutionally valid (Case B, 7, p.50).

The area of the constitution most directly implicated in *Gujarat v. Mirzapur* was Article 48: the Directive Principle that instructs individual states to “endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter, of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle” (Constitution of India, art. 48). As a Directive Principle, Article 48 is not an enforceable part of the Constitution. Rather, it is a guideline for state legislative assemblies which they should consider but are under no obligation to follow. The non-enforceable, guideline status of Article 48 has often been the explicit or implicit foundation for the criminalisation of cow slaughter and related activities across various states, of which the Gujarati law is an example.

The main interpretive question can be clarified with reference to the immediate precedent, the Supreme Court’s judgment in the 1959 case *Hanif Qureshi v. State of Bihar*. According to this earlier judgment, states can enact laws that prohibit the slaughter of cows, calves, and buffalo calves under any circumstances (Case B, 2, p.9). However, bulls and buffaloes providing milk, labour or genetic material can be slaughtered once they become too old to provide (Case B, 2, p.9). The question for *Gujarat v. Mirzapur* centres on whether or not the circumstances in Gujarat in 2005 are sufficiently different from Bihar in 1959 to justify expanding the scope of criminalised slaughter.

*Gujarat v. Mirzapur* relies on the National Commission on Cattle’s Report to support the conclusion that bulls and bullocks continue to be useful in their old age. The Report provides support through its findings on the utility of dung and urine and their consequent value for agriculture, nutrition, health, and energy (Case B, 7, p.39-42). Most of the judgment’s discussion focuses on correcting the “false” perception that bovines become useless in their old age (Case B, 7, p.41). The cost of maintaining a bovine that does not ‘work’ anymore is compared to the revenue from dung and urine products, demonstrating the economic viability of keeping old animals (Case B, 7, p.41-42). The Report is also referred in the affidavit filed by the then-Joint Director of Animal Husbandry for the State of Gujarat. In the affidavit he claimed that the dung specifically “is much more [valuable] than even the famous “Kohinoor” diamond” (Case B,

7, p.34). He argues that the only basic protection for the right to life is “proper food and feeding” which “can be grown with the help of dung” (Case B, 7, p.34). He concludes that “the most fundamental thing to the fundamental right of living for the human being is bovine dung” (Case B, 7, p.34).

*Gujarat v. Mirzapur* also includes the Report’s recommendations to the Union Government. The state should subsidise and promote schemes, organisations, and individuals that produce cow products (Case B, 7, p.40-41). Moreover, the benefits derived from such products justify enforceable union and state laws prohibiting the slaughter of all kinds of bovines and their transport between states (Case B, 7, p.40). Transgressing these laws should be treated as a cognisable offense (Case B, 7, p.40); officers should have the authority to arrest without a warrant and begin investigations without the permission of a court.

As these arguments for cow protection focus on the concrete benefits of bovines for human life, they can be identified as humanist arguments. However, the judgment is actually devoid of explicit Hindutva elements; nowhere did it discuss any of the five essential elements. It does include some discussion of the religious significance of the “cow and its progeny” for Hindu Indians (Case B, 7, p.9). The first occurrence of this discussion appears while recounting judicial precedent and is restricted to a brief acknowledgement of festival rituals and some bovine statuary in some temples (Case B, 7, p.9). The judgment relied on the vacuum within which the law operates; the judgment only discussed ideas or processes that were explicitly mentioned or directly relevant to the particular litigation: the arguments made by the defense and the prosecution. Instead of mentioning ideas or processes deemed to be *ultra vires* or beyond the limits of the particular case, the judgment strictly limited itself and its quotations to the distinctive features of environmental arguments for cow protection.

Despite this omission, Hindutva concepts of identity and society were read into the judgment and its application. Groups and individuals explicitly promoting these ideas celebrated the judgment as a decisive victory (Case B, 8). *Gujarat v. Mirzapur*, then, concretely affirmed the Hindutva concepts of identity and nation from its sources in the Indian public sphere. In this way, the decision itself mirrors the chapters of the Report; both focus on humanist arguments and take steps to minimise the Hindutva elements.

This minimisation can be seen in the concluding section of the Report’s introduction, where the relationship between Lodha’s historical account and the findings of the Report is

addressed. The introduction's penultimate paragraph begins with some information that was intended to contextualise the foregoing paragraphs:

The Commission has decided to approach all issues objectively only. The earlier references to the castes, communities or religions of the cow slaughterers in various periods of history of this country, whether it be the British era or Mughal empire etc., were only given with a view to tracing out the historical background for our record.

(Case B, 3, para 169)

The point Lodha made was to separate the historical account he gave throughout the preceding paragraphs from the scientific objectivity of the tests and surveys given throughout the rest of the Report. Aside from any kind of hierarchy of information, this separation exemplifies the mechanism behind *Gujarat vs Mirzapur*'s omission. Lodha confirms this in the second sentence: his historical account was "only given with a view to tracing out the historical background". The historical narrative and its Hindutva elements are minimized and dislocated from the rest of the Report.

However, Lodha belied this dislocation before the end of his introduction. He explicitly informed the reader, including the Union Government, of his "hope that the recommendations" made throughout the report "would be accepted and relied upon" by both the Executive and Legislative branches of Government, and, "above all[,] by the 100 crores of "WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA" for the benefit of 20 crores of speechless and defenseless "Cow and its progeny" in this great Nation of ours." (Case B, 3, para 170). The Report's findings and recommendations were intended to ameliorate the circumstances of bovines in India. According to Lodha, these circumstances are the result of past actions and failures to act, a process begun by Muslim invaders, continued by the British, and abetted by "Vote-greedy politicians, a few Money-greedy Hindus" (Case B, 3, para 62). He is quite unambiguous about how the circumstances developed and what required correction.

The Hindutva concepts in his introduction operated in his historical narrative, arguments for cow protection, and view of the entire Report. All of these cooperated and were aimed at reshaping Indian society, law, and governance into the Hindutva mould. This pattern has concrete effects for public discourse in India. In particular, the National Commission's Report impacted the discursive uses of *Gujarat v. Mirzapur*, affirming the public role of its Hindutva concepts of identity and society.

### 7.3 Effect: Conclusion

The effects of Hindu nationalist cow protection discourse has reached the heights of the discourse of the most populous state's Chief Minister and the Republic's apex court. Adityanath's discourse reproduces the Savarkar's exclusionary strategy: if one criterion is not fully satisfied, then the group or individual cannot legitimately claim to be Hindu. Cow protection functions in the same way as Savarkar's elements; denying its importance or supporting beef eating prohibits the speaker(s) from being Hindu.

*Gujarat v. Mirzapur* demonstrates how this particular way of formulating identity is affirmed in public discourse. Despite the Court making no reference to the Report's introduction or the meaning of 'Nation' that pervades it, the groups who participate in Hindu nationalist discourse celebrated the judgment as a victory. Even if the direct connections are omitted, the Hindutva formulation of national identity was functionally included in *Gujarat v. Mirzapur*. The judgment provided affirmation for cow protectors across India. These effects demonstrate the role of cow protection discourse as a criterion of Hindutva in India's public sphere.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

The category of environmental arguments relies on numerical data, mundane causation, and empirical research to convince the reader of cow protection's importance. The first subgroup, climate change arguments, emphasises the primacy of the environment as the beneficiary of bovines and their products. These arguments take the environment's welfare as its telos and does not focus on the benefits to humans, as demonstrated by the case of the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti. The second subgroup, humanist arguments, emphasises the benefits of bovines and their products for human welfare. The form and content of this subgroup can be found in the National Commission on Cattle's Report, particularly the introduction authored by Guman Mal Lodha. Both subgroups utilise the rhetorical strategies of scientific writing and appeal to scientific authorities in order to lend force to their arguments.

The category of social arguments are defined by the claim that the cow is concretely beneficial to society. Such arguments do not rely on the kinds of authority, sources or strategies common to the other categories. As demonstrated by the Muslim Rashtriya Manch's discourse, social arguments occur in positive and negative forms. Positive social arguments focus on the concrete benefits of cows and their products for society. Negative social arguments emphasise the concrete problems created in society by mistreating, killing, and eating cows. The Muslim Rashtriya Manch is itself an interesting example of the variety of Hindu nationalist discourse; a group that by Savarkar's definition is excluded from legitimately claiming national identity not only reproduces the substance of Savarkar's discourse but also advocates for the close relationship between cow protection and the nation.

The final category consists of arguments that appeal to religious authorities, myths and rituals, in order to convince the reader of cow protection's importance. As the blog *Hindu Existence's* discourse demonstrates, such arguments involve appeals to anecdotal, textual, and religious sources; apologetic definitions of 'true' Hinduism; and proof for the divinity of cows. Religious arguments do not utilise the strategies or sources characteristic of the other categories. Instead, they rely on the rewards, motivations, texts, myths, and rituals of the Hindu religious tradition, expecting the audience to find such sources authoritative.

Once the actual differences between the categories has been established, their interrelations become more apparent. Each of the four cases used to demonstrate the form and content of each category also mix arguments from different categories together. When the

arguments are mixed, they are presented without addressing the different kinds of appeals, sources, or strategies. This equivalent usage indicates the mutually supportive relationship between the categories. The substance of the categories are quite different, but they share one goal: convincing the Indian public of cow protection's importance for the nation. The Muslim Rashtriya Manch mixes environmental and religious arguments alongside their social arguments. *Hindu Existence* mixes environmental and social arguments together with their religious ones. The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti's discourse mixes religious and social arguments alongside their environmental arguments. The National Commission on Cattle's Report also mixes religious and social arguments.

Besides the intimate relationship between the categories, each case also reproduces the elements of Savarkar's concept of national identity. The conceptual test confirms the reproduction of Savarkar's ideas in each case's discourse. The test itself consists of five elements: common geography, ancestry, and civilisation, attributing a vulnerable status to the Hindu community in India, and valorising the Vedic tradition. The presence of these ideas, and consequent participation in the measurement of national identity, reveals the reason behind the importance of cow protection arguments for Hindu nationalist discourse. Seen in the proper discursive light, these arguments are not only trying to convince the reader should care about cow welfare. Their rhetorical telos includes using cow protection as a discursive measurement of national identity.

The cumulative rhetorical effect of these arguments and their interrelations carries cow protection arguments to the level of the criteria for Hindu-ness; in its absence, the individual or group cannot legitimately claim national identity. The effect of these arguments is observable at other locations in Hindu nationalist public discourse. One such site is the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh's attack on his counterpart for Karnataka. As Siddaramaiah supported public and legal beef consumption, he cannot be a true Hindu.

Another site is the 2005 Supreme Court of India judgment, *Gujarat v. Mirzapur*. The judgment reproduces almost the entirety of chapter 5 of the National Commission on Cattle's Report as part of their reasons for finding that the expanded Gujarati cow protection law is constitutionally valid and in the nation's interest. The judgement itself omits any reference to the Report's introduction or the relationship between cow protection and Hindu nationalist formulations of national identity. Despite these omissions, the apex court's stamp of approval

for the Gujarati law extended to the relationship between cow welfare and the good of the nation. The Court's discursive approval for Hindutva cow protection is confirmed by the judgment's reception. The Hindu nationalist ideas operative within the legislation's discourse were functionally affirmed by the Indian Republic's highest court.

The interrelations tracked throughout this thesis indicate several conclusions. First, there are substantially different ways of arguing for cow protection within Hindu nationalist discourse. These can be organised into three categories, based on the variety of sources and appeals used. Second, these different ways of arguing can be freely mixed, reinforcing their common conclusion. Third, the rhetorical force of these arguments and the way they are mixed affords the role of an essential criteria for national identity. Through the discursive sites, interactions, and effects involved, the contemporary position of cow protection within the Indian public sphere commands considerable strength.



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## Appendix I

Posters from *Hindu Existence* (Case A, 16)



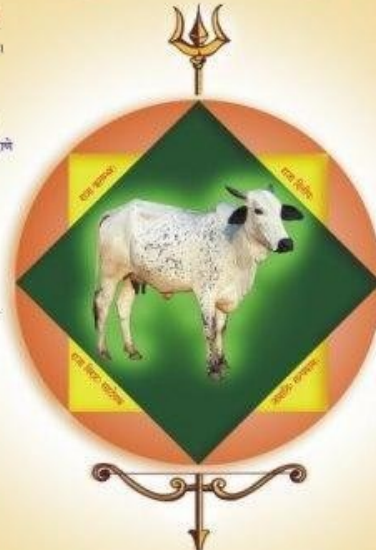
# Cow in Indian Mythology

**शङ्करकृत-सुरभि-धेनु स्तुतिः**  
सृष्टिस्थितिविनाशार्थं कर्तव्यं माते नमो नमः ।  
या त्वं रसमधैर्भक्षितराज्याययवसि भूषणम् ॥  
त्वया विश्वमिदं सर्वं बलस्नेहसमन्वितम् ।  
त्वं माता सर्वकद्रवाणां बर्हणं दुहितृता तथा ॥  
- स्कन्दपुराणे

**Praise of the Cow by Lord Shiva**  
O mother! I bow to you who is the mother who causes the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world by nourishing the mother earth. You nourish the whole world with strength and friendship. You are the mother of all the Rudra-s and the daughter of all the Vayu-s.  
- Skandapurana

**ऋषयो गावश्च**  
गावः पवित्रम् परम् -ऋषयः।  
गावः स्वर्गस्य सोपानं -ऋषयः।  
गावः प्रतिष्ठा भूतानां -ऋषयः।  
गावः प्रदक्षिणीकार्याः -अपस्तम्बः।

**Sages and Cows**  
Cows are most sacred - Vyasa  
Cows are the ladder to heaven - Chyavana  
Cows are the best of all beings - Vasishtha  
Cows are to be circumambulated daily - Apastamba




**कृष्णलीलासु गावः**  
यद्यज्ञानादसंनियं कुमाररीलो  
अन्तर्ध्वं तदवलाः प्रगृहीतपुच्छैः ।  
बलीयस्त्रित्तत दधौ अनुकूप्यमाणौ  
प्रेरन्त्य उग्रिज्ञानभूषा जहदुः कृत्यः ॥  
- श्रीमद्भागवते

**Cows in Krishna-Leela**  
The Cows in the 'Vraja' land that were most liked by Lord Krishna were held by their tails by the ladies of the land. These cows, moved here and there by their calves and proceeding towards the grazing lands were most beautiful to behold.  
- Srimad Bhagavatam

**रामलीलासु गावः**  
रामलक्ष्मणयो राजन् गोदानं कारयस्व हं ।  
सौमित्रे गोसहस्रमुपाकुरु ।

**Cows in Rama-Leela**  
O King, arrange for the cows to be given away by Rama and Lakshmana  
O Lakshmana, take away the thousand cows




Concept, Visualization and Design:  
**Samskriti Foundation**  
Mysore (www.samskriti.org)

**National Conference on 'Glory of Go-Mātā'**

Organized by:  
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati,  
S.V. Go Samrakshana Trust, Tirupati,  
Shri Bhaskaryan Charitable Trust, Chennai.

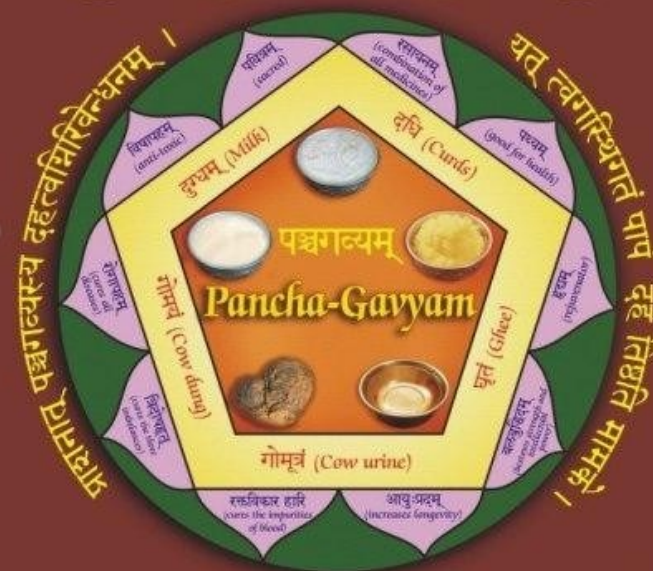
Posters Sponsored by: Sri R.S. Anand Singh, Hooper.

Fig. 1




# Pancha-Gavyam and its effects

The consumption of the Pancha-Gavya (five products of cow) burns away all the sins that are in my body including the skin and bones, just as the fire burns away firewood.



**पञ्चगव्यस्य दहत्वशरीरेकन्धनम् ।**  
**यत् त्वमास्थिगतं पापं देहे तिष्ठति मामके ।**



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Fig. 2



## Sage Cyavana's respect for cows


 $\neq$ 



 $\neq$ 



 $=$ 


- Sage Cyavana was unexpectedly caught in the net of fishermen.
- The fishermen reported this incident to King Nahusha.
- Cyavana asked Nahusha to compensate the fishermen with wealth equal to him.
- Only a Cow was found to be equal in merit to Cyavana.
- Cyavana praises the Cow:

**गावः स्वर्गस्य सोपानं गावः स्वर्गेऽपि पूजिताः ।**  
**गावः कामदुहो देव्यो नान्यत्किञ्चित्परं स्मृतम् ॥**

*gāvaḥ svargasya sopānaṁ gāvaḥ svarge'pi pūjitāḥ ।*  
*gāvaḥ kāmaduho devyo nānyatkīñcitparaṁ smṛtam ॥*

*The Cows are the stairways to heaven. They are worshiped even in heaven. They are wish-fulfilling deities. There is nothing greater than the Cow.*




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Shri Bhishyadara Charitable Trust, Chennai.

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Fig. 3



# The Praise of Cow in Vedas




**प्रणौमि ववणदोङ्कारमणिघण्टाविभूषिणीम् ।  
 कलालोककुटुम्बस्य सूक्तिधेनुं सरस्वतीम् ॥**

*"I bow down to Saraswati,  
 the milch cow in the family of poets.  
 She is adorned by the bell of Omkāra".  
 (Sāyana)*

प्रजापतिश्च परमेशी च शङ्खः बन्धुः शिरोः अश्विनोऽङ्गुलीः पद्मेः कुकरोः  
 सोमो राज्ञः मरिचिको द्यौस्तस्रहन्ः पृथिव्यस्रहन्ः । विद्युजिह्वाः ।  
 मरुतो दन्ताः रेवती वीजाः कृत्तिका स्वल्पः अर्षोऽङ्गुः । विश्वे वायुः  
 स्वर्गो लोकः कृष्णद्विपरणी निवेष्यः । श्विनः कोडोऽन्तरिक्षः  
 पातञ्जल्यः कृत्स्नविः कन्दुः पृथ्वीः कीकसाः ।  
 दिव्यानां पञ्चीः पृथ्व्यः उपरसदः पशवः । विश्वश्च वरुणश्चरितो त्वष्टा नार्यमा च बालाः ।  
 वक्रः च श्वरः च शोणी बलमुक्ताः ।  
 एतद्देविधरूपं सर्वरूपं गौरूपम् । (अथर्ववेदः)

*"The various Gods headed by Prajāpati, form the different limbs of the cow.  
 The universe is likened to a cow (Atharvaved)."*



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Fig. 4

**The limbs of the Cow and associated deities according to *Bṛhatparāśarasmṛti***

Root of horn	- Brahmā
Centre of horn	- Viṣṇu
Tip of horn	- Śiva
Whole body	- All holy places, all gods
Forehead	- Mother Goddess
Centre of nose	- Kārtikēya
Ears	- Kambala, Āsvatara Serpents
Eyes	- Sun and Moon
Teeth	- The eight Vasus
Tongue	- Varuṇa
Dung	- Yamuna
Urine	- Ganges

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Fig. 5

गौतमो विन्ध्यस्य पालकः

The five celestial cows and sages associated with them.  
These five cows were obtained while churning the ocean to obtain nectar

नन्दा  
(nandā)  
↓  
जमदग्निः  
(jamadagniḥ)

सुभद्रा  
(subhadrā)  
↓  
भरद्वाजः  
(bharadvājaḥ)

सुरभिः  
(surabhiḥ)  
↓  
वसिष्ठः  
(vasiṣṭhaḥ)

बहुला  
(bahulā)  
↓  
गौतमः  
(gautamaḥ)

सुशीला  
(suśilā)  
↓  
असितः  
(asitaḥ)

अमृतमन्थनम्  
The churning  
of ocean to  
obtain nectar

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Fig. 6

**मातृं विन्दस्व मातरं**

# The six products obtained from Cows

**षडङ्गानि Six Products**

- घृतं (Ghee)**: It is the source of ambrosia, the food of gods.
- गोमयं (Cow dung)**: Rites done with seeds of rice and other crops from it, along with the milk from its laved by Shiva and Lakshmi.
- दधि (Curd)**: All products derived from it are auspicious and lead to a long and healthy life.
- शेणुनी (Buttermilk)**: It is auspicious, gives good leads to good results and is the cause of all interferences.
- गोमूत्रं (Cow urine)**: It is the source of all medicines in the world.
- गोमूत्रं (Cow urine)**: Urine is produced from it. It is fragrant and presents to the cow. It is accepted by gods.


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Fig. 7



# Godāna - Giving a Cow in charity

1. Donating a black cow, secures heaven.
2. Donating a white cow extends the family tree.
3. Donating a red cow makes one beautiful.
4. Donating a yellow cow produces wealth.
5. Donating a dark-hued cow produces progeny
6. Donating a dark-blue cow secures righteousness.
7. Donating a brown cow destroys sins.
8. Donating a variegated cow gives salvation.



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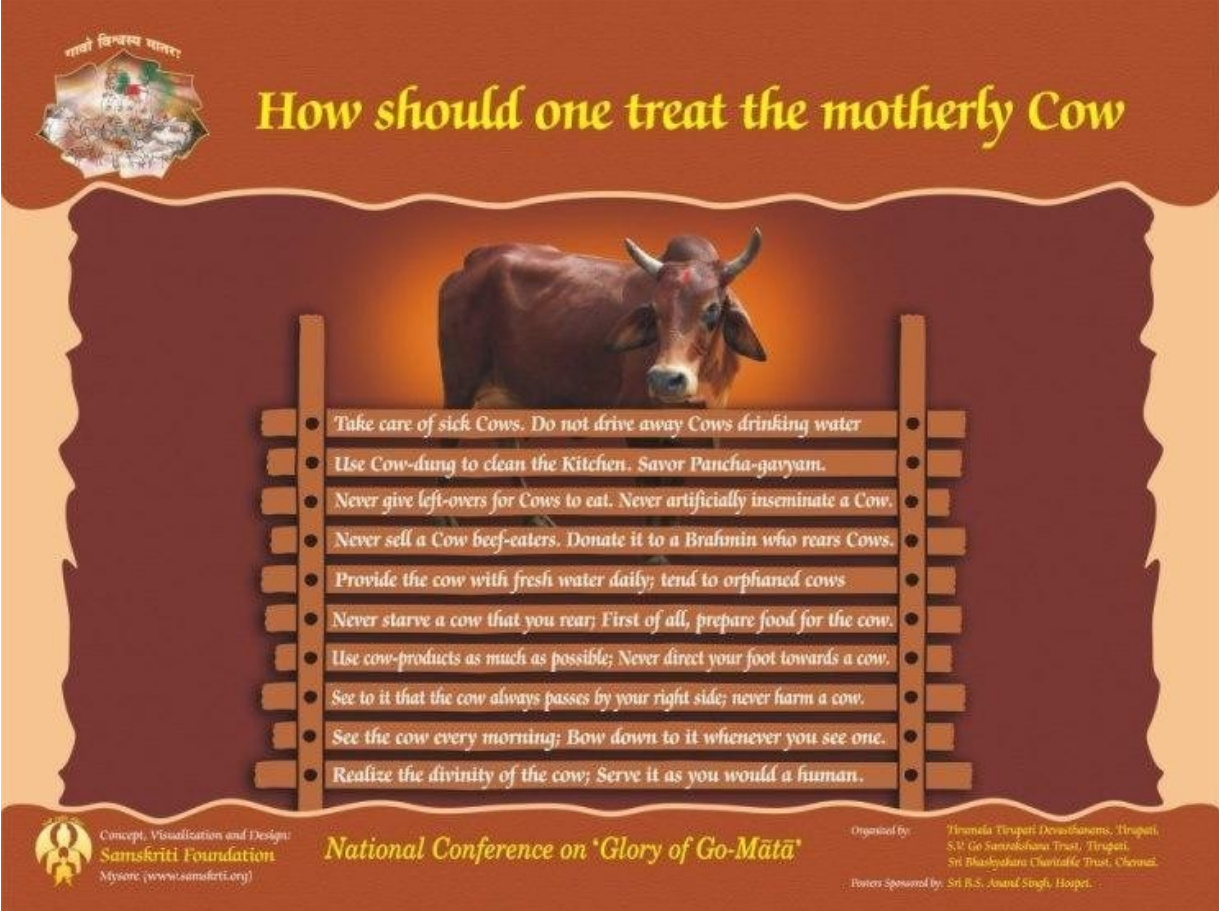
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Fig. 8





**How should one treat the motherly Cow**

- Take care of sick Cows. Do not drive away Cows drinking water
- Use Cow-dung to clean the Kitchen. Savor Pancha-gavyam.
- Never give left-overs for Cows to eat. Never artificially inseminate a Cow.
- Never sell a Cow beef-eaters. Donate it to a Brahmin who rears Cows.
- Provide the cow with fresh water daily; tend to orphaned cows
- Never starve a cow that you rear; First of all, prepare food for the cow.
- Use cow-products as much as possible; Never direct your foot towards a cow.
- See to it that the cow always passes by your right side; never harm a cow.
- See the cow every morning; Bow down to it whenever you see one.
- Realize the divinity of the cow; Serve it as you would a human.

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Fig. 9

## Glossary

### **Bullocks**

Male cattle that are generally used for draught labour and have commonly been castrated.

### **Bulls**

Male cattle that are generally used for breeding.

### **‘Cow and progeny’**

Generally refers to female cattle and the animals they birth: bulls, bullocks, and calves. This phrase is used to cover the broadest range of cattle possible, without included water buffaloes.

### **Cow/bovine**

These will be treated as synonyms, in part to reflect that the referent is not always female bovines. Within Indian discourse, it is relatively common to use ‘bovines’ as a synonym for cow. Male cattle and calves of both sexes are frequently read into the word ‘cow,’ as the deputy director of Uttar Pradesh’s Animal Husbandry Department did in an interview with the *Asia Times* (Kanchan 2019). Water buffaloes are a liminal example that are sometimes read into ‘cow’ and other times excluded.

### **Cow protection**

While there are still cow protection advocates who are either unaffiliated with or explicitly in opposition to Hindutva ideas, the movement is overwhelmingly identified with Hindu nationalism in public discourse. There is a distinction to be noted here between non- Indian discourse and Indian discourse. Foreign writers, notably journalists who expect their readership to be largely unfamiliar with the Indian discursive terrain, will use ‘cow protection’ to refer to all Hindu nationalists involved in cow protection without any qualification distinguishing between violent and non-violent cow protectors (Griswold 2019). Writers who are in a South Asian context and/or expect their readership to be familiar with the terrain will almost always make a distinction between cow protectors who commit cow-related violence and those who do not. The violent ones are more often referred to as ‘cow vigilantes’ than cow protectors, avoiding the value neutral or positive phrase (Bhattacharjee 2019; Bhattacharya 2017).

Despite this split in journalistic discourse, the use of the phrase ‘cow protection’ in this thesis is not a reproduction of the meaning foreign journalism assigns to it. Rather, it reflects this thesis’ view that the usage of Hindutva cow protection is not limited to one subsection of the cow protection movement. Hindutva ideas about cow protection are expanding into the many areas of Indian social life, including public discourse and administration. Using the phrase ‘cow protection’ to refer to the movement more generally reflects the discursive exchanges amongst Hindu nationalists interested in bovine welfare.

### **Hindutva**

A neo-Sanskrit term literally meaning ‘Hindu-ness;’ the suffix -tva creates an abstract noun from ‘Hindu’ (Bhatt 2001, 77). It generally refers to Hindu nationalist thinking, organisations, and figures. Although a fuller discussion of this term and its usage in this thesis will occur below, it will be used as a synonym for Hindu nationalist. It is particularly useful in this thesis as it has both a broader and more specific meaning than Hindu. It is broader in that groups who consider themselves religiously non-Hindu can still claim and use Hindutva discourse. It is more specific in that a substantive meaning unites its referents.

### **Milch Cows**

Female cattle that are kept for their milk production.

### **Gau**

Transliteration of the Hindi word for cow: गौ. Due to the actual interchanging of गौ (gau) and गो (go) in discourse, I will normally paraphrase with “gau” even when the Devanagari reads गौ for consistency and searchability. Gau-mata (Kamadhenu)

The gendered symbol of ‘Mother Cow,’ simultaneously a divine symbol and each individual cow. The figure of Kamadhenu is frequently elided into Gau-mata, often by interpreting mentions of Kamadhenu in textual sources as referring to Gau-mata. Individually, Kamadhenu is normally referred to as the ‘wish-fulfilling cow’ in reference to her mythological role. The elision between these figures can be seen in the 2016 editions of Class 5 Hindi textbooks from Rajasthan. The textbook includes a letter informing the students and any other reader of the benefits and blessings flowing from the cow that is signed “Kamadhenu Gaumata” (Chowdhury

2018). The letter's signature explicitly elides the two figures, making them synonymous and mutually implied.

### **Panchgavya**

A sacred substance used in a multitude of Hindu rituals. Composed of five components: milk, ghee, curd, urine, and dung.

### **Union Government**

The Centre Government led by the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the ruling party and/or coalition; analogous to the Federal Government in Canada.