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Critique of Hindutva in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*

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Submitted By:

Garima Pandeya

Roll No.: 60

Symbol No.: 2815013

T. U. Regd. No.: 6-2-40-205-2017

Central Department of English

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Critique of Hindutva in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Garima Pandeya has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Dr. Bal Bahadur Thapa

(Internal Examiner)

Dinesh Kumar Bhandari

(External Examiner)

Prof. Dr. Dhruva Bahadur Karki

(Head of the Department)

Date:

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Garima Pandeya

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Abstract

This thesis explores how and why the Hindutva ideas presented by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar are repeated throughout Salman Rushdie's Victory City. This study fills the research gap, providing in-depth critical examination of Hindutva issue and its impact, especially in the context of modern India. The research adopted qualitative approach, resorting to close reading, thematic coding, and textual analysis from the theoretical perspective of New Historicism and allegorical interpretation. In line with Fredric Jameson's ideas regarding allegorical reading, the researcher links the fictional portrayal of the 14th century Hindutva in India to that of the 21st century. Victory City serves as the primary text and literature review, various books, news, reports, academic journal articles, book reviews, and other e-resources serve as secondary source to collect information. This research underlines that the idea of Hindu's sacred land, resistance to foreign influence, Hindu philosophy, strict religious orthodoxy, intolerance, myths, Sanskrit language, literature, festivals, and cow protection ingrained within the novel, serve as Hindutva themes. The novel set in the 14th century with these themes, metaphorically mirrors the idea of Savarkar, which the BJP has adopted in the recent years to assert supremacy over Muslims, construct Hindu-centric identity, and build India as a Hindu Rashtra. This step of the BJP has caused internal divisions, continuous communal violence, and destruction of properties within various Indian states as presented in the novel. Presenting these Hindutva images and references in the novel, Rushdie has created Victory City as an allegorical text to critique the rise of Hindutva in contemporary India.

Keywords: Hindutva, New Historicism, orthodoxy, supremacy, resistance, Hindu Rashtra

This research examines the manifestation of various Hindutva themes and analyzes how they are presented in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*. The research ventures into how the

novel skillfully intertwines Hindu myths, history, fiction, and magic reflecting the characters' aim to create an ideal Hindu state. It presents the history of the 14th century real Vijayanagar Empire, a powerful Hindu Kingdom in the southern part of India that existed until the 16th century. The period between 14th and 16th centuries is still celebrated as the golden age of Hindu civilization. Inspired by its history, Rushdie presents the fictionalized version of Vijayanagar that despite being rich in cultural, architectural, and other resources, it faces internal conflicts, invasions, and religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The dominant visions of Hindu leaders towards other religious minorities, idea of religious tolerance and intolerance that causes the internal conflict between Hukka, Vidyasagar, Bukka, and Pampa Kampana, and the communal tension between Hindus and Muslims shown in the novel provoke the researcher to do this allegorical research reflecting the rise of Hindutva with the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in modern India. This study attempts to explore and analyze how and why the Hindutva ideas presented by BJP and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar are repeated throughout *Victory City*. This research adds value to it as no study has been conducted on the issue of Hindutva before. By providing a depth critical study, it effectively contributes to those who seek to research on this issue. It serves as a beneficial resource for prospective scholars, researchers, academics, students, and other literary enthusiasts interested in Rushdie's literary creation and who wish to enrich their understanding of Hindutva ideology and its impact, especially in the context of modern India. It further strengthens scholarly research in the field of literature and academic discussion.

Salman Rushdie, the eminent British-American novelist, born on 19th June 1947 in Bombay (now Mumbai), writes skillfully knitting magical realism, socio-historical, cultural, and political themes in his literary works. His works are greatly influenced by his personal experiences growing up in post-colonial Indian environment and later staying in the West for study. This led him to bridge the literary traditions of West and East. His eccentric

storytelling technique first captured the attention of global audience with his novel *Midnight's Children* (1981) winning Booker Prize. This book has explored a hectic journey of India to independence through the blending of myth, history, and magical realism. However, his literary journey has been synonymous with disputes and controversies. His novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) became controversial as it fanned the flames of anger and resentment within the Muslim world, leading to a fatwa issued by Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that called for his assassination. This incident led him to hide for almost ten years that shapes his perspective on the issues like freedom of individual speech, identity, and existence. These themes repeatedly come throughout his works, profoundly influencing his literary crafts.

Despite being surrounded by controversies and dangers, he continued to pen and publish other outstanding works like *Shame* (1983), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008), and other so on. Rushdie's *Victory City* is his 15th novel published in February 2023 after being attacked by a Muslim man with knife, leading him to lose his right eye in August 2022 in New York. He blends history, myth, fiction, and magical realism in this work too. Reimagining the rise and fall of Vijayanagar, the marker of Hindu civilization, he set the novel in 14th century India through the protagonist Pampa Kampana blessed with magical powers. His background as a diasporic and postcolonial writer with roots in India and his abiding engagement with religious and political themes, shape this novel as a critique of Hindutva ideology.

Rushdie's *Victory City* serves as the fictional re-imagination of Indian history, exploring the rise and fall of Hindu Kingdom, Vijayanagar (Bisnaga in the text), originally founded by two Sangama brothers, Hukka Raya and Bukka Raya in 1336. In the novel, Rushdie narrates the past concealed history of Vijayanagar written in Pampa Kampana's Sanskrit epic *Jayaparajaya*, long buried in a pot. The novel has four parts: Birth, Exile, Glory, and Fall. It begins with the founding of this pot after four and a half centuries later and

how Hukka and Bukka, with the help of Pampa's magical seeds, create a powerful, peaceful, and harmonious Hindu city, where the Hanuman Temple with big statue of Lord Hanuman emerges near the Pampa river. However, there emerges the idea of religious tolerance and intolerance. Hukka Raya, who at the beginning, tolerates other faiths, becomes intolerable after being influenced by Vidyasagar, a strict religious leader. He too dedicates temples to Lord Virupaksha. It creates the internal conflict between two brothers and Vidyasagar as well. Bukka advocates for the separation of religion from politics but Vidyasagar advocates for the consolidation of both, calling for unity using the philosophy of *Brahman* and *Atman*. Later, when Bukka Raya dies, Pampa with her three daughters, Haleya Kote and Master Lee went to the exile in the enchanted forest of Aranyani, where she calls other communities to celebrate Hindu festivals. During that time, Vidyasagar makes Bhagwat (Hukka Raya II) as the new king of Bisnaga, who imposed strict religious orthodoxy, demolishing Buddhists, Jains, and Muslims philosophies. He even tries to erase the pluralistic history of Bisnaga by renaming the streets and breaking the flow of Muslim and Hindu culture together at Rachakonda.

When Devaraya takes the throne after Bhagwat, Pampa manipulates him by whispering in his ears that makes him tolerant of multiple faiths and marry a girl from Jain and Muslim communities. However, during the reign of Krishnadevaraya, he defeated Sultans of Bijapur and Bidar and demands subserviences to Bisnaga from them while allowing them to retain their religion but staying in a subordinating position. After Krishnadevaraya, Achyuta Deva Raya becomes the king, who, in his reign, orders to build Pampa's statue to be placed in opposition to Narsimha's statue. Despite attempting to impose religious supremacy over one another through various means, the Battle of Talikota (1565) held during the reign of Aliya Rama Raya, destroys the entire Bisnaga city, leading many citizens to death and the destruction of religious symbols.

This allegorically critiques the way Hindutva leaders manipulate citizens using histories, myths, philosophies, religions, cultures, and Hindu texts to fit its political agendas, reflecting on India's continuous religious tension between authoritarianism and pluralism. Rushdie uses the fictionalized Bisnaga to reflect the real-world power struggles, illuminating how rulers employ divine narratives to validate their authority and reconstruct history and identity. Though Rushdie doesn't mention directly, he mirrors the fragmented and divisive rhetoric through the rise of exclusive religious doctrines in the city. As leaders assert supremacy over other religious minorities by promoting homogeneous faith, Rushdie resembles modern India's political and historical context. He exposes and criticizes the tactics of employing religious purity to justify the rewriting of history, suppression of minorities, and consolidation of power. Advocating the idea of cultural and religious diversity as the essential base of real Indian identity, Rushdie's novel seems to be cautioning against the dangers of rigid and singular interpretation of history and religion, central to Hindutva subject. Rushdie- weaving history, myths, fiction, and magical realism- requests audience to resist extremist ideologies that pose a threat to inclusive and pluralistic history of Indian civilization, presenting a critique of the rise of Hindutva in modern Indian politics.

Several critics have examined and reviewed Salman Rushdie's latest masterpiece *Victory City* through various lenses. In this novel, Rushdie retells the history of Vijayanagar Kingdom, knitting multiple issues skillfully and artistically.

Ajeesh A. K., in his "Book Review: *Victory City* by Salman Rushdie," emphasizes the examination of "complexities of identity, power, and the struggle between tradition and change" in a city in Southern India (1). A. K. also mentions that "Rushdie weaves together myth, memory, history, and imagination into a sensual and harmonious tapestry" (2). He appreciates his use of magical realism, narrative skills, character development, and text's capability to elicit thought about contemporary social issues.

V. R. Amirthavarshini and R. Bhuvaneshwari have also examined Rushdie's *Victory City* in "Construction of Ideal Self in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*." By using self-construal theory, they examine Pampa Kampana's character development in the novel and also address various challenges faced by women in the society. This research illuminates "how Pampa Kampana eschews independence in favour of interdependence when navigating social dynamics, familial ties, and cultural norms of human civilization. It mirrors the struggles and journey[s] faced by most women" (Amirthavarshini and Bhuvaneshwari 1). This especially highlights the development of ideal selves.

In "*Victory City: A Brief History of the Kingdom of Vijayanagar*," Bikram Lamba reflects the history of Vijayanagar Kingdom in a fictional way. Lamba's research mainly stresses on Vijayanagar's historical significance, its economic growth, its remarkable contributions to architecture and culture, and its depiction as a Hindu fortress protesting Muslim encroachments. He accounts that the kingdom "saw significant advances in art and economy" (Lamba 1). He also mentions the statement of Percy Brown who states that "Vijayanagar architecture is a vibrant combination and blossoming of the Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya, and Chola styles" (3). Additionally, Lamba presents Phillip B. Wagoner's assertions that describes Vijayanagar as "a Hindu bulwark against Muhammadan conquests" (3). It is clear that Lamba deals with the historical, cultural, economic, and architectural development of Vijayanagar, its contribution, and its long lasting impact in South India.

Additionally, Judith Shulevitz addresses the issues like empowerment, equality, and word power in her article "The Miraculous Salman Rushdie." She accounts that the novel displays a Utopian world where "when women flourish, everyone flourishes: male and female, native and foreigner, Muslim and Buddhist and Jain, gay and straight and bisexual" and highlights how it "vindicates Pampa's bittersweet faith in literature" as well as Rushdie's own persistent belief that "words are the only victors" (Shulevitz). This article praises the

skill of Rushdie to intertwine intricate societal issues into an enchanting narrative that underscores individual and common hardships, novel's importance, and Rushdie's way of withstanding problems.

Likewise, Xan Brooks, in "*Victory City* by Salman Rushdie Review: A Lavish Fairytale," scrutinizes how Rushdie deftly consolidates the history with the fantasy in his literary work to present fascinating and fantastic narration. He considers Rushdie's work as "a bewitching fable" in which his narration "weaves in and out of time and reality" and "a heady, dazzling triumph" which "marries the magical with the mundane" (Brooks). This emphasizes the vibrant narration of the novel and the expertise illustrated by Rushdie in consolidating details of history and components of fantasy.

In "Rushdie's Miracle City," Michael Gorra also analyzes Rushdie's novel *Victory City* by stressing on the portrayal of an Empire which longs to show pluralism but in the long run ends up unsuccessful to keep up its beliefs. This idea is clearly stated in this expression: "The story Rushdie tells is about a state that forever fails to live up to its ideals" (Gorra). This underscores how Rushdie's writing critiques the troubles of building a society that is truly inclusive and the intricacies of governing.

Oksana Bohovyk and Andrii Bezrukov, in the research paper entitled "Transcendent Imagination in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*: A Confrontation of Myth, Religion, History and Tradition," discuss how Rushdie's novel deftly combines myth, religion, history, and tradition in order to construct a new mythology, which examines identity complexities within the framework of Vijayanagara Empire of India and critiques modern social issues or challenges. Bohovyk and Bezrukov assert that "the book explores the epistemological problems of religious tradition fictionalising the history of the Indian Vijayanagara Empire and proposing thus a new mythology" (81). This study makes clear that Rushdie's writing

questions historical accounts as well as asks readers to consider how transcendent ideals and the realities of human experience interact.

Moreover, the research entitled "Mother Pampa in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*" by Wahaj Unnisa Warda and Mohammad Rezaul Karim, analyzes the character of Pampa Kampana as a mother figure in Rushdie's book drawing from Erich Neumann's concept of the Great Mother archetype. Warda and Karim explore how Pampa embodies the themes of "matriarchy" as well as "creation, sustenance, and empowerment" influencing the psychological and cultural dynamics of the narrative (25). This highlights Pampa's role in shaping how motherhood, gender, and power are depicted in the novel.

Ankhi Mukherjee also examines Rushdie's novel in her article "Really Unreal: Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*." She explores various themes presented in the novel. She, here, scrutinizes how Rushdie's writing examines "historiographic metafiction," gender autonomy, and cultural diversity through the character Pampa Kampana, shedding light on how history, myths, and narratives shape the Vijayanagar Kingdom's understanding of politics and culture (Mukherjee). This underscores how much Rushdie gives importance to historical and cultural context in his writing.

In "Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*: A Novel in Search of an Empire," Anis Shivani examines the diverse meanings of Rushdie's novel, underscoring its narrative as a combination of storytelling, historical fiction, and personal introspection. He suggests that one can approach the novel from three different perspectives; viewing it "as a stand-alone imagined epic . . . as a creative reinterpretation of the actual history of the Vijayanagar Empire in South India . . . and finally, as a metacommentary on the writer's own craft and his place in the world of practical compromise" (Shivani). This shows how creative writing, history, and Rushdie's personal development have connected signifying his writing as complex.

Meticulously considered and pondered by numerous critics, scholars, researchers, and reviewers, Rushdie's *Victory City* is examined from different perspectives including identity complexities, power, struggle between tradition and change, motherhood, woman empowerment, equality, word power, transcendent imagination, historiographic metafiction, cultural hybridity, and challenges faced by women in society. The above reviews shed light on how Rushdie deftly weaves a rich web of myth, religion, tradition, history, fantasy, and magic, proposing a new mythology, captivating readers with its profound and boundless scope, and critiquing contemporary societal issues and reflecting on his own creative process. However, among all these poignant contemplations, the issue of Hindutva in *Victory City* is left to be deeply and completely examined from new historicist perspective. Doing in-depth research on this issue, fulfills this knowledge gap and lets us enhance our understanding of Hindutva and its rise in Rushdie's beautiful creation. So, this study attempts to explore and examine how and why the concept of Hindutva is shown in *Victory City*.

The research question this thesis tries to meticulously address is: How and why the Hindutva ideas presented by BJP government and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar are repeated throughout Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*?

Addressing this research question, this thesis investigates that Hindutva ideas of BJP and Savarkar are presented in the novel through various underlying themes like considering India as Hindus' sacred land, resisting foreign influence, using Hindu philosophy, imposing strict religious orthodoxy, intolerance, myths, Sanskrit language, literature, festivals, and cow protection. The leaders of Bisnaga have used these themes as tools to impose singular Hindu identity and establish Hindu nation. But, they fail to achieve their goals due to internal division, communal violence, and the ultimate destruction of the entire city. Through the portrayal of these Hindutva images and references in the novel set in 14th century, Rushdie

allegorically tries to mirror the BJP's adoption of Savarkar's Hindutva ideas to assert supremacy over Muslims, critiquing the rise of Hindutva in contemporary India.

This research employs a qualitative approach to examine the portrayal of Hindutva ideals in Salman Rushdie's *Victory City*. Therefore, this study resorts to close reading, thematic coding, and textual analysis. The textual interpretation is based on allegorical reading as a literary text is the allegorical representation of culture, history, and society. Fredric Jameson, in his book *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, interprets the text as an allegorical text. He argues that any cultural texts, particularly literary texts, should be understood as "socially symbolic acts" as they are embedded with underlying socio-political and historical meanings and ideologies (20). He asserts that "all cultural artifacts are to be read as symbolic resolutions of real political and social contradictions" (80), and "[i]nterpretation is . . . construed as an essentially allegorical act, which consists in rewriting a given text in terms of a particular interpretative master code" (10). This reinforces the idea that literary texts represent real socio-political contradictions, allowing depth understanding of the masked ideological forces at play in both past and present contexts. Simply saying, interpretation involves recontextualization of texts within broader ideological frameworks. Jameson admits that everything has hidden political meanings. He asserts that "there is nothing that is not social and historical- indeed, that everything is 'in last analysis' political" (20). In line with Jameson's ideas regarding allegorical reading, the researcher links the fictional portrayal of the 14th century Hindutva in India to that of the 21st century. *Victory City* is chosen for this thesis as it is a latest masterpiece of English literature, which has a room to explore and analyze the rise of Hindutva and its impacts. In this study, lines, words, and themes from *Victory City* serve as primary source and literature review, various books, news, reports, academic journal articles,

book reviews, and other e-resources serve as secondary source to reinforce the argument of research.

This study analyzes Hindutva in *Victory City* from the perspective of New Historicism through which historicity in fiction is examined. Stephen Greenblatt first introduced this concept in early 1980s. It came as a reaction against the ideas of Formalism and New Criticism, which considered text 'as an autonomous entity'. New critics take text itself as resource and argue that meaning lies within the text. However, New Historicism focuses on the inseparable relationship between literary text and history. It argues that literary or cultural texts cannot be studied and analyzed in isolation rather it should be studied within socio-cultural and historical context. It recognizes text as a product of socio-political and historical context in which it was produced.

Louis Montrose, in his essay "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," focuses on the relationship between text and history. He defines New Historicism "as a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (588). This study is based on historicity of fiction, which can be demonstrated through the setting, characters, plot or themes that are directly taken from history or in some way impacted by past occurrences and ideologies. In *Victory City*, the historicity is evident since the fiction is set in 14th century Vijayanagar of southern part of India and presents the historical significant figures like Harihara Raya (Hukka), Bukka Raya, Devaraya, Krishnadevaraya, Achyuta Deva Raya, Aliya Rama Raya, and Tirumala, the real conflict between Hindus and Muslims, and Battle of Talikota held in 1565 that causes the downfall of the Hindu kingdom, Vijayanagar, founded in 1336 by Hukka and Bukka. Rushdie retells the history of Vijayanagar, fictionalizing it, which allegorically echoes the modern India and the communal tension between Hindus and Muslims, where Right wing political leaders want to assert Hindu dominance over other religious minorities, especially Muslims through different mediums.

In addition, Stephen Greenblatt, in his essay entitled "The Forms of Power and the Power of Forms in the Renaissance," outlines four fundamental principles of New Historicism: "[L]iterary text is the product of historical and cultural factors; literature is the representation of history; the interpretation of the literary text is conditioned by the ideology of its time; and the literary text should be explored in the light of history since literature and history are inseparable constructs" (Ramadan 31). It indicates that literature is closely connected with its social, historical, and cultural background, and its interpretation is determined by the then existing ideologies. To describe this approach, "he coined the name 'Poetics of Culture'" that "seeks to reveal the relationship between texts and their sociohistorical contexts" (Veenstra 174). Poetics of Culture "assumes that texts not only document the social forces that inform and constitute history and society but also feature prominently in the social processes themselves which fashion both individual identity and the sociohistorical situation" (174). This posits that texts both mirror and actively mold the social and historical factors that impact personal identity and societal frameworks. This idea is presented in Krishnadevaraya's act of dominating Sultans to accept his supremacy and remain in a subordinating position. It allegorically mirrors the rule of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) that deprives Muslims to have Indian citizenship reflecting a colonial mindset seeking to impose cultural hegemony, placing Hindus at top priority over Muslims. The imposition of strict religious orthodoxy by Divine Ascendancy Senate (DAS) and Vidyasagar in the narrative can also be analyzed as a true reflection of the socio-historical contexts of modern India, where Hindutva leaders attempt to reconstruct history, national, cultural, and religious identity.

In the essay entitled "Towards a Poetics of Culture," Stephen Greenblatt contends that literary production is an effective interaction between the creator and creators' community, impacted by collective practices and social dimensions. He asserts that "the work of art is the

product of negotiation between a creator and a class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions and the institutions and practices of society" (Greenblatt 12). This underscores that literary work is profoundly engrained in the socio-cultural contexts, springing up from the creator's interplay with a common history and community rather than from purely individual encouragement. Rushdie, as the creator of *Victory City* and postcolonial writer, retells Vijayanagar's past through Pampa Kampana and negotiates with the rise of Hindutva and the present socio-political and cultural climate in India. The novel even acts as counter narrative, critiquing Hindutva attempts to control, redefine, and reconstruct historical narratives to reshape national identity.

Greenblatt, in his *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, introduces the term self-fashioning as main subject to describe how an individual constructs self and public identity. He defines 'self-fashioning' as "the process of constructing one's identity and public persona according to a set of socially acceptable standards, and the conscious effort to strive to imitate a praised model in society" (Mambrol). He even describes how "self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life" (Greenblatt 3). This indicates that the process of 'self-fashioning' entails molding one's identity to associate with social norms and blurring the boundaries between individual expression and the impact of literature and societal conventions. He also mentions how "[l]iterature functions . . . [as] a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those [cultural] codes" molded by historical factors (4). This illuminates the dialogue between literature, historical, and social reality, not placing them in isolation. In *Victory City*, Greenblatt's idea of self-fashioning is apparent when characters attempt to construct their Hindu identity asserting supremacy over other religious minorities and external forces. Especially Bukka's rejection of

naming city on the basis of foreign utterance and Tirumala Devi's rejection of foreign clothes, underscore how the characters seek to build Hindu national and cultural identity. This reflects Greenblatt's idea that literature not only consists imagination, fantasy, but also historical, political, and social realities of the time. The researcher has applied relevant aspects of New Historicism to analyze the Hindutva themes depicted within the text.

This study delimits its analysis only on the basis of in-depth exploration of Hindutva themes embedded within Rushdie's *Victory City*, from the perspective of New Historicism and allegorical interpretation.

This thesis consists all together six sections: introduction, literature review, research methods and theoretical methodology, textual analysis, findings, and conclusions. The introduction section introduces the key issue, its context, objective of the study, its significance, author's background, plot summary of the primary text, and its brief critical commentary. The literature review provides a thorough examination of the existing literature relating to the primary text, which assists the researcher to identify the research gap marking the point of departure. Then, the research question this thesis addressed and the thesis statement it developed is mentioned. The research methods and theoretical methodology section details the research design employed in this study, rationalizes the selection of the primary text, figures out the data collection method, the process of data analysis along with the introduction of theoretical perspective used to analyze the text, and delimitation of the study. The textual analysis section first introduces the major concept this thesis deals with and then, analyzes the primary text using theoretical insights and allegorical method of interpretation. The findings section provides the description of the data found theme by theme, analysis of them, and briefly synthesizing them by comparing and contrasting with the existing literature. Finally, the conclusion section summarizes the key findings and discusses how the research objectives have been met by answering or addressing the question raised.

Hindutva is a political ideology that the nationalists use to build the Hindu nation, defining cultural and national identity in terms of Hinduism. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar first introduced the concept of Hindutva in the 1920s. In *Hindutva*, he differentiates Hindutva from Hinduism. He asserts, "Hindutva is not a word but a history. Not only the spiritual or religious history of our people . . . but a history in full. Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, a part of Hindutva" (Savarkar 3). He further regards Hindutva as "Hinduness" (4). This implies that Hindutva serves as the entire history also including the issue of land, culture, and rituals of the nation. It does not limit itself into theological beliefs. To understand the concept of Hindutva, one should know the meaning of Hindu. Briefly, he defines Hindus as having "common classical language Sanskrit and [are] represented by a common history, a common literature, art and architecture, law and jurisprudence, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, fairs and festivals; and . . . addresses . . . Sindhustan as [their] holyland" (116). He outlines "the essentials of Hindutva- a common nation (Rashtra), a common race (Jati) and a common civilization (Sanskriti)" (116). These ideas of Savarkar closely align with the portrayal of the Hindutva in Rushdie's novel *Victory City* that offers the details of sacred Hindu land, myths, literature, art, culture, and language over others, indirectly asserting Hindu supremacy. This allegorically links the rise of Hindutva in modern India where the BJP government seems to have adopted Savarkar's Hindutva ideals, aiming to establish Hindu nation.

According to Louis Montrose and Stephen Greenblatt, literary texts have intimate connection with socio-cultural and historical contexts. In case of *Victory City*, it is set in a fictionalized version of the Vijayanagar Kingdom, a strong South Indian Hindu nation that existed from 14th to 16th centuries and get destroyed by the Battle of Talikota in 1565 as a result of the conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Though it presents the 14th century history, it allegorically represents the 21st century India, where the tension between Hindus

and Muslims still prevails. Adopting Savarkar's Hindutva ideals, the BJP led Indian government asserts supremacy over others through the medium of history, land, myths, language, sacred texts, festivals, rites and rituals, and other culture.

The author portrays Bisnaga (historically Vijayanagar) as a sacred place that echoes Savarkar's notion of considering Hindustan as "not only a fatherland [and motherland] but [also] a holyland" (Savarkar 111). This is well expressed when Pampa orders two Sangama brothers, Hukka and Bukka to "[b]uild [their peaceful and harmonious] city there" in a "place where in ancient times Lord Ram and his brother Lakshman joined forces with the mighty Lord Hanuman of Kishkindha and went forth to battle many-headed Ravana of Lanka, who had abducted the lady Sita" (Rushdie 13). Referencing the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha, significant figures like Lord Hanuman, Ram, Laxman, Sita, and Ravana and their stories from ancient Hindu epic, the *Ramayana* reflects Vijayanagar as a site of Kishkindha, a sacred Hindu land. This allegorically mirrors the Indian government's act of marginalizing other religious minorities, considering India as only the sacred land of Hindus. For instance, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who came to power in 2014, especially when speaking about Ayodhya, regards it as sacred Hindu place, where Lord Ram was born. The other far-right Hindu extremists also call India "a Hindu 'holyland'" ("India's Far-right Hindus"). However, Romila Thapar, in *The Past as Present: Forging Contemporary Identities Through History*, stresses the pluralistic nature of Indian Civilization, critiquing the idea of India as a sacred land of Hindu. She asserts, "The strikingly unique feature of the plurality of cultures in India . . . went unheeded in the desperate attempt to identify a single culture and give it priority" (Thapar 118). This reflects the idea that India has a long history of diverse identities, defying the perception of foregrounding a single sacred identity. The novel uses Pampa Kampana, who possesses the goddess' voice to examine how the employment of mythology maintains

the significance of Hindu land as sacred, shaping political and cultural identity and asserting Hindu cultural supremacy.

Rushdie also reflects the notion of resisting foreign influence that is close to Greenblatt's idea of self-fashioning. He opines that various factors are involved in the process of constructing individual identity. Greenblatt, in *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, reflects, "I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact . . . strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force" (256). Resisting foreign influence is also a way of constructing identity, influenced by cultural and historical factors. This clearly signifies the Hindutva ideals of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who asserts that "Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization-our Hindu culture" (91-92). This suggests that shared bonds are the base of Hindu identity, which one should protect against foreign influences. In *Victory City*, Bukka becomes displeased when Pampa, instead of Vijayanagar, renames the newly created city as Bisnaga, based on Domingo Nunes, a Christian's final incorrect utterance. Bukka expresses, "'The day will come,' . . . 'when we will no longer allow foreigners to tell us who we are'" (Rushdie 33). The opposing and rejecting of foreign influence over culture, religion, and governance of India, emphasizes the nationalist desire to construct a self-defined cultural and national identity, free from external definitions or control. In addition, Pampa and Aranyani resist the foreign influence by fighting with the pink monkeys, symbolized as foreign invaders, who attempt to take control over the forest by causing the division among native green and brown monkeys and manipulating them with the greed of money and threats as well. Recognizing the danger, "Pampa Kampana and the goddess went together to face the enemy. . . . And wrought horrible destruction" on them (188). Pampa and Aranyani fighting against those pink

monkeys reflects the idea of resistance against foreign influence and protecting traditional Hindu values and a way of life.

The resistance to foreign influence is also seen when Tirumala, with her father Veera and mother, Nagala Devi, arrives at Bisnaga, finds Krishnadevaraya dressed adopting the style of Arab, Turkey, and Persia. She objects to the use of such foreign clothes, stating that ". . . [their] garments will not be those of any northern sultanas. There will be no Arabic-Persian-Turkic blasphemies for us" (231). This expression of Princess Tirumala Devi shows her rejection of foreign influence giving much importance to Hindu costumes that reflect the Hindu identity. Such idea of resisting foreign influence allegorically mirrors the modern India, where Modi initiated the campaign likes 'Make in India (2014)' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat (2020)' to resist foreign influence, uplift the national production sector, and make the country independent. Kishor Kumar asserts that Narendra Modi started 'Make in India' campaign "to attract foreign investment around the world" and "to fulfill the objective of new job creation, growth of GDP, boosting Indian economy, converting India to a self-reliant country, and to give global recognition to the Indian economy by making India as global manufacturing hub" (7560). He further mentions that Modi reinforced "the requirement of a self-reliant India . . . focus[ing] on reviving the economy, generating employment, supporting start-ups, promoting domestic production, budding enterprises, strengthening supply chains and empowering people" (7560). This shows India's actions towards foreign influence.

However, these kinds of resistance seem to be the consequence of the underlying anxiety, tension, insecurity, and fear of the leaders and citizens of the country after being colonized. Tracing out the history, India was under control of Mughal and British rulers during colonial period (1526-1858 and 1858-1947 respectively). During that time, British sought to reshape society, culture, and government of India. This led to the rise of nationalist movement that aims to reclaim and redefine religious and cultural identity of India. Ashis

Nandy, in the preface of his book entitled *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, asserts, "The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds" (11). This underscores the critique of such resistance that fails to completely free themselves and the nation from the intense cultural and psychological trauma caused by colonization.

Being influenced by Michel Foucault's idea of discourse, power, and knowledge, Greenblatt and other New Historicists approach literary work as a demonstration of power relations. For Foucault, discourse is representation, knowledge creates power, and power creates knowledge. Faten Ahmed Ramadan, in his research paper, asserts, "Power, therefore, is pervasive and discursive as it encompasses all types of relations including the oppressor/oppressed interaction and struggle for hegemony through the power of knowledge" (35). This idea is observed in *Victory City* when the author uses Hindu myths, texts, and philosophy to assert supremacy. Vidyasagar uses the philosophy of *Brahman* and *Atman* to justify supremacy and to call for unity at the same time. This idea is evident in this Vidyasagar's expression: "'There is *Brahman*,' . . . there is *atman* . . . Everything else is illusion: space, time, power, love, place, home, music, beauty, prayer. Illusion. There are only the two, which are one" (Rushdie 107). The crowd interprets this by saying that "there were Two, and there should only be One" (107). It highlights the main principle of Advaita Vedanta that regards *Atman* and *Brahman* as same. In the text, this concept is used as Hindutva ideology to promote singular unified religious and cultural Hindu identity over pluralistic or secular approaches. The call for unity allegorically mirrors the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 that also opens up the way to get Indian citizenship for non-Muslim refugees from neighboring countries. This Act "removes barriers for acquiring Indian citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from . . . Afghanistan, Bangladesh[,] and Pakistan who arrived in India on or before 31 December 2014" ("India:

Citizenship Amendment Act"). However, it still excludes Muslims. This decision elevates Hindu-centric view of Indian identity and reflects narrative's examination of religious supremacy through the philosophical schooling of Vidyasagar.

Despite having same goal to establish the unified and harmonious society, the idea of religious tolerance and intolerance causes the internal conflict among two Sangama brothers as Hukka becomes influenced by Vidyasagar's rejection of syncretism. When Hukka dies, Bukka Raya I holds the throne and being influenced by Haleya Kote's first remonstrance out of five, he emphasizes the idea of separating politics and religion. The narrator asserts, "Bukka Raya I had insisted throughout his reign on the separation of the temple from the state . . ." (Rushdie 107). It depicts the conflict within Hindutva ideology concerning to the consolidation of religion into political systems. This implicitly underlines the historical conflict of interest between secular state and religious influence in Indian politics. Insisting on alienating religion from the statehood sounds as a reaction to the challenges of retaining a pluralistic society in the face of growing religious nationalism. The narration seems to point out that contradiction between the concept of secularism and the actual state where religion plays key role.

Apart from advocating for separation of religion and state, the text also reflects on difficulties in running a society whose religion is deeply intertwined with cultural identity and political power. The debate over Ram Temple at Ayodhya and Babri Masjid site elucidates a religious-versus-secular authority dilemma. For instance, Hindus regard Ayodhya as the birthplace of Hindu god Ram, and the Hindu nationalists claim that Mosque was built in 1528, destroying the temple during the rule of Babur. The dispute grows when the "British colonial administration partitions the site into two separate sections for Hindus and Muslims. Muslims allowed to pray inside, while Hindus allowed to worship in the outer courtyard" in 1859 and the state announced that site as "disputed property" closing the door

after placing the statue of Ram within the Masjid in 1949 ("Babri Mosque to Ram Temple"). However, the dispute continues for a long period of time. Some Hindu Right wing leaders formed a group to lead the movement in which the BJP leader, Lal Krishna Advani, was also involved to establish the Ram temple in the Masjid site. In 1990, he even organized *rathayatra* all over the India in the hope of getting support for their aim to establish Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. After that, on 6 December 1992, Hindu riots attacked on Babri Masjid and destroyed it badly that killed about two thousand people, mostly Muslims. Despite this, in 2019, India's Supreme Court allowed construction of the temple in Ayodhya. After completing the construction, the inauguration ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya held in 22 January 2024 by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. All Indians celebrated that day by lighting up *diyas* in temples and homes. This reflects that political decisions are shaped by religious feelings.

Vidyasagar, in the text, mirrors the image of Narendra Modi as both disagree the idea of separating religion from state. The novel shows the building of various Hindu temples dedicating to different deities. When the two Sangama brothers scattered magical seeds, the "Monkey Temple" emerges in the city along with "the gigantic sculpture of Lord Hanuman . . . to stand by its gates" (Rushdie 15). Hukka Raya I also builds the temple in Mandana Complex, dedicating to "Lord Virupaksha" (58). Similarly, Deva Raya instructs to build "Hazara Rama temple" for Bisnagian king's personal religious purpose (162). Later, he also orders to construct "Vitthala Temple," where Krishna, Lord Vishnu's incarnation is worshipped (179). In addition, Achyuta Deva Raya orders "Krishnabhata to make a Pampa-figure . . . which would be placed in direct opposition to the Narasimha statue" to show his profound religious beliefs (304). The importance of connection with the gods is further elucidated when Vidyasagar admits that the reason behind Bukka's defeat with the sultan of Zafarabad "was a consequence of the king's abandonment of 'intimacy with the gods in

general and Shiva in particular'. If that intimacy could be renewed then the advance of Zafarabad would fail; and military success would follow" (110). Giving priority to constructing temples, statues of Hindu deities, and close association with them in the novel illuminates the importance of Hindu traditions and beliefs. Moreover, it allegorizes the context of India, where Modi emphasizing Lord Ram, builds Ram Mandir at the site of Ayodhya where Babri Masjid existed until 1992 to preserve and reclaim Hindu cultural identity. Yogi Adityanath remarks that "[Ayodhya] is set to be a model of 'the new India'- a vision of a devout nation where politics and religion become one" (Landrin). In addition, Andrea Malji asserts that BJP's act of appointing Yogi Adityanath, "a radical religious leader as chief minister of the largest state in India [in 2017] signals the BJP's intent to move away from the secular roots of the country" (42). However, the chief minister of Kerala and "Communist Party of India leader Pinarayi Vijayan issued a statement expressing concern about the government's involvement in a religious event and noted that Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, believed in the separation of religion and state so that secularism could be preserved" (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Ram Mandir, Ayodhya"). As reported by Hindu Bureau, Mavalli Shankar, a "Dalit rights activist" on January 18, 2024, says that the "BJP is utilizing the Ayodhya Ram Temple inauguration to further its political prospects" ("BJP Using Ayodhya Ram Temple"). Similarly, Ambedkar Vada also put forth his opinion: "'The January 22 event is completely political. There is nothing spiritual about it'" (qtd. in Hindu Bureau). This shows that the political leaders use Hindu religious symbols for their political purposes like gaining more votes in election by manipulating people. It might also be the consequences of deep psychological trauma caused by so many years of Muslim/Islamic and British colonization. The present condition reflects Bukka Raya's struggle to separate religion from the state, allegorically illustrating that it remains a challenge in modern India to balance political and religious interests.

Rushdie employs Hindu mythology, referencing *Laxman rekha* from *Ramayana*, the Hindu epic as a metaphor and trick to underline religious and cultural narratives in political debate. This is evident in this expression: "Vidyasagar had not crossed that line . . . protective line or *rekha* drawn by Lakshman[,] the brother of Ram to defend Ram's wife Sita while the brothers were away, a line that would erupt in flames if any demon tried to cross it" (Rushdie 107). Invoking mythical figures or images from Hindu mythology, like the mention of *Laxman rekha*, is an effective means for redefining cultural narratives within political settings. It not only serves as a cultural reference but also as a mode of making legitimate certain political ideologies based on past canonical texts. The metaphor of *Laxman rekha* also implies a contradiction of maintaining cultural boundaries while allowing in external forces. This could also show an intrinsic fear towards retaining cultural purity and anxiety about being tainted by strange and non-religious components. In other words, these mythological allusions in texts are used as tools both to consolidate and conceal the power relations within them. In the present context, politicians also use Hindu mythologies as examples in their speeches or political discourse. For instance, the politician Yogi Adityanath used Hindu mythological figures when he compares Modi to Lord Krishna, who guides BJP and his rivals to antagonists from the *Mahabharat* during a public meeting organized in Jalaun on 15 May 2024. He regards Modi's opposition as "'Duryodhan' and 'Dushasan'" while claiming Modi as a leader of a battle against those who "betrayed Lord Ram" and "praise Pakistan" and he also states that Lok Sabha Election "is not about polarization. It's about Rambhakts . . . and Ramdrohis" as well (PTI). This exemplifies the employment of Hindu myths or religious identity in political discourse. This practice reflects the way *Ramayana* is symbolized in the novel, thereby fostering a unified national narrative that reflects its past, which is a technique used by countries that rely on mythology to shape their national and political identities.

The *Laxman rekha* drawn highlights Vidyasagar's creation of us vs. them mentality which divides the Bisnagian into two opposing sects: Vidyaites and Bukkaists. The growing factions or conflict between Vidyaites and Bukkaists shows the tension between upholding religious pluralism and enforcing exclusive singular religious identity, reflecting the Hindutva conflict. This depicts the agenda of Hindutva that prioritizes the Hindu superiority over other religious beliefs. The narrator mentions that "two camps grew up in Bisnaga, the Vidyaites and the Bukkaists. . . . [I]t was clear that they were Two, and that the Two were getting harder and harder to reconcile" (Rushdie 108). Both groups aim to create a Hindu nation and desire to impose their own religious ideologies over one another. The narrative exposing the complexity of reconciling these opposing groups having varying religious ideologies implies that the narrative is struggling with persistent tension between unity and division. This allegorizes the internal division within historical and modern India to define its identity. In 1947, a country divided into India and Pakistan as Muslims sought for the protection of their rights and separate state for them. In addition, the influential leaders of India, like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal's way of defining Indian national identity also differs. This is clearly stated in Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh's assertion: "Nehru was committed to the rational and secular organization of the society and believed that religious values and beliefs would stand in the way of full realization of an individual's potential" (319). They also assert that Gandhi's aim "was to create religious tolerance without ignoring the importance of religious values in social life" (320). This implies that Gandhi advocated for secular state and religious pluralism, respecting all religious faiths whereas Nehru also strongly advocated for secularism based on democracy but he opined that state should not favor any kind of religion, which is completely individual matter and not a foundation for political identity. Simply saying, Nehru believed on the separation of religion and politics. In addition, Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist's act of assassinating Gandhi in 1948, also

marks an internal division within the India. Likewise, rising of polarized political wing like supporters of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and opponents of its strategies reflects the internal ideological splits within the country. For instance, Indian National Congress follow the path of Nehru upholding a vision of separating state from religion and treating all religious communities equally. However, the BJP rise in 1980, still uphold the Hindutva ideology in the 21st century, intending to define Indian identity in terms of Hindu culture and values and marginalize the religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians. Such division have led to societal fragmentation.

Rushdie's novel also implicitly portrays religious and cultural supremacy through the imposition of religious orthodoxy and suppression of diverse religions. The narrative shows how Divine Ascendancy Senate (DAS), led by Sayana, enforced a strict religious orthodoxy that "'demolished' the philosophies of Buddhists and Jains as well as Muslims to celebrate the New Orthodoxy created by the thinkers of the Mandana mutt under the supervision of Vidyasagar and made the New Orthodoxy . . . the basis of Bisnagan society" (Rushdie 153). It echoes Hindutva agenda that prioritizes Hindu orthodoxy or dominance over other diverse religions. The theme of religious and cultural suppression and enforcement of single Hindu Identity is further explored through Bhagwat's (Hukka Raya II) direct expression that "Bisnaga will be ruled by faith, not magic" and "our narrative, and our narrative only will prevail" (132). This declaration of Bhagwat highlights the Hindutva attempt to rewrite and reinterpret the history from a Hindu-centric view. Bhagwat even instructs Erapalli and Gundappa to conquer and ruin the big fortress at Rachakonda, "where people still follow the old gungajumna culture . . . blending of Hindu and Muslim culture [which] flow into each other just like the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, and become one" (156). He often orders them to take many lives to make such idea of religious tolerance go away. This reflects cultural syncretism and unity contrasting with the divisive religious policies.

The objection to the fusion of these two cultures highlights the Hindutva ideal of safeguarding the sacredness of the monolithic Hindu culture against foreign influence. The Gujarat riots led by Hindu nationalist groups in 2002 strongly exemplifies how modern Hindu nationalism has adopted a strict exclusive identity that violently asserts Hindu dominance by effacing the pluralistic history that historically defined Hinduism. The Gujarat riots of 2002 routed by Hindu mobs took place when "on February 27, 2002, a coach of the Sabarmati Express was returning with [Hindu Pilgrims] from the Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya . . . was set ablaze near Godhra railway station by a mob consisting of people from the Muslim community . . . that left at least 1,000 people dead and left thousands injured" (Pathak). But in 2005, the Godhra incident was proved as accidental, not caused by Muslims. This manifests the aspect of Hindutva's target of building and promoting a singular Hindu religious and cultural identity, subjugating and erasing all other beliefs or practices that do not align with the dominant Hindu narrative. However, Nandy states that the modern attempt to establish monolithic Hindu identity by suppressing and excluding other diverse religious groups through various acts seems as distorting the traditional history of other religious communities' contributions in the civilization and a response to the colonial encounter. Discussing T.N. Madan, who reminds that Muslims were the ones, who first regard all Indians as Hindus, Nandy asserts that "to use the term Hindu to self-define is to flout the traditional self-definition of the Hindu, and to assert aggressively one's Hinduism is to very nearly deny one's Hinduness" (103). He further points out that historically, Hindus "did not need an exclusive concept of Hinduism till the nineteenth century when some modernist Hindu religious reformers thought . . . who, in response to the faith of their martial rulers . . . [attempt] to indirectly Christianize what they saw as emasculated Hinduism" (103). This clarifies that the reinterpretation of Hinduism by Hindu nationalists subverts the historical inclusive and adaptive quality of Hindu and it is the reaction to colonialism rather than a

realistic representation of Hindu values. It also reflects the result of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder for Indians are still traumatized from the past colonial incident. As a result of it, the BJP government and other Hindu extremists might have started the Hindutva movement in the name of protecting Hindu cultural values. By metaphorically shedding light on such underlying reasons behind the Hindutva movement, Rushdie seems to critique the rise of Hindutva in 21st century India.

The idea of pluralism and religious tolerance emerges when Deva Raya ascend to the throne after the death of his father, Bhagwat and brothers. In the very beginning of his rule, he being influenced by Sayana, DAS, and Vidyasagar, advocates for religious intolerance. This is indicated in this expression: "And the Puritanism of the DAS and its intolerance of other faiths continued" (Rushdie 162). His instruction to construct "the beautiful Hazara temple . . . in the heart of the Royal Enclosure . . . the private place of worship of the kings of Bisnaga" seems to allegorically reflect the rejection of mass worship (162). However, when Sayana dies, "[t]he ruling officers of the DAS . . . [remain] toothless and wizened" (167). Then, Pampa tactfully begins to whisper her plans in the ears of Deva Raya. This leads him to be tolerant of diverse faiths and he even decides to do intercaste marriage with girls of Jain and Muslim religion and to pray at their temples. This is evident in his declaration: "I'll marry a Jain! Bhima Devi . . . and I'll pray at her favorite temples too. And I'll take a Muslim second wife" (Rushdie 168). Pampa even orders him to "[b]ring poets to the court, Kumara Vyasa for the Kannada language, Gunda Dimdima for Sanskrit, and the king of poets, Srinatha, for the Telugu tongue" (168-69). This implies that Pampa executes her plans to make the Bisnaga more inclusive in terms of religion, language, and literary art.

Krishnadevaraya also asserts supremacy over defeated sultans of Bidar and Bijapur, to whom he demands their subservience while permitting them to retain their faith. This holds the idea of M.S. Golwalkar, who, in his book entitled *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*,

asserts that "the foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture . . . or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation . . ." (104-5). He calls Muslims and Christians to be a part of Hindu nation adopting and respecting Hindu culture and traditions also continuing their own faith at the same time under the subjugation of Hindu religion. In the novel, after winning the Battle of Diwani, Krishnadevaraya says, "[Y]our sultanates will be subservient to the Bisnaga Empire, and you will accept my supremacy, and pay me tribute. . . . But if you show disloyalty to the empire in even the slightest degree, then Masti Madahasti may have to risk his tender feet after all and pound you both to death" (Rushdie 204-5). This event reflects the idea of asserting Hindu supremacy through force while allowing other religions to exist in a subordinate role. In other words, it reflects the promotion of Hindu identity, accepting a multi-religious landscape and alerting them that their act of betraying would lead them to death. This also breaks the Indian actual history of diversity without any religious domination. The controversy of Citizenship Amendment Act- 2019 (CAA) and National Register of Citizens-1951 (NRC) implemented in Assam exemplifies the notion of asserting dominance over Muslims. The Home Minister Amit Shah declared that CAA should be seen along with the creation of NRC and it will be applied all over the India, which helps to identify illegal immigrants and send them back to their country. The NRC process makes Muslims difficult to get citizenship as they have to show the legal documents. The Indian government "promised that those who have entered Assam after 1971 would be identified and declared illegal" and people "who have entered till 2014 were eligible to get [Indian] citizenship through CAA. But Muslims cannot use this route, only Hindus can" (Apoorvanand). This decision gets criticism for overburdening impact on Muslims, which may

cause countless people stateless and increase the communal conflict. This shows the forceful displacement of Muslims and assertion of dominance over Muslims.

Nonetheless, Nandy critiques the assertion of supremacy connecting it to the deep psychological and cultural impact of colonialism. He argues that colonialism not only subjugated the nations physically but also sought to redefine and reshape identities and beliefs by manipulating the colonized psychologically. The act of Krishnadevaraya and the CAA along with NRC allegorically depict the colonial attempt to enforce cultural and religious hegemony, where Hindu identity is positioned at the top of other identities, specifically Muslims, being systematically marginalized. Nandy assumes that those attempts highlight the anxiety or tension of the colonizers, who require an ever-present manifestation of power using violence with the aim of enforcing their supremacy. He contends that such technique is unwise for it degrades the human quality of both the oppressors and oppressed by making them live out in their lives the very violence they want to escape from. He, in the preface of *The Intimate Enemy*, asserts, "Between the modern master and the non-modern slave, one must choose the slave not because one should choose voluntary poverty or admit the superiority of suffering, not only because the slave is oppressed, not even because he works . . . [but] also because he represents a high-order cognition . . ." (Nandy 15). The colonialism causes the colonized to internalize the oppressor's rules. This is evident in Nandy's expression: "[C]olonialism . . . creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter" (3). This also underscores how the CAA not merely attempts to assert legal dominance but also attempt to reshape the national identity by marginalizing Muslims, akin to how colonial powers enforced cultural hierarchies.

The text also emphasizes Sanskrit language, a language of Gods, poets, sages, and ancestors. Hindus also give importance to the forms of Sanskrit, particularly, Hindi as the

large population of Indian sub-continent take it as the easiest means of communication. Savarkar mentions that Sikhs regard Sanskrit language "not only as the language of their ancestors but as the sacred language of their land" (123) and he takes it as "par excellence; a common inheritance, a common treasure, that enriches all the family of our sister languages" (95-96). The importance given to Sanskrit language by Rushdie is highlighted when he describes the founding of the Pampa Kampana's buried epic "*Jayaparajaya*, meaning 'Victory and Defeat,' written in the Sanskrit language, as long as the *Ramayana*, made up of twenty-four thousand verses" that retells the history of Bisnaga (Rushdie 3). He also makes use of Sanskrit names of the main characters like Aranyani, Bhagwat, Achyuta Deva Raya, Madhava Acharya, and phrases like Agyatbas, Vanvas, Peetham, ankanam, and other many more in his work. Bhagwat act of renaming the streets also exemplifies the use of Sanskrit language that aligns with the Hindu Nationalists' agenda of reshaping the historical narratives to fit a particular ideology. This is evident when Pampa Kampana assigns Haleya Kote to gather information about Bisnaga and he informs, "[Bhagwat] wanted to change the names of all the streets, to get rid of the old names that everyone knows and replace them with the long titles of various obscure saints . . ." (154). It underscores the idea of rewriting history and cultural memory.

These references symbolize the modern India where various places, cities, streets, and stations are renamed under the rule of Modi after the BJP gained power in 2014, prioritizing Sanskrit language and its forms as well. For instance, the BJP Government "renam[es] . . . Allahabad city to Prayagraj and Mughalsarai Junction railway station to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction railway station" and "use[es] . . . the name Bharat for India in placards identifying the prime minister and the president in the 2023 G20 summit . . ." (Raikar). Here, the name "Prayagraj" is the Sanskrit word to which "senior Cabinet minister Siddhartha Nath Singh said, '. . . Rig Veda, Mahabharat and Ramayana also mentions . . . for Allahabad'"

(Outlook Web Desk). The Allahabad city's "original name [was] Prayag, which means a 'place of offerings,' comes from its position at the Sangam of the rivers Ganga . . . Yamuna . . . and the mythical river, Saraswati where Lord Brahma attended his first ritual sacrifice . . . [and it is considered as the] site for historic Kumbha Mela" (Nair). It was initially found by "the 16th century Mughal Emperor Akbar" (Nair). Likewise, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction "inaugurated on August 5, 2018, by BJP president Amit Shah" was put after the name of Pandit and nationalist who was killed near the Mughalsarai Junction railway station in 1968 (Outlook Web Desk). Additionally, the BJP government renamed "the iconic Mughal Garden at the Rashtrapati Bhavan to 'Amrit udyan,'" "the name of Delhi's iconic 'Rajpath' to 'Kartavya Path,'" "Faizabad to Ayodhya," and "Gurgaon to 'Gurugram'" in between 2014 to 2023 (Outlook Web Desk). This reflects the Hindutva emphasis on Sanskrit as a sacred and actual language of Hindu Civilization, an indicator of cultural and religious superiority. Renaming of places in Sanskrit and Hindi displays the idea of putting Hindu at the top of other religious minorities. However, this highlights the erasure of India's colonial and Mughal past and recreation of Hindu's cultural and linguistic history. The act of renaming places in Sanskrit aligns with Nandy's idea of "defensive redefinition of its selfhood" (Nandy 16). Along with this idea, he, in the preface of his book, asserts that ". . . the rhetoric of progress uses the fact of internal colonialism to subvert the cultures of societies subject to external colonialism and where the internal colonialism in turn uses the fact of external threat to legitimize and perpetuate itself" (12). This illuminates the act of renaming places in Sanskrit as a part of internal colonialism that attempts to impose cultural and religious supremacy over other eliminating history.

In *Victory City*, various Hindu sacred texts are used to reflect the Hindutva ideal, which stresses the dominance of Hindu culture and its role in building Hindu nation. Highlighting the significance of common Hindu literature, Savarkar asserts, "The story of

Ramayan and *Mahabharat* alone would bring us together and weld us into a race even if we be scattered to all the four winds like a handful of sand" (94). This implies that common literary texts possess the strength of uniting people though being universally circulated. The discussion of Hindu texts appears when the narrator talks about deceased Madhava Acharya's book shelf that contains "the collection of . . . the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, and the eighteen major and eighteen minor *Puranas* copies which, according to the lore of the mutt, had once belonged to Vidyasagar himself" (Rushdie 332). The narrator presents the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as the foundational epics of Hindu culture, depicting idealized figures like Lord Rama and Krishna, who embody the principles of dharma and the struggle against adharma. The author has also shown the use of the *Garuda Purana* connecting with thoughts on death and transformation, which aligns with Hindutva's emphasis on the purity of Hindu life and afterlife. This is stated when "[Pampa] longed to hold the *Garuda Purana* in her arms one last time . . ." (333). In addition, the novel uses the reference to the "*Kamasutra* of the philosopher Vatsyayana of Pataliputra," taking as a part "Tantric tradition," while discussing on the inclusion of erotic art in the temple (88). This idea aligns with a broader cultural assertion, emphasizing that Hindu traditions encompass not only spiritual but also worldly aspects of life, including sexuality. By integrating the *Kamasutra* into the narrative, the text upholds the idea that Hindu culture is comprehensive and superior in addressing all facets of human life, aligning with hindutva's Cultural nationalism. Likewise, Pampa Kampana references the "*Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*" when talking about "*moksha*," which symbolizes "erotic figures of the maithuna" and refers to the liberation from the cycle of rebirth (88). She ties the spiritual goal of Hindus to the cultural essence of the nation. She mentions the quote of Upanishad: "A man closely embraced by a woman knows nothing more of a *without* or *within*" (88). This seems to reinforce the spiritual superiority of Hindu philosophy. Collectively, these all sacred texts are used to assert

supremacy of Hindu traditions, philosophies, and cultural practices, aligning with Savarkar's vision of Hindutva by promoting the idea that these elements should form the core of the national identity in India.

The presence of such Hindu texts in Rushdie's novel allegorically mirrors the historical context of India. In the name of building Hindu nation, the politicians have had given much importance to ancient Hindu epics or texts like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, and *Bhagwad Geeta*, presenting them through different media like TV shows and proposing them to be included in the academic curriculum. For instance, "In 1987 and 1988, India's official . . . TV channel (Doordarshan) broadcast[ed] serialized version of the famous Indian epics, the [*Ramayan*] and the [*Mahabharata*]" ("Are the (TV)"). The broadcasting of these two renowned "serials led to a rise in Right wing Hindu nationalism, which culminated in the demolition of the Babri masjid by Right wing mob in 1992" and "[a]s India has gone into lockdown due to Covid-19, Doordarshan has announced . . . to rebroadcast these serials" during the rule of Modi ("Are the (TV)"). Similarly, "[a] high-level committee constituted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to revise the school curriculum for social sciences, has recommended to include epics like [*Ramayana*] and [*Mahabharata*] in textbooks to teach . . . students in classes 7 to 12" (HT Correspondent). CI Isaac states that "[t]he committee has insisted on teaching epics . . . [to help students] build their self-esteem, patriotism and pride for their nation" and "it is important for them to understand their roots and develop love for their country and their culture" (qtd. in HT Correspondent). In addition to this, "the National Institute of Open Schooling introduced the [*Gita*, *Ramayana*] and [*Vedas*] to the syllabus of those in the third, fifth and eighth standard, under a section titled 'Indian Knowledge Traditions'" (Sagar). The *Gita* "has also been, either fully or partly, included into the state school curriculums of BJP-ruled Haryana and Madhya Pradesh" (Sagar). The advertising of *Bhagwad Geeta* has also

been done by Narendra Modi, who takes it as a solutions for India's problems. For instance, "in February 2019, Modi released a three-meter-long, 800kg copy of the Gita, at a function in Delhi" (Sagar). Along with the inclusion in political discourse, academic processes, and TV serials, the Hindu texts like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, and *Bhagwad Geeta*, and their stories are mostly used in religious sermons too. This leads the people to possess specifically the knowledge of them rather than other texts like four *Vedas*, eighteen *Puranas*, and other so on. The BJP government has also used the references of Hindu literary texts and mythological figures like Ram, Laxman, Krishna, and other so on to achieve underlying political goals. The specific use of references from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* in Rushdie's novel allegorically reflects India's assertion of supremacy and promote Hindu national identity.

Savarkar's idea of commonalities in terms of festivals that all religious groups celebrate also plays a major role in Rushdie's novel. He asserts, "We have feasts and festivals in common . . . rites and rituals in common. The Dasara and the Diwali, the Rakhibandhan and the Holi are welcomed wherever a Hindu breathes, Sikhs and Jains, Brahmans and Panchams alike" (Savarkar 98). It shows the equal participation of all religious groups in shared festivals and culture but indirectly put Hindus' festivities at top priority over other religious groups. Rushdie's novel also presents the celebration of Hindu festivals like Diwali, Holi, Dashain, and Gokulasthmi as a medium of asserting Hindu cultural supremacy by incorporating diverse religious communities into these festivities. This is evident when Pampa Kampana, the protagonist, in Aranyani forest, "invited the one-godly to take part in the festival of light . . . color . . . and . . . nine nights celebrating the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura . . . the victory of good over evil" (Rushdie 137). In addition, "Gokulasthmi, celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna," was organized during the rule of Krishnadevaraya (233). This reflects the significance of Hindu mythology and rituals along with the expression of culture. The celebration of these Hindu festivals also asserts

Hindu cultural supremacy by integrating and inviting the followers of single deity from other diverse religious communities, promoting a unified, Hindu-centric cultural identity. This serves as an allegory for cultural supremacy, suggesting that Hindu festivals and their underlying values are positioned as superior and universally applicable.

The festival Ganesh Chaturthi, which is celebrated by Indians today, was popularized by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak as "public celebration of the Ganesh festival in 1893, aiming to bring people of all religions together on a shared platform in India's quest for freedom" and "to bridge the gap between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins" (Kutty). On the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi on August 31, 2022, both Hindu and Muslim groups celebrate it together "at BD Colony of Mandya in Karnataka" showing "communal harmony" and unity (DH Web Desk). However, when it comes to celebrate Ram Navami in various states of India, there occurs a communal violence between Hindu and Muslim communities that even lead to so many deaths, injuries, and loss of properties. India has faced such violence from last 9 to 10 years. The communal riots of 2022 is one of the big incident happened during the Ram Navami procession in the Ramadan's first month in various Indian states that causes big losses. According to the report *Routes of Wrath: Weaponising Religious Processions*, prepared by the citizens and lawyers and edited by senior advocate Chander Uday Singh, the violence takes place in Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Goa, West Bengal, Karnataka, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh as well. The report mentions that all those processions "comprised of larger-than-usual gatherings of saffron-clad men drawing swords, waving trishuls and even . . . firearms . . . cross[ing] major mosques and Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods, and raising provocative slogans about the coming of a Hindu Rashtra . . . even justifying violence against Muslims" (167). Hindus have even used loud speaker for playing music against Muslim that led towards stone throwing acts. According to the report, "at least 100 persons from the minority community have been

injured and two people killed" (9). Ram Navami "processions [of 2023 is as same as of 2022 as it] carried out in Muslim-majority neighbourhoods, loud and vile music played right outside mosques, and deviation from approved routes" (Bhalla). Such repeated incidents reflect the continuous communal violence between Hindu and Muslim groups. Regarding this, Meenakshi Ganguly contends that "India's Hindu festivals are increasingly being used by the ruling Hindu majoritarian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to rally voters, leading to an increase in violence" ("India's Hindu Festivals"). She also presents the view put forth by "[t]he global Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) [that] called the latest incidents a 'vivid manifestation of mounting Islamophobia and systemic targeting of the Muslim community in India'" (Ganguly). These events show how Hindutva leaders or Hindu Nationalists use festivals to assert supremacy over other religious minorities.

The narrator also mentions the idea of cow protection that aligns with Savarkar's Hindutva ideal. When Savarkar talks about goals to be achieved, he also mentions "protection [of] cows," not being only limited to territorial accomplishment and restoration of Kingdom (71). Haleya Kote, in the novel, while discussing his military years, expresses his avoidance of cows meat, despite having eaten other different animals, for the meat is not merely "chewy" but also for "other reasons for eschewing it" (Rushdie 127). Furthermore, the conversation between Hukka and Bukka reveals the metaphorical significance of cows in their society, with Hukka affirming that "cows will remain important to us," despite Bukka's humorous dismissal of milking (Rushdie 18). The protection of cows has been a significant issue within Hindu nationalist discourse that reflect the Hindu identity and culture. It symbolically aligns with Savarkar's notion, used today for the Gau-Rakshya Movement led by the BJP and its right-wing organization like the RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and Bajrang Dal, which continuously push for legislation regarding the protection of cow. The Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, "in the election [of] 2014, . . . campaigned on a promise to

end 'pink revolution' -- a phrase describing the slaughter of cattle across the country" (Regan and Gupta). In between "May 2015 and December 2018, 44 people suspected of killing or transporting cows for slaughter, or even just eating beef, were killed in vigilante attacks, according to Human Rights Watch" and "in 2017, 111 people were killed across India and more than 2,300 injured in communal violence of all kinds" (Regan and Gupta). Most of them were Muslims.

The Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog "set up in February 2019, [which] aims to address several issues related to the conservation and protection of cows [is] one of the many measures undertaken by the BJP government to fulfill the promises made in their 2014 election manifesto to protect cows" (Maskara). Moreover, in "February 2021, the BJP central government proposed a law to impose a complete ban on the slaughter of cows and the sale, storage or transportation of beef or beef products in any form" (Maskara). In the name of protecting cows, the religious minorities, especially Muslims and Dalits (beef eaters) are attacked repeatedly by Hindu mobs leading them to death. Regarding this, Meenakshi Ganguly states, "Calls for cow protection may have started out as a way to attract Hindu votes, but it has transformed into a free pass for mobs to violently attack and kill minority group members" (qtd. in Regan and Gupta). This reflects the underlying motif of Hindu nationalists to gain electoral votes from Hindu majorities, who regard cow as sacred and mother. Presenting himself as an atheist, Savarkar goes against the worshipping of cow as mother but he asserts that "'we need cow care, not worship'" and he "urge[s] . . . non-Hindus to give up their 'cow hate' and take up 'cow care'" reflecting on the cruel acts of slaughtering cows (Purandare). Collectively, this illuminates the Hindutva ideology of protecting cows from being slaughtered by Muslims, Christians, and Dalits. However, in the text, Hukka compares cows with the newly created inhabitants in a negative way. He states that "'[they] are as brainless as cows, and they don't even have udders to give us milk'" (Rushdie 23). In

addition, the royal zenana's transformation underscores the Sangama dynasty's association to cowherding and the regime of Krishnadevaraya seeks to dissociate itself from such historical and cultural connections. Giving importance to cows at first and dissociating them later signifies the portrayal of cow just as utilitarian purpose. It might also allegorically reflect the idea that in the name of protecting and worshiping cow as mother, Devi, and Laxmi, the Hindu nationalists can use them for political purpose whenever they want.

In addition, *Manusmriti*, in chapter 5, also discusses on the issue of slaughtering animals, consuming meats, and procedures to be adopted in case of the sacrificial rituals. In the very beginning, Manu states that "it is appropriate to eat meat during Devakarya and Pitrikarya, if invited or if there is a fear of losing one's life" and he even says that "by eating creatures worthy of eating cannot be a sin for god has created the creatures worthy to be eaten and their eaters" (My translation. 165). By compromising, he, in shloka 39, even argues that "slaughtering for religious sacrificial purpose is not a killing" (My trans. 167). At the same time, in shlokas 48 and 49, he again asserts that "meat is not produced without making animals injured and heaven is not attained by killing animals. That's why, one should stop eating meat. Seeing the origin of meat and act of butchering animals, one should divert their mind from eating all types of meat" (My trans. 168). Later, Manu in shlokas 51 and 52, considers "the person on whose advice animals are killed (adviser), separator of their body parts by cutting, slaughterer, buyer, seller, cook, server, and consumer as killers" and "the person who desires to increase own muscles by others' muscles without worshipping gods and ancestors commits sins" (My trans. 169). On the one hand, Manu gives emphasis on eating meat only after offering to gods and on the other hand, he advocates for not killing animals for meat. In addition, "the milk cow was already in the [*Rigveda*] said to be 'unslayable'" (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Sancity of Cow"). The BJP's cow

protection movement is closely associated with the Hindu religious sentiment that has been employed today to gain votes and assert supremacy over Muslims.

Ultimately, the leaders' attempt to build Bisnaga as the Hindu dominated nation fails when the combined Sultans of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Bidar, and Golconda attack the city in the Battle of Talikota held in 1565. It leads toward the eventual downfall of Bisnaga Empire, causing the destruction of the big seven walls, lives of inhabitants, sculpture of Hanuman and Pampa, the Monkey Temple, which the Hindutva leaders claim to safeguard. Rushdie narrates, ". . . the seven walls had collapsed . . . streets ran with blood . . . giant statues of Lord Hanuman and of the goddess Pampa were broken into so many pieces . . . [and] Underground Temple . . . was burned and utterly destroyed" (Rushdie 336). This destruction serves as the destruction of religious symbols and the loss of Hindus' strength which do not align with the dominant ideology, which can be seen as a critique of Hindutva's selective use of Hindu mythology for political gain in contemporary India. However, believing in reincarnation, Pampa asserts, "Nothing endures, but nothing is meaningless either. We rise, we fall, we rise again, and again we fall" (337). This emphasizes the cyclical nature of rise and fall, suggesting the possibilities of renewal and rebirth even in destruction. This symbolizes the rejuvenation of Hindu identity after centuries of subjugation. In other words, it reflects the cyclical understanding of history, emphasizing the resilience, renewal, and preservation of Hindu identity. It too highlights that permanently establishing Hindu nation is impossible as it will continuously face the cyclical nature of rise and fall.

This analysis clearly shows that the researcher has done new historicist and allegorical interpretation of *Victory City*, placing it in its socio-cultural, historical, political, and religious contexts in which it was produced. Especially focusing on the issue of rise of Hindutva, this study has examined and analyzed Hindutva themes profoundly embedded within the novel set in 14th century, allegorically representing today's India and showing how political leaders like

Narendra Modi and other Right-wing activists use Hindu religious symbols to manipulate people and assert Hindu dominance over Muslims.

This study has made an attempt to explore and analyze Hindutva themes in *Victory City* from new historicist perspective and allegorical interpretation. Through a depth examination of the novel, it becomes evident that the portrayal of the 14th century Vijayanagar, allegorically echoes the 21st century modern India and its political and historical situation. This study has dug out the novel's underlying key Hindutva themes that are synonymous to the ideas of Savarkar and BJP, who led the Hindutva Movement in India to assert supremacy, marginalizing other religious minorities, particularly, Muslims. The idea of considering India as Hindus' sacred land, resisting foreign influence, using Hindu philosophies, religious intolerance, myths, imposing strict religious orthodoxy, Sanskrit language, literature, festivals, and cow protection serve as the Hindutva themes profoundly embedded within the novel.

The idea of considering India as sacred land is symbolically presented in the novel when Pampa Kampana suggests Hukka and Bukka to build a city signifying the place near the Pampa river as sacred referencing the myths of Kiskindha, where Ravana abducted Sita. It shows the act of resisting foreign influence through Bukka's rejection of Pampa's decision to name the city based on Portuguese's mispronunciation, Pampa and Aranyani's battle with the pink monkeys, and Tirumala's rejection of foreign clothes. The novel has portrayed the strict religious leader, Vidyasagar, who references *Brahman* and *Atman* philosophies, seeking to merge state and religion as one. Influenced by him, Hukka becomes intolerant of other faiths that resulted into the conflict between both brothers. It creates a situation to draw *Laxman rekha* so that none from outside could cross the boundaries. It also acts as a boundary between Bukka and Vidyasagar. After Bukka, Bhagwat takes the throne, who inspired by Vidyasagar and his brother Sayana, demolishes Muslims, Buddhists, and Jains, also

disrupting the combination of Hindu-Muslim culture of Rachakonda as well. He also renames the street, erasing past names with language used by sages. In the novel, Pampa is found to be using references from Hindu literary works like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, *Garuda Purana*, *Kamasutra*, and *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*. Not only these, the Hindu festivals like Dashain, Diwali, Holi, and Gokulasthmi and the culture of protecting cows have been given equal importance in the novel. However, at last, these all attempts get failed when the Bisnaga Empire faced the Battle of Talikota, which caused the destruction of the entire city.

Although the novel is set in 14th century, the repeated Hindutva ideas of Savarkar and BJP government mirrors\resonates the 21st century India. Pampa's marking Vijayanagar as sacred place in the novel metaphorically resembles Savarkar and BJP's Hindutva ideal. When Modi came to power in 2014, he especially calls Lord Ram's birthplace, Ayodhya as sacred place of Hindus. Calling India as only the sacred land of Hindus seems to marginalize the religious minorities (particularly, Muslims), erasing their contribution to a country and the pluralistic history of Indian civilization in the process of foregrounding singular religious identity. The characters like Bukka, Pampa, and Tirumala appears to be adopting the Greenblatt's idea of self-fashioning while resisting the foreign influence and invaders. They seem to be constructing their own identity, in which cultural artifacts play a major role. These events allegorize Modi's Make in India (2014) and Atmanirbhar Bharat (2020) campaigns to resist foreign influence, increasing economy of the country, and making citizens independent. However, this might have resulted as the underlying anxiety, tension, trauma, and insecure feelings of leaders and citizens of the country, caused by the long-lasting impact of British and Islamic colonization in their minds.

In addition, the use of *Brahman* and *Atman* philosophy by Vidyasagar to impose supremacy and call for unity at the same time allegorically mirrors the act of today's BJP government, who introduces the CAA (2019) allowing non-Muslim refugees from

neighboring countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan to get Indian citizenship, leaving Muslims boycotted. This highlights Hindutva leaders' act of maintaining Hindu-centered singular identity. As in novel, the idea of separating and merging religion and state is relevant to the context of modern India, where Congress advocates for secular state and the BJP advocates for merging religion with state. This is further exemplified by the movement led by the BJP for the establishment of Ram Mandir in the site of Babri Masjid, which was destroyed by the Hindu mobs in 1992. The act of appointing Yogi Adityanath as Chief Minister in 2017, the permission given by Supreme Court to BJP to build Ram Mandir in Ayodhya in 2019, and the inauguration ceremony of Ram Mandir in 22 January 2024 shows the BJP's success in merging religion and state, asserting dominance over Muslims. This causes the internal conflict between Congress and BJP leaders as in between Hukka, Bukka, and Vidyasagar in the novel reflecting us vs. them mentality. Along with this, the use of myths and mythical figures like Ram, Laxman, Hanuman, Arjun, and Krishna in the novel, symbolizes the act of Indian politicians, who use Hindu myths and characters in political discourse. Adityanath's comparison of Modi to Krishna and his opposition party as Dushasan and Duryodhan clarifies that politicians rely on mythology to shape their identities.

Additionally, Bhagwat's act of demolishing Muslims and breaking the gangajumna culture seem to allegorically reflect the prevailing communal tension between Hindus and Muslims in modern India. The destruction of Babri Masjid and the Gujarat Riots (2002) led by Hindu mobs, highlight how Hindu nationalists adopt exclusive religious ideologies and oppress Muslim communities. Krishnadevaraya also demands subservience from Sultans while permitting them to celebrate their original faiths, but in a subordinating position that closely aligns with Golwalkar's ideas of letting outsiders to either fully accept Hindu faiths or stay in a subordinating position in the country. It symbolically mirrors the CAA seeing along with NRC in India that makes Muslims more difficult to get Indian citizenship as they have to

show legal documents. Moreover, the employment of Sanskrit epic, terms, characters' name, and renaming places in the novel, indirectly resembles Modi prioritizing Sanskrit language over other by renaming the city, street, station, garden, and other so on. He has renamed Allahabad city as Prayagraj, Mughalsarai Junction railway station as Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction railway station, India as Bharat, Mughal Garden as Amrit Udyan, Delhi's iconic Rajpath as Kartavya Path, Faizabad as Ayodhya, and Gurgaon as Gurugram in between 2014 to 2023. This underscores how Hindutva leaders use ancient language to erase India's Mughal and British colonial history, rewrite and reconstruct linguistic and cultural history as well as national identity. It also reflects the internal colonialism, seeking to impose supremacy over Muslims, erasing past history.

The use of Hindu sacred texts to assert dominance in the novel is also akin to Modi's use of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat*, and *Bhagwad Geeta* in 21st century. This idea is close to Foucault's idea of power and knowledge. Modi has utilized his knowledge of Hindu texts to impose his power upon religious minorities. The Indian government has broadcasted those texts in a form of TV shows, included them in academic curriculum, and politicians also use them as an example while giving political speeches. Moreover, the use of Hindu festivals and the idea of cow protection presented in the narrative indirectly echoes the modern India, where Hindutva leaders use festivals, especially Ram Navami and take action against cow slaughtering and transporting. These things target Muslims to assert dominance over them through the use of power of knowledge. Yet, despite these all attempts, Bisnaga get destroyed at the end, echoing the 21st century Indian internal conflict and communal violence.

While undertaking this study, many reviews, articles, news, and journals on *Victory City*, have been found dealing with the issue of identity, motherhood, equality, word power, and women empowerment, but none is found dealing with the issue of Hindutva. So, this study is completely unique that has explored the underlying themes of Hindutva in the novel,

which allegorically mirrors the Hindutva ideals of Savarkar and BJP government in modern India.

To conclude, the creators and the rulers of Bisnaga (Vijayanagar) Empire aim to build the Hindu nation. However, in the name of asserting supremacy of single religious and cultural identity, they create a division among themselves. The division between Bukkaists and Vidyaites exemplifies it in a more significant way. The Delhi Sultan also tries to convert Hindus (Hukka and Bukka) into their Islamic religion, but their attempts fail as the two brothers escape from their hand and again retain their original Hindu faiths. This shows that none of them get success completely. When one rises, another falls. Each ruler of Bisnaga gives their best to build the Hindu nation by resisting foreign influence, breaking the blending of Hindu and Muslim culture, conquering territories, asserting Hindu supremacy over defeated Islamic Sultans, building Hindu temples, statue of gods and goddesses, worshipping Hindu deities, celebrating Hindu festivals, emphasizing Sanskrit language, putting Hindu text at top of the others, calling for protecting cows, and other so on. Each of their attempts to establish Hindu nation gets failed due to the Battle of Talikota held in 1565, leading to the ultimate destruction of the Bisnaga Empire.

The portrayal of 14th century socio-political, historical, and religious context of Vijayanagar Empire in *Victory City* serves as the allegorical representation of 21st century India. Aiming to establish country as the pure Hindu nation, the BJP government have adopted the Savarkar's indirect tactics of asserting Hindu supremacy, causing the marginalization of Muslims to whom the government has deprived of getting Indian citizenship and even their rights. They are even treated as outsiders. In addition, the factions between Bukkaist and Vidyaites emerged from the idea of religious tolerance and intolerance, inclusive and exclusive approach in the novel allegorically represents the factions between Indian Congress and BJP leaders. The political leaders' and other Hindus' act of asserting

supremacy over Muslims can also be seen as the repercussion of the long-lasting psychological impact caused by Mughal and British colonization as the Indian citizens are still traumatized by the violent past events. The reason behind their activities of using Hindutva themes or tools, pretending to protect them have some hidden political ideologies. Regarding this, Jameson also argues that any form of socio-historical artifacts become political in last analysis. Modi has used Indian land, Hindu myths, texts, Sanskrit language, festivals, and cow protection movement as tools to manipulate people to gain electoral votes. Furthermore, by showing the images of internal conflict, religious intolerance and communal tension between Hindus and Muslims, and Sultans' causing the ultimate destruction of Bisnaga in the novel, Rushdie seems to be alerting the audiences and concerned authorities about the negative consequences of asserting supremacy over other religious minorities, in the process of foregrounding singular religious, cultural, historical, and national identity.

Thus, the Hindutva ideas presented by Savarkar and BJP government are repeated in the novel through the leaders' act of using Hindu historical, cultural, and religious tools to assert supremacy over other religious minorities, particularly, Muslims and to manipulate citizens for political purposes. The way Rushdie creates allegorical text bringing images and references of Hindutva and showing the ultimate destruction of so-called Hindu Ideal state, reflects the critique to the rise of Hindutva ideology in modern India.

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