**University of Leicester**

**Future 50 PhD Scholarship**

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| **Project Reference** | HYPIR Visana |

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**Section 2 – *Project Information***

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| **Project Title** | Hindu Nationalism and Populist Internationalism |
| **Project Highlights:** | 1. | From High Caste Ideology to Populist Majoritarianism? |
| 2. | The impact of Hindu nationalism in the UK’s Hindu diaspora |
| 3. | The mutual-constitution of Hindu nationalism in India and populist internationalism between India and the UK. |
| **Project Summary**  |
| In political science and the history of political thought, Hindu nationalism and the populist success of India’s BJP are distinguished, with the former often regarded as vestigial political ideology and the latter as an electoral strategy. This PhD would nuance this view by identifying the populist theoretical core of Hindu nationalism and explain its rise in terms of the emergence of a new ideological hegemony in Hindu politics globally.The first objective would be to apply qualitative methods drawn from political theory to Hindu nationalist archival material, contemporary party manifestos, political speeches, and media output in English and Hindi at the national and grassroots level in India. Using these materials to reconstruct the ideology of historical Hindu nationalism and the contemporary Hindutva populism of Narendra Modi’s BJP, these chapters would show that there is an ideological continuity between Hindu nationalist theory and recent BJP campaigning.The second objective would seek to demonstrate that a major change in recent years has been the ideology’s achieving of a subaltern and international currency through new media at a time when upwardly mobile Hindus in India and the UK were seeking novel forms of social and intellectual capital in increasingly fluid multi-caste and multicultural contexts.Third, the thesis would combine qualitative and quantitative methods in assessing voter ideological commitments and behaviour both in India and the UK. This would draw on copious electoral, polling, and focus group data for India as well as analogous data for the UK while also integrating oral testimony, marketing literature, and media from UK Hindu grassroots organisations and the public. In so doing, the thesis seeks to understand how populist internationalism has served to anchor ideas of national “peoplehood” in South Asia while ideologically radicalising diasporic politics and subsequently changing diasporic electoral patterns and inter-community relations in the UK.This thesis will make a major contribution to understanding recent developments in Hindu nationalist politics in India and the UK while offering wider insights to political scientists, historians and sociologists on the general rise of right-wing populism in the last decade and – crucially – the significance of internationalism to this ideology. |