

Hindu Nationalism in America: **Assessing the Influence of Hindutva Ideology in the U.S.**

How Did We Study Hindutva?

Research by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) examines the extent to which Hindutva resonates among a sample of U.S. Hindus by surveying their views on identity, politics, and social issues and comparing them to the general public. The survey was fielded by Qualtrics from May 4, 2023 - May 26, 2023 to a sample of 604 self-identified Hindus residing in the U.S. and 704 among the general U.S. population.



Indian Americans, comprising approximately 80% of the 5.4 million South Asians in the United States, are one of the fastest-growing and most highly educated ethnic groups in the country. Hinduism is the major religion of India. According to Pew, in the US, 54% of Indian Americans identify as Hindu, compared to 13% who identify as Muslim.

What Is Hindutva?

Hindutva is an ethno-religious nationalism that espouses belief in the cultural and civilizational supremacy of Hindus in India. There is a concerning rise in the influence of Hindutva ideology among Hindus in the U.S.

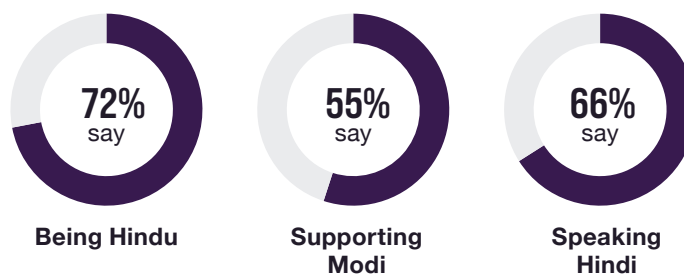
Why Does Hindutva Matter?

Understanding the influence of Hindutva ideology among our sample of Hindus on attitudes toward American Muslims adds an important perspective to ISPU's body of work on Islamophobia and discrimination. By analyzing perceptions of religious and political identity and democratic values, the report presents the ways in which Hindutva ideology intersects with American values and institutions, potentially influencing public discourse and policymaking processes.

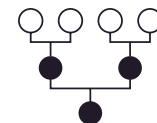
Religion, political support, and language are important markers of identity for U.S. Hindus in our sample.



...is very important to the way they think about themselves.



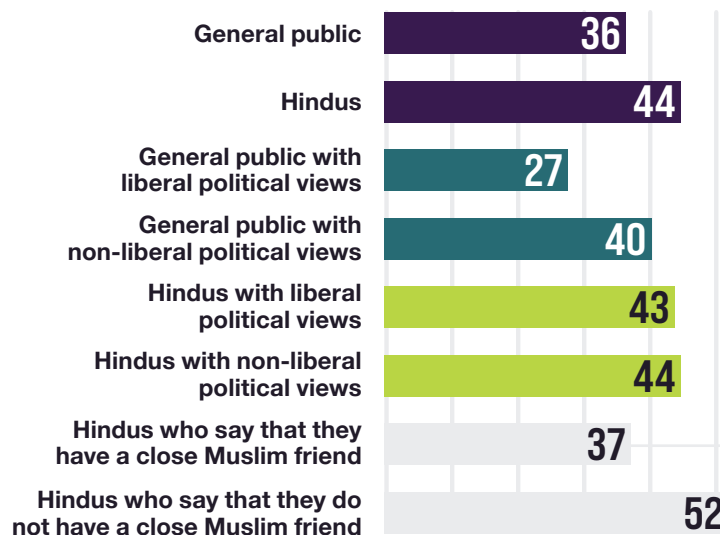
...is important to being truly Indian.



Second- and third+ generation Hindus tend to place more importance on religious, national, and linguistic markers of national identity than first-generation Hindus.

U.S. Hindus in our sample score higher on ISPU's Islamophobia Index than the general public.

The Islamophobia Index ranks religious and non-religious groups on a scale from 1 to 100, measuring the group's reported level of agreement with five false stereotypes about Muslims that are linked to support for anti-democratic policies.



While having a close Muslim friend significantly reduces Islamophobia among the Hindus in our sample, it does not reduce it lower than the general public.



One-third of both Hindus and the general public agree with the false stereotype that most Muslims living in the U.S. discriminate against women, in line with previous findings showing perceived misogyny to be the most likely false trope endorsed by various groups.

Half of U.S. Hindus in our sample agree with at least some Hindu nationalist policies in India.



40% of Hindus in our sample agree that hatred toward the current Indian government is equivalent to hatred toward India.

While Hindus in the sample who espouse liberal views are less likely to agree with Indian policies that disproportionately target Muslims, there is still agreement with these policies among at least one third of liberal Hindus.



50% of Hindus in our sample agreed with the Citizenship Amendment Act in India, which offers amnesty to migrants from neighboring countries while excluding Muslims.



50% of Hindus in our sample agree that the demolition of "illegal" churches and mosques is lawful and important. In 2022, a fundraising gala was held in Frisco, TX to raise money to help demolish "illegal" churches in India.

U.S. Hindus in our sample are more likely than the general public to support anti-Muslim policies in the United States.

Hindus
General Public



Strongly oppose a **ban on visas to Muslims wanting to enter the U.S.**

29% **43%**



Strongly oppose **bans on building mosques**

27% **53%**



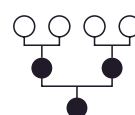
Support **mosque surveillance**

38% **25%**



Support a **ban on hijabs in public schools and universities**

38% **22%**



2nd and 3rd+ generation Hindus are less likely than the 1st generation to strongly oppose such a ban.

Hindus with liberal political views are more likely than non-liberal Hindus to oppose stripping rights away from American Muslims.

A majority of of U.S. Hindus surveyed report a favorable view of Prime Minister Modi's BJP. Those who have a favorable view of Modi are more likely to be actively involved in both U.S. and Indian politics.



49% of Hindus with a favorable view of the BJP have volunteered for a U.S. political campaign, compared to

28% of Hindus with a neutral or unfavorable view of the BJP.



48% of Hindus with a favorable view of the BJP contribute money to groups in the U.S. that support the Modi government, compared to

28% of those who have neutral or unfavorable views toward the BJP.



45% of Hindus who agree with the Citizenship Amendment Act contributed money to groups in the U.S. that support the Modi government, compared to

36% of Hindus who do not agree.



48% of Hindus who agree that "illegal" churches and mosques should be demolished contributed money to groups in the U.S. that support the Modi government, compared to

34% of Hindus who do not agree.



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About the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)

ISPU provides objective research and education about American Muslims to support well-informed dialogue and decision-making. Since 2002, ISPU has been at the forefront of discovering trends and opportunities that impact American Muslim communities. Our research aims to educate the general public and enable community change agents, the media, and policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. In addition to building inhouse capacity, ISPU has assembled leading experts across multiple disciplines, building a solid reputation as a trusted source for information for and about American Muslims.

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