# Muslims' Struggle in Modi’s India and Bollywood’s Hindu Nationalism Reflect the Changing Face of Indian Society



**Strangers in Their Own Land: Being Muslim in Modi’s India**

Muslim families in India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s administration have reported experiencing increased ostracism and discrimination. Among them is Ziya Us Salam, a former film critic, and his family living in Noida, on the outskirts of Delhi. Mr. Salam, alongside his wife Uzma Ausaf and their four daughters, contends with ethnic profiling and societal alienation. Their mixed Hindu-Muslim neighborhood once symbolized coexistence, but rising Hindu nationalism has strained communal bonds. Mr. Salam’s professional focus has shifted towards documenting the marginalization of Muslims in contemporary India, a shift driven by what he perceives as existential threats to their identity.

Prime Minister Modi, who rose to power in 2014 with a development agenda, has been championing Hindu nationalist policies, sparking fears among the Muslim community, which comprises around 200 million people. This period has seen an escalation in Islamophobic rhetoric and actions, including sectarian clashes, vigilante violence, and discriminatory policies.

In contrast, Tamil Nadu in southern India offers a different narrative. Jan Mohammed’s family in Chennai enjoys religious harmony and secular values, protected by the state's political stance against the central government’s ideology. They experience fewer of the sectarian tensions prevalent in the north, focusing instead on ordinary aspirations like education and careers.

**Bollywood’s Shift Reflecting Hindu Nationalism**

Bollywood, India’s prolific film industry, producing 1,500 to 2,000 films annually, has also mirrored the changing tides of Indian society under Modi’s rule. Once known for its secular values, Bollywood now increasingly perpetuates Hindu nationalist narratives, with recent films amplifying anti-Muslim stereotypes and aligning with BJP's views. Films like "The Kashmir Files" and "The Kerala Story" received government endorsement, aiding their commercial success while deepening societal divides. Critics compare this shift to Hollywood pandering to extreme right-wing sensibilities, noting a significant acceleration of such trends during Modi’s tenure.