**Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India and the Challenge of Hindutva[[1]](#footnote-2)**

(Paper presented by Wessly Lukose at the Glopent Seminar, 19 February 2010)

**Introduction**

Pentecostal Christianity[[2]](#footnote-3) is growing rapidly in India as in many parts of the world. Even in Rajasthan, the largest state in India, where the Christian message in general has had little impact, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing Christian sector. However, there is a misrepresentation of the origin and nature of Pentecostalism in India in general, and Rajasthan in particular, as it is viewed as a product of western Pentecostalism. At the same time, in many parts of the nation, including Rajasthan, Christianity is generally identified with colonization.[[3]](#footnote-4) Many from both within and outside the movement regard Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as an imported movement from south India, where Pentecostalism was supposedly brought from North America. Such a wrong profile of Pentecostals places them in a potentially vulnerable situation, which may lead to faith conflicts. Therefore, this paper will discuss the historical and contextual identity of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, the Hindutva challenges and its impact on Pentecostals.

**Part I Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India**

**Pentecostal Beginnings in Rajasthan**

Although early Pentecostals could not establish themselves as an organization, the Pentecostal message came to Rajasthan prior to the coming of many other Protestant churches.

Pentecostal Message in Rajasthan

The Pentecostal message was brought to Rajasthan for the first time by Pentecostal missionaries from other states of north India. A certain Mr and Mrs Jiwa brought the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan for the first time in the 1930s. The message came to the district of Banaswara. This was directly linked to the Mukti Revival, in Pune, Maharashtra. Mr Jiwa was a native of Madhya Pradesh state, who married a girl from the Mukti Mission run by Pandita Ramabai. She had an experience of the Holy Spirit baptism with speaking in tongues. They did not establish any Pentecostal churches, but were involved in vigorous evangelistic activities. Although the Jiwas did not have a significant Pentecostal impact, they are known as *pavitratma vale* (Holy Spirit people- those who were filled with the Holy Spirit) and *dubki vale* (immersion people- the people who were advocating and practicing adult baptism by immersion). Mrs Jiwa was known by local people as *anya bhasha vali* (tongue-speaking lady) and *hallelujah vali* (hallelujah-speaking lady). It is significant that Mrs Jiwa is known and talked about more than Mr Jiwa by local people, even today.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Peter Lal, a native Pentecostal missionary from Uttar Pradesh (UP), came to work in the district of Ajmer in 1942. He was sent as a missionary from the *Dua ka Ghar* (House of Prayer), Lalbagh, Lucknow, UP.[[5]](#footnote-6) He came to Rajasthan at the invitation of Miss Pindi Das, who was a lady of prayer from Punjab and a member of the Methodist Church.. Later, he was employed by the Indian Railway as a Divisional Officer alongside his preaching ministry. After his marriage in 1945, they began cottage meetings, and two years later established a local church at Christian Ganj, Ajmer, called ‘Bethesda Church,’ and it was the first Pentecostal church in Rajasthan.

Local Revivals

Revivals in existing churches played a significant role in the development of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. *Atma ka gagruti* (Spirit revival) occurred in a few places in Rajasthan, during which people witnessed new and unusual spiritual experiences in the mainline churches. It appears that the first Spirit revival in Rajasthan took place in Udaipur in 1959-60 in the Shepherd Memorial Church. A spiritual thirst and hunger developed among many members of the church after Emmanuel Loel made a few visits to the church in 1959. Loel was an Air Force officer from Jabalpur, and had a charismatic experience. In these prayer meetings people had many spiritual experiences including speaking in tongues and falling on the ground in the presence of God. However, they did not recognize it as a revival. According to J Masih, a chief participant of this revival, it was only when KV Philip arrived from Kerala in 1960 that people were able to understand that their experience was ‘in accordance with the experience of the first century Christians in Acts.’[[6]](#footnote-7)

There was a fully fledged local Spirit revival in 1965-67 in Banaswara. This Spirit revival had almost all the Pentecostal characteristics. Many prominent local Pentecostal leaders of the state, including Tajendra Masih, Pathras Masih and Valu Singh, are the products of this Rajasthani[[7]](#footnote-8) revival. The first event took place on 26 December 1965 in a medical store. Some young people, including Praveen, Tajendra and Sohan met in the medical store. After having a conversation about Christ’s death and resurrection they began to pray. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit came upon them. Tajendra describes:

We were just making an ordinary prayer when the Spirit of the Lord came upon us, and we all fell down from our chairs, and we began to speak in other tongues. It was in a market place. All the people who came to the market began to come to the store when they heard the loud voice. They began to ask, “what happened? What is it?” We could not control our voice, and even we did not know what was happening. ... I just opened the Bible, and my eyes fell on Act 1:8.[[8]](#footnote-9)

From then onwards they began to gather every night in the CNI Mission hostel for young boys. More people began to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Later this revival spread to the girls’ hostel as well. Although there was strong opposition from the CNI, such meetings continued for two years.

The Banaswara revival seems to be similar to many other Indian revivals. One of the most important features of it was that there was no external influence or connection. There were visible manifestations, including speaking in tongues, singing in tongues, falling down, visions and dreams, confession of sins and shaking of body, as occurred in many Indian revivals.

South Indian Contribution

One of the greatest impacts of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan was brought about by south Indian Pentecostals. With their coming there was a new vigour, passion and meaning to these spiritual experiences of Rajasthanis. They took these local revivals to further heights, and thus made it a movement in Rajasthan resulted in the formation of many churches and missionary organizations. Since the early 1960s, missionaries from Kerala and Tamil Nadu began to come to Rajasthan with the Pentecostal message and work there. KV Philip was the first, followed by Thomas Mathews, KV Abraham, Peter Kuruvila, and others. They accelerated the evangelistic activities through various means, including spiritual resources like healing, exorcism and miracles, which resulted in the multiplication of native Pentecostal believers, pastors, leaders, churches and organizations. Thus in brief, the south Indian missionaries, particularly those from Kerala, have played a pivotal role in making Pentecostalism a movement.

## Contemporary Pentecostalism in Rajasthan

Although Pentecostals made little advancement in the beginning, Pentecostalism has become a significant local religious movement today. South-west Rajasthan has the greatest representation of Pentecostal Christianity. However, Pentecostalism expanded to other districts in the course of time. Today there are Pentecostals, at least in small numbers, in almost all 33 districts of Rajasthan, except Baran.

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is predominantly a tribal movement. It has made inroads into many tribal communities in Rajasthan, and so a majority of its followers are from tribal communities. The spiritual means like healing and exorcism are the major means for the growth of tribal Pentecostalism, and their churches are called healing communities. At the same time identity concern also seems to be an important reason for the tribals turning to Pentecostalism. Many tribal pastors and believers have argued that they have gained a new identity through becoming Pentecostals.

The most significant fact is that today’s Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be identified as a Rajasthani movement as there has been an increase in the number of local pastors and followers. Although many missionary organizations in Rajasthan have south Indian founders and leadership, most of their workers as well as followers are Rajasthanis. Almost all churches in the state are established by local ministers.

Currently, Pentecostals are the fastest growing sector of Rajasthan Christianity despite the fact that they are latecomers in the soil. According to Chouhan, a leading evangelical leader in Rajasthan, the charismatic expression of Christianity is responsible for the present growth of Christianity in Rajasthan.[[9]](#footnote-10) Abraham Cherian’s research also shows that Pentecostalism has brought expansion to Christianity in Rajasthan.[[10]](#footnote-11)

The above discussion concludes that Pentecostal message had reached Rajasthan long before south Indian Pentecostals came to the state. The origins and growth of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan are due to four major reasons. First, missionaries from other north Indian states brought the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan. In this sense, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be viewed as a product of the missionary outreach of north Indian Pentecostals. Second, the local revivals that took place in the existing churches in Rajasthan have created a spiritual thirst among Christians. From this perspective, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be regarded as a revival movement linked to the spiritual renewal in the existing churches. Third, missionary activities of south Indian Pentecostals played a significant role in the making of the Pentecostal movement. Fourth, the involvement of local missionaries caused the movement to spread to almost every district, and so Pentecostalism is a Rajasthani movement. However, this does not mean that Pentecostalism grows without any challenge, but in reality they face serious issues from Hindtuva as will be discussed below.

# 

# Part II The Challenge of Hindutva

**What is Hindutva?**

The Hindutva ideology and its subsequent issues pose an ominous challenge before Pentecostals along with other Christians in Rajasthan. It seems that Hindutva ideology has been taking the form of a religio-cultural nationalism. However, such nationalism is to be understood not as a sudden development, but as the achievement of long term efforts by Hindu extremists influenced by this ideology. Hindutva (literally, Hindu-ness) is a fundamentalist ideology of militant Hinduism, and this concept was developed by VD Savarkar.[[11]](#footnote-12) MT Cherian’s recent research on *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights* reveals the religious, cultural, ethnic and political ideology of Hindutva movements.[[12]](#footnote-13)

A significant consequence of Hindutva ideology is the alternative versions of nationalism in India. There are two principal versions of nationalism in the country.[[13]](#footnote-14) The first is Indian nationalism, which is a heterogeneous, territorial nationalism that upholds the unity and equality of all citizens irrespective of their distinctiveness. The second is Hindu nationalism, which is a homogenous and religio-cultural nationalism that advocates only one religion, one language, and one culture.

As most works on Hindutva reveal, Savarkar, the former president of the Hindu Mahasabha, was chiefly responsible for the evolution and development of militant Hindutva ideology.[[14]](#footnote-15) Later, ‘during the late 1980s Hindutva became the most common referent for the ideological and organizational forms of the Hindu nationalist movement (VHP, RSS, Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal).’[[15]](#footnote-16) For Savarkar, as Michael observes, Hindutva ‘refers to a people united by a common country, blood, history, religion, culture and language,’[[16]](#footnote-17) and intrigue to alienate Muslims and Christians from the mainstream Indian society. According to him, ‘a Hindu is that to him the land that extends from Sindhu to Sindhu is the Fatherland (*Pitribhu*), the Motherland (*Matribhu*), the land of his patriarchs and forefathers.’ Savarkar made it more clear and specific when he said:

That is why in the case of some of our Mohammedan [Muslim] or Christian countrymen who had originally been forcibly converted to a non-Hindu religion and who consequently have inherited along with Hindus, a common Fatherland and a greater part of the wealth of a common culture- language, law, customs, folklore and history- are not and can not [sic] be recognized as Hindus. For though Hindustan to them is Fatherland as to any other Hindu yet it is not to them a Holyland too. Their holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently their names and their outlook smack of a foreign origin.[[17]](#footnote-18)

Later his ideology was further propagated and developed by Hegdewar and his successor MS Golwalkar. The words of KS Sudarsan, the current leader of *Rashtreeya Swayam Sevak Sangh* (RSS), shows that Hindutva still holds the same position. He said, ‘The country can have only one Hindu culture . . . and so all must accept Ram – if not as divine, at least as the nation’s hero.’[[18]](#footnote-19)

Thus in conclusion, with the help of *Sangh Parivar*,[[19]](#footnote-20) Hindutva ideology and its current developments have given a religio-cultural face to nationalism. In reality this ideology has produced a number of faith conflicts in India in recent years and became a real threat to minority religious groups in India.[[20]](#footnote-21)

**The Impact of Hindutva**

Various incidents reveal that Pentecostals in Rajasthan face dreadful consequences of Hindutva ideology. One of the gravest consequences of Hindutva is the rising religious intolerance. India was known as a nation of religious tolerance and harmony until recently. However, there have been examples of a number of religious conflicts in post-independent India, and in the past few decades there has been a tremendous growth of religious intolerance. Although the saying that ‘Christianity is a foreign religion’ has existed from colonial times, it is currently voiced very seriously in Rajasthan.

Another dreadful product of Hindutva is the unhealthy nexus between politics and religion. Pentecostals along with other Christians as well as other minority religious groups hold that one of the greatest challenges they face is the implications of the relationship between politics and religion. There are many incidents that cause Christians to believe that the Hindutva political party *Bharateeya Janatha Party* (BJP) and its government cover up atrocities committed by the *Sangh Parivar* and other organizations. The best example is the response of AB Vajpayee, after his visit to the Dangs district of Gujarat, which was followed by an intensified attack on Christians during Christmas 1998. On 10 January 1999, the then Indian Prime Minister and leader of the BJP, Vajpayee, called for a ‘national debate on conversion.’[[21]](#footnote-22) As Earnest W Talibuddin comments, ‘… Christian nuns have been raped, Christian priests and missionaries have been executed, even burnt alive. But instead of any word of condemnation for such ... anti-social and inhuman acts, in order to cover them up and divert the attention of the public, a national debate on the issue of conversion has been strongly recommended by those in authority!’[[22]](#footnote-23)

Pentecostals in Rajasthan are seriously concerned of the consequences from the interrelationship between politics and religion. The objects of their concern included the lack of cooperation from the Government and other domains of authority like the police and the police’s delay in reaching a location where there is an attack and atrocities taking place in the presence of the police.

However, this does not mean that all cases were ignored by the Police. There have been a few incidents of the police protecting Christians from dreadful attacks. Also there were occasions when Christians were protected by local Hindus when they were assaulted by militants.[[23]](#footnote-24)

The most terrifying consequence of Hindutva is the use of physical violence against Christians. The extremist Hindutva advocates desire to wipe out religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians from India and there has been severe persecution of Christians since the early part of the 1990s. The VHP leaders made a public statement in 1997 that ‘they will make the district of Banaswara free of Christians by 2000 AD.’[[24]](#footnote-25) It is said that within three years after this threat there were ‘at least 25 violent attacks against Christians’ in the state.[[25]](#footnote-26)

Another impact of Hindutva ideology is the confusing view of conversion. Hindutva advocates a socio-political reading of conversion and so they link conversion ‘with colonial power, ecclesiastical expansion, political manipulation’ and ‘social disturbance.’[[26]](#footnote-27) It is significant that although Christians view conversion in theological terms, as Kim observes, their ‘studies also tend to assume that the problem of conversion is socio-cultural rather than theological, and so they link conversion with ‘social uplift, caste mobility, and the search for justice.’[[27]](#footnote-28)

## 

## Part III The Emerging Pentecostal Challenges

The above discussion reveals that the militant nature of Hindutva ideology is a serious issue in Rajasthan. The following concerns are emerging from the discussion as challenges before the Pentecostal community in Rajasthan.

1. Investigating the indigenity of the movement

As the Hindutva advocates raise the identity concern, it is high time for Pentecostals to explore the indigenous nature of the movement. The usual ‘Euro-centric approach’ (North America-centred) in Pentecostal historiography is to be discarded. As almost all Pentecostal churches in the state have local stories behind its origin, it is vital to unearth the local revivals in depth through vigorous research.

1. Equipping Rajasthani Leadership

It is very important to raise local leaders within the movement. As more Rajasthanis join the movement, it is high time to train and equip the tribal people into the senior leadership of the movement. Although majority of Pentecostal pastors and followers are Rajasthanis, they have not received a considerable representation in the senior leadership of the movement as the senior leadership of most organizations are south Indians.

1. Exploring the Spiritual Dimension of conversion

As the socio-political or socio-economic interpretation of conversion does not do much benefit in the Indian context, a spiritual dimension of conversion is to be emphasized. Therefore, the role of charismatic dimension in conversion is to be researched out. As there are numerous stories of conversion of individuals and families after the result of healing, exorcism and other miracles behind the formation of many churches, such stories need to be documented.

1. Manifesting the Public Dimension of Pentecostal Mission

Pentecostal need to manifest the public dimension of mission more explicitly, as there is an accusation that Pentecostals are interested only in the conversion of poor tribals. Although there are ecological, medical educational and other social projects undertaken by Pentecostals, there should be more concrete ways of involving in community developing mission activities and the need of researching.

1. Purposeful Ecumenical Initiatives

There should be more deliberate ecumenical initiatives by Pentecostals in Rajasthan in the light of the challenges posed by Hindutva. It is true that there is an increasing interest in ecumenicity among Christians. However, this does not mean that there is a smooth relationship between various Christian groups in every part of the state. The intensified persecution and other challenges from Hindu militants should motivate Christians to realize the importance of coming together and acting in unity.

1. Hindutva is the ideology of militant Hindus. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In the present study the terms ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘Charismatic’ are used interchangeably with the same meaning unless otherwise stated. The present study adopts a more inclusive definition, following Walter Hollenweger (see Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 1), Anderson (see Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 9-15. He calls them ‘spiritual gifts’ movements (p.14).) and Amos Yong (see Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 18-19.). Such a definition embraces Classical Pentecostals, Charismatics and Neo-Pentecostals, who share a common emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For a detailed discussion, see Paul M. Collins, *Christian Inculturation in India* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 18-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. It is common even today in many villages in north India that the name of women were not known to the public much, but referred as *unki avurath* (his lady- that means the wife of so and so), and so in many instances, it is not easy to identify the name of women. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *Dhua ka Khar* is an indigenous Pentecostal church established by a local Pentecostal minister, B.M. Chand, in 1942 at Nishadganj, Mahanagar in Lucknow. B.M. Chand’s son is the pastor of the church today. B.M. Chand served as the Secretary of Northern Region of the All India Pentecostal Fellowship. B.M. Chand, ‘All India Pentecostal Fellowship: Northern Region,’ *Cross and Crown* 5, no.4 (1975): 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. John Masih, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 15 May 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Throughout this thesis, the term ‘indigenous’ (people) is used to mean (people) belonging to from Rajasthan as well as other states of India. The terms ‘Rajasthani/s,’ ‘local’ (people) and ‘native/s’ are used interchangeably to mean people from Rajasthan, including both tribal and non-tribal. Wherever necessary, the term ‘tribal’ is used to show the difference. Moreover, if these terms are used differently, the distinction will be mentioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Tajendra Masih, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 23 May 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Chouhan (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 09 May 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. A.T. Cherian, ‘Pentecostal Revival, the Key to Church Growth,’ *Filadelfia Jyoti*, Souvenir (Udaipur, India: FBC, 2006), 40. Cherian has done an exhaustive research on Christianity among the Bhils in Jhadol Taluk. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu*, 6th edn. (New Delhi, India: Bharti Sahitya Sadan, 1989), xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. M.T. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights: A Christian Response* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2007). See p.157. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. However, a third version of nationalism, ‘neo-orthodox Hindu approach’ is also proposed in contemporary India. This approach provides ‘spiritual confidence for ordinary Indians, and lays the theological justification for identification’ with Hindus for all Indians irrespective of religion. For a discussion, see Sebastian C.H. Kim, ‘Hindutva, Secular India and the Report of the Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee: 1954-57,’ in *Nationalism and Hindutva*, 139-40. For more details of this approach see, Ashis Nandy, ‘The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance,’ *Alternatives* 13, no. 2 (1988): 177-94; Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Parts in Indian Politics and Religion* (London: Hurst, 2002), 60-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. See for example, Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 168-75; S.M. Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism and Indian Christian Response,’ in *Reflecting Mission, Practicing Mission: Divine Word Missionaries Commemorate 125 Years of Worldwide Commitment*, vol. 2, ed. Steyler Verlag (Nettetal: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institute, 2001), 477-78; Lise McKean, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Ronald, Neufeldt, ‘Hindutva and the Rhetoric of Violence,’ in *The Twenty-First Century Confronts Its Gods: Globalization, Technology and War*, ed. Hawkin, David J. (Albany State: University of New York, 2004); S. Soban Kumar Daniel, ‘The Challenges of the Hindutva Movement and Christian Responses in India’ (MPhil thesis, Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2004); Sumit Sarkar, ‘Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva,’ in *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. Ludden David (New Delhi: OUP, 1996), 270-93; Jaffrelot Christophe, ‘Hindu Nationalism and Democracy,’ in *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of* Democracy, ed. Francine R. Frankel, et al. (New Delhi: OUP, 2000), 353-404; Patnaik Arun and K.S.R.V.S. Chalam, ‘The Ideology and Politics of Hindutva,’ in *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India*, vol 3 of *Social Change and Political Discourse in India: Structures of Power, Movements of Resistance*, ed. Sathyamurthy, T.V. (Oxford: OUP, 1996), 252-80; Brenda Cossman and Ratna Kapur, *Secularism’s Last Sigh? Hindutva and the (Mis)Rule of Law* (Oxford: OUP, 1999); C.V. Mathew, ‘Hindutva: Majority Religious Nationalism in India,’ in *Mission in Context: Missiological Reflections*, ed. C.V. Mathew (Chennai/Delhi, India: MIIS/ISPCK, 2003), 212-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 482. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Savarkar, *Hindutva*, 113. For more details, see pp.110-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Tapan Basu, et al., *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags* (Hyderabad: Orient and Longman, 1993), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. The collective group of all Hindu militant organizations such as RSS, Bajrangh Dal, VHP and Shiv Sena is known as *Sangh Parivar* or *Hindutva Parivar* [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Kajsa Ahlstrand, ‘Toward a Paradigm Shift in Christian Mission: South Asia and North Europe,’ in *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue*, ed. Mortensen Viggo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Sebastian C.H. Kim, *In Search of Identity: Debates on Religious Conversion in India* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2003), 187. For more details of the discussion, see pp. 157-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Earnest W. Talibuddin, ‘Mission Context Today: Inter-Religious and Cultural Conflicts,’ in *Emerging Indian Missiology: Context and Concepts*, ed. Joseph Mattam and Joseph Valiamangalam (Delhi, India: ISPCK, 2006), 26. Such a call was questioned even by many Indian historians like K.N. Panikkar. According to him, ‘the response of Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, who is considered a good man and a liberal by many, was the most devious. By calling for a public debate on conversions, he suggests that the blame, in fact, rests with the victims. His move is a veiled threat to individual freedom, guaranteed in the Constitution after extended discussion in the Constituent Assembly.’ See K.N. Panikkar, ‘Towards a Hindu Nation,’ *Frontline* 17, no.3 (1999): 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Even during the recent religious violence in Orissa, many persecuted Christians were protected and taken care of by local Hindus. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Lalu (pseudonym), interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006. In his letter to Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, regarding the persecution of Christians in Rajasthan, in 2006, John Dayal, the National Secretary of All India Christian Council, also mentioned about this threat of VHP leaders. See, http://indianchristians.in /news/ content/ view/300/47/ (accessed 27 November 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. This was expressed during the pastors meeting in Banaswara, 13 May 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 5, 188. Christians argue that the supremacy and dominion of these nationalists will be affected as the Dalits and tribal communities will be educated and their identity strengthened, and that is why the social work done by the Christians is opposed by militant Hindus. For more details, see Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism.’According to him, ‘when the lower-caste students are educated in Christian schools, they learn not to go to the money-lenders, to the land-lords, to become bonded labours. If this happens, the nationalists claim, the age-old structures will be destroyed, and where will the *zamindars* (landlords) get their labour from?’ p. 485. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)