Study of Wikipedia Article on the Citizenship Amendment Bill/Act in India

The Indian Government implemented the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act on December 11th, 2019. The law is designed to fast-track the process of obtaining Indian citizenship for religious minorities, including Hindus, Jains, Parsis, Sikhs, and Christians from neighbouring Muslim-majority countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh while excluding Muslim refugees and immigrants. While the government maintains that the Citizenship Act aims to protect religious minorities from persecution in neighbouring Muslim majority states, critics claim that the law is exclusionary, discriminatory and anti-constitutional in character as it provides citizenship status on a religious basis. In addition to the Citizenship Amendment Act, the Indian government has prepared a National Register of Indian Citizens (NRC) in all Indian states using the National Population Register (NPR) that lists all residents of India regardless of citizenship. This implies that citizens will have to prove their citizenship. With the rise of Hindutva ideology, and the deep divide between the Hindu majority and Muslim minority populations in the country, fear is now amplified that the combined implications of the NRC and the CAA will lead to systematic marginalization of Muslims or the possible revocation of their Indian citizenship, and has led to massive street and digital protests to oppose the law.

The article on the [Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019](#) provides a neutral timeline of events from the passing of the law by the current BJP government, its reception by the common public, and the protests that the law provoked in several Indian states. The article in English explains the background of the Bill/Act, the government intention behind its implementation, how the law came to be criticized by scholars, how it led to protests across India, particularly in North eastern states of the country and several national universities with

student participation, and a casual mention of the internet lockdown in the capital, New Delhi. The Wiki page alludes specifically to BJP's intention to deport Bangaldeshi refugees and illegal immigrants residing in India while also critiquing how the current government has redefined citizenship in the country based on religion. The page goes on to discuss the specific amendments to the Bill and the gaps in the law when employed with the National Register of Indian Citizens to grant/take away citizenship. Finally, the article maps out the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (which is elaborated on another Wikipedia page) and makes a minor mention of Rohingya Muslims who have fled persecution in Myanmar to find a home in India.

Although the article is neutral and charts the entire timeline of the events leading upto the anti-CAA protests in India, a considerable number of viewpoints are left out from the article. What about the perspectives of Indian Muslims without proof of citizenship and their fear of being rendered stateless by the government? What about other Hindu minorities like the Tamils from neighbouring non-Muslim majority countries like the Sri Lanka? What about other minoritized communities in the country, like Muslim women who sat in peaceful protest for 100 days in Shaheen Bagh in the Delhi capital? What about students protesting across the country and their perspectives as the intellectual elites in India? Finally, the article does not include a history of religious persecution under the current government which will help the reader understand the intention behind the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act.

The article is available on Arabic, Bangla, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Punjabi, Tamil, Urdu and Chinese. The English article is not directly translated into other languages, and from first glance, it appears that the above language articles are drafted independently of the main Wiki page, although they borrow from it occasionally. Wikis drafted in Bangla, Indonesian, and Chinese are more extensive than the rest of the languages. Specifically the

articles in Bangla and Chinese speak more to the persecution of Indian Muslims and minorities, and the Chinese wiki speaks in depth about the Internet lockdowns, the curfew and the militarized state in India. Other key indian languages like Punjabi, Hindi and Tamil only offer a short background of the Bill/Act. Hindi is the language that the majority of Indians would understand. However, there is no information on the current government's intentions or an in-depth analysis of what the law stands for. The Tamil wiki mentions Assamese, Bengalis and Sri Lankan Tamils but does not delve into any of these communities or scholarly critiques properly.

Most of these languages have sources and/or citations from digitally available Indian or international news articles in English. Bangla, French, Hindi and Tamil languages carry, in addition, some regional news articles available digitally. However, the majority cited are available only in English. Not many sources outside of news articles are employed to study the Citizenship Amendment Bill - there is a lack of academic sources, interviews and surveys of Indian citizens on the subject. Therefore, the only citations that are available online come from a neutral perspective that do not inform the citizens of the potential dangers of the law, thereby creating a divide between real information and perception on the subject for citizens to make an informed opinion. The reason for citing these sources can be owing to the lack of readily available digitized sources in different languages and /or institutional access to academic articles.

Articles in Indian languages (except Bangla) on CAA do not provide information to enable citizens to make informed opinions. The Wikis do not go into any depth, and only sketch out the background of the Bill/Act. For the English Wiki, the protests, and the background of the bill have been well charted but what is missing is an extensive section on religious persecution by the current government, experiences and/or of Indian Muslims, and Assamese who fear for their citizenship or an influx of Hindus.

In order to effectively decolonize knowledge on CAA on Wikipedia, perspectives and lived experiences of minoritized communities impacted by the law must be included. Interviews and surveys should be made available and should be incorporated to provide the real voice behind the protests. Another effective way to add information to the regional language wikis is through the translation of the English article with the addition of unique perspectives of specific communities impacted (Sri Lankan Tamils in the Tamil, Bangladeshi refugees in the Bangla).