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REGISTRATION REVOKED: AN EXAMINATION OF THE MODI ADMINISTRATION'S USE OF THE FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION REGULATION ACT

Victoria (Tory) Scordato

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The recent uptick in media coverage of a longstanding Indian financial and political regulation, the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, has brought about new criticisms of the current Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi and his administration have been accused of using the law, which regulates which non-governmental organizations are eligible to use funding from international sources, for their political benefit.

There is a lack of academic literature that has focused on the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, especially recent usage of it. This research project aims to fill some of that gap by examining the validity of claims made by both domestic and international media outlets. My hypothesis is two-fold: the Modi administration is revoking the registration of non-governmental organizations at a higher rate than previous administrations, and organizations associated with religious minorities are more likely to have their permission to accept foreign funds rescinded.

In order to test this, I have compiled a database of all of the civil society organizations in 17 states that currently have approval under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act or have had their approval revoked. The data was first examined by looking at the number of organizations that lost their registration and the year in which it occurred. Then, I attempted to calculate if there was a correlation between the classification of an organization and the likelihood of it still being eligible to receive foreign funds.

The results of the study show a slight confirmation that the Modi administration has increased the number of organizations losing their registration, but does not show a strong connection between the type of organization and its likelihood of losing access to foreign funding.