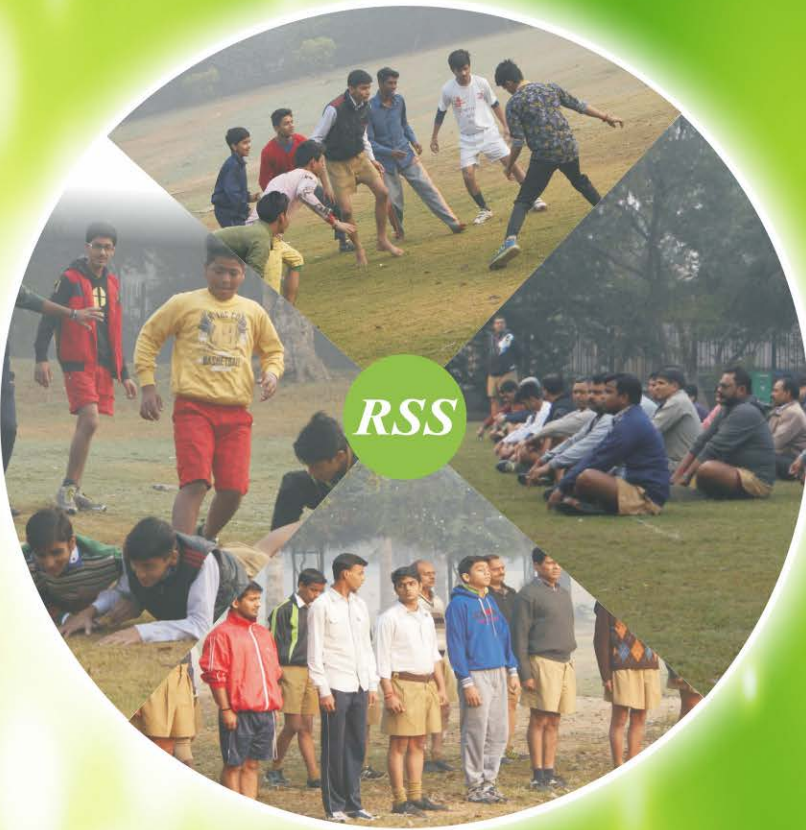


UNDERSTANDING

RSS

(RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEWAK SANGH)



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SANGH)

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Keshav - The Patriot

Our Sangh's full name is *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh*. It was established on the *Vijayadashami* day (Dussehra), in 1925, at Nagpur by *Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar*.

Who was this *Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar*?

Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was born in an ordinary Brahmin family on the *Ugadi day* (New Year Day) in 1889. *Dr. Hedgewar* had two elder brothers. The name of his eldest brother was *Mahadev Shastri* and the name of the second brother was *Sitaram Shastri*. *Dr. Hedgewar* was the youngest of the family.

The Hedgewar family's roots were in Telangana Region (Andhra) from where they had migrated and settled in Nagpur. Doctorji was born in Nagpur. Doctorji's father was a priest by profession. Though the family was not wealthy in terms of money, they never had any feeling of inadequacy. They were blessed with the wealth of great values - self-respect and family pride. Doctorji (*Keshav*) imbibed the virtue of self-respect along with his mother's milk itself.

Here is a casual, yet symptomatic incident that happened in the year 1897. England's Queen Victoria had completed her 60th year of coronation to the throne and The British Empire had decided to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the coronation on a grand scale, with pomp and gaiety. At that time, our country, Hindustan, was a slave and dependent nation, ruled by the British. The British

Government had ordered for celebrations on a grand scale in Hindustan also. As per the order, Government buildings were decorated with lights, speeches eulogising the Queen were made in schools and colleges. Also sweets were distributed to the children in schools, and the school where *Keshav* studied was one among them. All the children ate the sweets except *Keshav*, who threw it away into the dustbin. *Keshav* was not interested in celebrating an event in commemoration of the coronation of a foreign ruler. Do you know how old *Keshav* was then? Just Eight years old! Even at that young age, he had the fierce spirit of patriotism glowing in him. There is a similar incident from his life in the next four years.

Keshav was just twelve in 1901, when King Edward VII became the king of England upon the demise of Queen Victoria. King of England meant the Emperor of Hindustan, too. So the coronation was celebrated with the same pomp in Hindustan, as in England. There was a textile mill in Nagpur by the name '*Empress Mill*'. It is not there now. The factory management decided to celebrate this occasion on a grand scale, by profusely decorating the factory premises and entertaining the people with fireworks at night. A large number of people had gathered to see the event, including very many children. It was the entertainment that appealed to all of them. However, *Keshav* did not go. His friends compelled him to accompany them to watch the show. He refused, saying that it was really shameful to celebrate the coronation of a foreign ruler. Such was the degree of patriotism displayed by *Keshav* at that young an age.

After completing his primary education, *Keshav* was admitted to Neil City High School for learning English education (presently Neil City High School is known as Dada Saahab Dhanvate School).

Keshav was dismissed from this school. Do you know the fact and the reason behind it? To know and fully comprehend it, we

need to look at the circumstances prevailing then.

Year 1905 witnessed turbulent upheavals in our country. Lord Curzon was the Viceroy of our country then. The Viceroy was the representative for the King of England and he ruled the colony as if he were a King himself. He ordered the partition of Bengal province. People strongly protested against this order. Though the partition was only related to Bengal, it ignited protests all over the nation. Around the same time, the slogan ‘*Vandemataram*’ had started inspiring people. The song *Vandemataram* had appeared in the novel ‘*Anand Matha,*’ authored by late *Bankim Chandra*. The song extolls the glory of our *Bharat Mata*. During the partition of Bengal, people listened to this song and started singing it. It got deeply instilled in their minds.

Vandemataram means “*Hey Bharat Mata, I salute you!*” This slogan kindled patriotic fervour in crores of our countrymen. The slogan symbolized the people’s protests of anger against the British rule, in the cities and villages of our country. The British government banned shouting of the slogan *Vandemataram* and punished whoever chanted it. However, the ever increasing protests caused the British government to abort the partition plan of Bengal.

How unfortunate was our country? Within 40 years of this victory, we accepted the partition of Bengal.

In 1905, it was an offence to protest against the partition of Bengal, from the perspective of the British Government. At that point of time, *Vandemataram* had created a wave of national consciousness across the nation. How could the students of Neil City High School stay away? They too joined the protests with enthusiasm.

In 1908, *Keshav Hedgewar*, who was doing his

Matriculation, formulated a plan. An educational officer from the Government was about to visit the school for inspection. The students decided that they would welcome the official with the slogan *Vandemataram*. Accordingly, when the inspecting official stepped into the Matric class, he was greeted with the cries of *Vandemataram*. He went to the next class; the greeting continued there too. The officer stopped the inspection and left in a huff. An enquiry into the incident was started. Investigations as to who was behind the plan and who was the leader were made. However, nobody revealed anything. So, the Headmaster announced the decision to dismiss all the students of both classes from the school. However, all the students boycotted the school protesting against this decision. Finally, the parents and school management came to an agreement. It was decided that the Headmaster would ask each student whether he had committed any mistake and the student would simply nod his head in answer to this. As per the answer, the students would be allowed to attend the classes without any punishment. As per the decision, the students were questioned individually and then re-admitted to the school. However, *Keshav Hedgewar*, neither nodded his head nor accepted what happened was a mistake at all. Hence, only *Keshav* was rusticated from the school.

At that time, a nationalistic school - '*Vidyagruh*' had been established in Yavatmal (district headquarters of Vidarbha) through the efforts of *Sri Bapuji Ane* and *Sri Baba Sahab Paranjape*. *Keshav Hedgewar* got admission into this school. Unfortunately, before *Keshav* could appear for Matriculation, the school attracted British Government's ire and got closed. These hurdles did not impede *Keshav*, who was very determined. He went to Pune with some of his friends. Around the same time, some nationalists had established a National University in Kolkata. The Matriculation exam of that university was scheduled for July. *Keshav* and two of his

friends decided to appear for that exam. He started intense preparations for the same. The exam centre was in Amaravati. *Keshav* and his friends went to Amaravati and attended the exams.

In 1909, *Keshav Hedgewar* successfully passed his matriculation. Do you know who signed his matriculation certificate? It was *Ras Bihari Bose*; the same *Ras Bihari Bose*, who had gone to Japan to run *Bharat's* freedom movement and who helped *Netaji Subhashchandra Bose* in every possible way to establish the *Indian National Army*.

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Working for the public cause

At that time, Kolkata was the nucleus of the revolutionary freedom movement. *Keshav Hedgewar* had got acquainted with some of the revolutionaries in Nagpur itself and he was one of the associates. In Kolkata, there was a popular revolutionary group called '*Anusheelan Samiti*'. *Keshav Hedgewar* naturally became a member of this group, on reaching Kolkata. *Keshav Hedgewar* joined the National Medical College in Kolkata to become a doctor. And his Medical education and revolutionary activities commenced at the simultaneously.

In 1916, *Keshav Hedgewar* returned to Nagpur as *Dr. Keshav Hedgewar*. However, he neither established a practice nor got married and started a family. He did not return to Kolkata because the First World War was taking place in Europe then. England was fully embroiled in the war. The revolutionaries were planning to take full advantage of this scenario and wanted to add more fuel to the fire. These plans did not succeed. The war came to an end in 1918, with England emerging victorious. England became more powerful and it was almost impossible to wage an armed revolution against the British Empire. One thing became clear; it was impossible to free a big country like *Hindustan* from the clutches of the British by sacrificing a few lives. To attain freedom it was inevitable to awakening the national consciousness of the entire people. At that time, Congress was the only political organisation in the country. It was established to fight for a few rights of the people of *Bharat* from the British Government through appeals and

representations. In Congress sessions, resolutions supporting the British Government were invariably passed first before the resolutions demanding people's rights were moved.

Lokmanya Tilak brought about a radical change in the Congress ideology. He proclaimed that the country wanted complete independence and not merely certain rights. He coined the slogan: '*Independence is my birthright*'. This slogan radically altered the atmosphere in the Congress and gave a fresh lease of enthusiasm to the people. However, this also led to a split in the Congress into two groups. One group was called moderates while the other, extremists. In Congress, the moderates group had more members than the extremists. Their politics was in support of the British Government. The general public was attracted towards the extremists group. *Lokmanya Tilak* was rightfully respected and was well-known for his political views. The British Government could not digest the public love for *Tilak*. It filed a case against *Tilak*, citing some of the articles written by him in the newspapers. He was imprisoned for 6 years and sent to Mandalay prison in Brahmadesh (Myanmar). He was released from the jail in 1914. During those 6 years, the politics of extremists had cooled down a lot. *Lokmanya Tilak* restarted his work with the chanting of yet another slogan, '*Punashcha Hari Om*'. He received a lot of support from the youth of the nation and *Dr. Hedgewar* from Nagpur was one of his chief supporters. Eventually, *Dr. Hedgewar* became a Congress leader.

There was a group called '*Rashtriya Mandal*' in Nagpur, and *Dr. Moonje* and *Barrister Abhyankar* were its members. *Dr. Hedgewar* enrolled himself into this group and was its youngest member. It was decided to hold a Congress session at Nagpur in December 1920. *Dr. Hedgewar* was given the responsibility of making arrangements for this session. Members of *Rashtriya Mandal* wanted *Lokmanya Tilak* to become the President of

Congress. Their wish might have come true but for the unfortunate and quite unexpected death of *Lokmanya Tilak* on August 1st, 1920. The leadership baton of Congress was thus passed on to *Mahatma Gandhi*.

The entire nation got drawn towards Congress because of its two successful agenda : Non-cooperation to British Government and the call to use of *Swadeshi* goods. *Doctorji* also plunged himself into these programmes. He travelled from one village to another, making speeches to ignite the spark of independence (Swaraj) in the minds of people. The British Government was annoyed with the speeches of *Doctorji* and charged him with treason. He was punished with one year of imprisonment. He was released from prison on July 12th, 1922.

Though *Doctorji* participated in *Gandhiji's* Non-cooperation and *Swadeshi movements*, he was not in agreement with *Gandhiji's* policy on Muslims. When *Mahatmaji* started insisting on Hindu-Muslim unity for securing independence, *Doctorji* voiced his objections to *Mahatmaji*. He expressed that India was a land of multiple religions - *Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis* and *Jews* and asked *Mahatmaji* as to why he was talking only about unity among the first two. He also brought home the fact that even before coining of the phrase '*Hindu-Muslim unity*', many Muslims had joined Congress and were taking part in the Independence struggle. *Mahatmaji* replied that by talking about Hindu-Muslim unity, he was building love and affection in the minds of Muslims for the nation. *Doctorji* was not convinced by this reply, and yet he continued to work for Congress.

World War - I ended in 1918. Turkey had sided with Germany in the war and was defeated. As a result, Turkey was split into many parts. The Turkish emperor was also the '*Khalipha*', the religious head the Muslims all over the world. With the defeat of

the Empire, the emperor also lost his title and role. Turkey came under a new nationalist rule and *Kamal Pasha* became the President of the country. He ended the Khaliphate. The ultra-orthodox Muslims started opposing the British and Kamal Pasha. All was fine till then in India. Mahatmaji wanted to pull Muslims into the independence movement and get them involved in it. Mahatmaji started a movement all across the nation to mobilise support for re-establishing the Khaliphate. This was called as *Khilafat movement*.

The *Khilafat* movement was a flop because Muslims in Turkey themselves did not like the *Khalipha*. The failure of this movement had an undesirable effect in our country. Hindustani Muslims felt closer to a different country. Muslim orthodoxy got emboldened to such an extent that Muslims started attacking *Hindus* to avenge the failure of *Khilafat* movement. The *Mooplah* rebellion in *Kerala* was one such horrifying example. During this barbarous campaign of bigotry, Muslims killed more than 1500 *Hindus* and forcefully converted more than 20,000 *Hindus* to Islam. Numerous ladies committed suicide by jumping into the wells to protect themselves from getting raped.

The founding of RSS

After seeing the bitter results of Congress's Muslim appeasement policy, *Dr. Hedgewar* started thinking on a new line.

The country had to obtain independence. Doctorji felt that this could not be possible only with the stand-alone violent protests of revolutionaries. So he did not continue with those activities. Congress was creating awareness in the general public about the importance of freedom. Doctorji felt that this awareness was important but not enough. He strongly felt that there must be a complete uprising against the British Government.

A conscious society creates fellowship and it helps. When it comes to the actual fighting for the rights on the street, only a very few come forward and not the entire society. This is the case with any Independence movement. Only some have 'fighting for independence' as their goal of life. They lead a disciplined life and aren't afraid of making any sacrifice or even embracing death. The society at large stands by them with a sympathetic view to help them in all circumstances. This is the pre-condition to win the fight for independence.

To illustrate, there are icebergs in the oceans. Generally, only the tip-1/8th -of the iceberg is visible on the surface. The remaining 7/8th is invisible as it is underneath the ocean's surface. When a ship hits this 1/8th portion of the iceberg, it breaks. How is it possible for a small iceberg to have so much strength? The visible 1/8th iceberg is completely attached to the remaining 7/8th iceberg, which is under the surface.

Due to the efforts of Congress, there was awareness in the society, but the society did not feel a strong kinship with the martyrs who led the protests from the front. *Gandhiji* did not have the time to establish that relationship. This was the main reason for the failure of the 'Quit India' movement, in 1942. When *Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's* army reached the frontiers, the entire nation had lost the vigour to fight against the British. It was the time for a nationwide revolution but the leaders were in jail and were thinking about modes of getting out. (I have presented the scenario available in 1942 after Doctorji's death, so as to enable the readers to get an insight into his thought process.) Doctorji was deeply pondering over yet another issue - A handful of British had come traversing thousands of miles to *Bharat* without any army. They had come only with weighing scales to do trade; but yet they managed to win the entire nation. What a big surprise? Who won this nation for them? Doctorji understood that we ourselves only had enabled them to win our nation. We had become soldiers in their army. We had also become their officers and administrators.

Doctorji saw *Jalianwalabagh* massacre, happening during his lifetime. In *Jalianwalabagh*, two thousand people were shot dead on the orders of a British officer. *Jalainwalabagh* was a big ground in the city of *Amritsar* in Punjab. This ground was surrounded by a compound wall on all four sides, with only one narrow entrance. A large meeting was being held to protest against the British government. The government decided to disrupt this meeting. The people had gathered and the meeting had the maiden speech had just begun, when a British officer ordered the policemen to shoot at the crowd. Thousands of people were killed and only those who crawled like animals could manage to escape.

Who shot them? Only our own people did it. The British officer might have given the orders, but only our people did the actual shooting. Both the killers and the killed were our people. Who were

the commanders and soldiers of foreign invaders from Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan? Again, only our people. Our people showed the way to Mohammad Ghaznavi. Mansingh was Akbar's commander, and 'Mirza' Raja Jaisingh was Aurangzeb's commander. Shivaji's father, Shahaji, was a senior official in Nizam Shah's court in the beginning and then he became an officer in Adil Shah's court. These people were very intelligent leaders. But why did they do such things? If leaders themselves were like this, one could imagine the condition of ordinary people.

Doctorji was thinking about these issues for quite some time. These thoughts were disturbing him a lot, which ultimately led him to focus on one thought - getting organised is a must for the society. There should be an organisation of those who love the nation. He felt that all the people should realize their identity, become aware of the actual friends/foe, and remember all this forever. An organisation doesn't mean just the aggregate of people or a big crowd. We can see such crowds in a fair or a carnival. Even in a market, many people come together. An organisation means coming together of devoted people with specific ideas and a common behavior. But who could infuse the people with such a spirit?

Naturally, there are two places where value-based learning is possible-one, in one's own home and another, in the school. Values were taught at home but they were restricted to the family level; it does not assume a social or national dimension. Schools were just centres that fed information for the purpose of passing the exams. These trends continue even today.

Hence *Doctorji* felt the need to adopt a completely different system. *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh* and its method of working were products of this thought process of *Doctorji*. Once he decided this, *Doctorji* relieved himself of all other social

responsibilities. He was holding a position in Congress and he could have attained higher positions had he continued there. However *Doctorji* never allowed himself to fall a victim to that temptation.

Whom did he take along? He knew that only those who are with fresh minds could be taught. Hence he organized a team of 10-12 year old youngsters. At that time, *Doctorji* was 36 years old. People felt he was mad because he had turned his face against name and fame and had ended up playing and chatting with teenage boys. Our *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh* was born thus.

Coining the name

'*Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh*'- this name was decided after intensive thinking. Each and every word of this name is of significance. We should understand its meaning. '*Sangh*' means, many people. A single person can never become *Sangh*. Our *Hindu society* has huge numbers yet every *Hindu* feels that he is all alone. An incident in *Dr. Hedgewarji's* life explains this. This incident happened before *Sangh* was established. At that time, Doctorji was a Congress worker. Public meetings were organized across villages to protest against the British government. It was decided to pass resolutions against the Government in these meetings. To attend one such meeting Doctorji went to Chandrapur.

Such a meeting was organized in Nagpur as well. The venue for the meeting was the Town Hall ground in Nagpur. The ground got packed with people. Spirited speeches were made by leaders and the presentation of resolutions against the Government had just started when someone started shouting '*Snake! Snake!*' People started running helter-skelter. The '*Dainik Maharashtra*' newspaper published an interesting article about this commotion. People did not know why they were running. They were running because everyone else was running.

On returning from Chandrapur, Doctorji met various leaders and enquired about the meeting. Everyone told that the crowd was huge and rabble-rousing speeches were made. They told Doctorji that a naughty fellow threw a toy snake and started shouting and

that caused the entire gathering to disperse. Doctorji asked them: “You were there, Why didn’t you prevent the crowd from running away?” One leader answered, “What could have I done all alone?” Many people repeated the same thing. Though there were so many people in the meeting, everyone felt that he/she was just all alone himself or herself. Doctorji decided that it was necessary to remove this- ‘I am alone’- syndrome of the Hindu society, and he established the Sangh to cure the society of this syndrome.

Nobody calls our Sangh by its full name - ‘*Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh*’ every day. We just call it *Sangh*.

When somebody asks, “Where have you been?”

We answer, “to *Sangh*.” “Today we have a Sangh programme.” “This is a *Sangh shakha*.” “This is *Sanghaslhan*” (place where shakha is conducted). The very term Sangh is of tremendous significance. It implies that we are many, yet a single entity. It also signifies the importance of oneness. However, Sangh is not simply a confluence of people. It means a confluence of people with great value-system. What are the values of the Sangh? First value : We, the children of *Bharat Mata* are Hindus and we are all one. This feeling has to be deeply inscribed in our minds. Hinduism comprises by many different sects, languages and food habits, etc.. Some castes are considered upper caste’s while some others are supposed to be lower. Even worse, some castes are bracketed as untouchables-meaning, no one can touch them. It was believed that the persons who touch them become unclean. To establish the Sangh in such a society was as difficult as weighing frogs in a scale. However Doctorji was determined to take up this difficult task. He gave everyone a simple mantra- ‘*Ekashaha Sampata*’, meaning, “Stand in a single line”.

He told all, “Higher or lower caste, you are expected to let go

of your ego, helplessness and inferiority complex and stand in a single line. The rich should shed his feeling of being affluent and the poor should not feel he is poor. The highly educated should not take his educational qualification to his head and the illiterate should shed his feeling of ignorance. All should stand together in a single line. You are a Hindu, so stand in the single line.” Doctorji coined the slogan “*Ekashaha Sampata*” and made people belonging to diverse castes, languages, strata and with different dressing habits to stand united in a single line.

Then all started sitting in a single line, and going out and eating together, too. Such was the magic created by Doctorji through the Sangh. Doctorji did not give long sermons against casteism and untouchability. He did not coin any slogans, like ‘We are going to remove untouchability’. He just told one thing to everyone - ‘We are all Hindus’. He started daily shakhas to create this innate (and not conscious) feeling of oneness in *Hindus*. All had to assemble daily, stand in a single line, play together, occasionally go out together, and eat together. In Sangh camps, there will be only one kitchen. All sit together and eat. It is the *swyamsewaks* who serve. Questions about castes are neither raised, even if it is known, nor discussed. No one will ask others caste and even if it is known, it won’t be a discussed. All are *swyamsewaks* of the *Sangh* and that is their identity.

Shakhas are held daily. Many people keep telling that they will do this and that for the country. People used to say this to Doctorji as well, during the early days of the Sangh. Doctorji used to respond saying, “Out of 24 hours in a day, you keep 23 hours for yourself. Just give one hour for the society and nation; i.e. give one hour to Sangh. Make it as a lifelong habit that you will not think about you, your business or work, but think only about Sangh, Consider Sangh-work as a *Tapas*”.

There is a difference between a recreation club and the Sangh. One visits club to pass free time whilst for Sangh, one has to create time from a busy schedule, to attend the shakha. Doctorji wanted people to organise the day-to-day activities in such a way to allot one free hour for the Sangh. Through this, he wanted to inculcate a new value in people's lives - i.e. selflessness - "Not living for one's own self alone but for the sake of society, too". There was lack of this feeling in the Hindu society, and the Sangh could remedy this to a great extent. Many Hindus are generally self-centric and many more family-centric. Sangh made swyamsewaks society-centric. Sangh is the confluence of society-centric people. Hence Sangh is often being called an institution that imparts value-education.

What type of value? The value that creates unity in Hindu society, which impels one to live for the society bearing in mind one's duty towards the society. The word '*Sangh*' has such a profound meaning.

Swayamsewak

The second important word in *RSS* is '*Swayamsewak*'. People who work for remuneration or salary are called employees or workers. However, a person who works for Sangh is called a '*Swayamsewak*'. This means that when one works for Sangh or the society, there is no expectation of anything in return. Sangh-work is a service rendered to the motherland. Do we expect anything in return when we serve our mother? When something is expected in return, can that be termed as service? If so, it becomes a business deal. Doctorji has said, "*All of us are swayamsewaks of our motherland; we do not wish or expect anything in return for our work. Hence, there is no salary or royalty in Sangh*".

During Doctorji's time, the word '*swayamsewak*' had a very different meaning.

Swayamsewaks then were those who :-

- * Made arrangements for meetings, like laying the carpets and arranging the chairs.
- * Took care of all logistics for the comfort of their leaders.
- * Took part in processions, shouting slogans praising one leader or the other.
- * Did everything for any party wearing a badge on their chests.

The English word 'Volunteer' was in vogue at that time and the word '*swayamsewak*' was considered a true translation in Indian languages. Doctorji changed the meaning of the word '*swayamsewak*' completely. He brought prestige to the word '*swayamsewak*,' implying the meaning a 'patriotic citizen'; the persons who do Sangh-work - swayamsewaks; the persons who contribute the needful for Sangh activities - swayamsewaks.

The attitude behind this contribution is not subscription and not donation but as '*Dakshina*' (offering). *Dakshina* means an offering of money with complete reverence and dedication, and the value cannot be counted just in numbers. To whom should this *Dakshina* be offered? To the *Guru*. Who is the *Guru*? Doctorji identified '*Bhagwa Dhvaj*' as the *Guru* and not any individual. It is a symbol of sacrifice, icon of purity and a sign of valour. Purity and valour are depicted in the saffron colour. One must offer *Dakshina* (*samarpan*) before *Bhagwa Dhvaj*. This is the method of fund raising (*Guru Dakshina samarpan*) in the Sangh. One who does so is not called a donor. Those who do *samarpan* remain *swayamsewaks*. Hence, no importance is given to those who offer more *Guru Dakshina*. Similarly, those who do less *Guru Dakshina* are not neglected. In Sangh, no individual is praised for the quantum of his offering.

Doctorji had started Sangh by bringing together small kids. He designed all the Sangh programmes, rules of conduct and regulations. If at all he had asked the *swayamsewaks* to say, "*Dr. Hedgewar ki jai!*" ("*Praise Dr. Hedgewar*"), everybody would have raised that slogan in a crescendo with utmost reverence and enthusiasm. However, there is no '*Dr. Hedgewar ki jai*' in the Sangh. The Sangh people praise only *Bharat Mata*. Here, everyone is a *swayamsewak*. Someone is an *adhikari* (office bearer) just for the sake of structural arrangements. So there is no hero worship of

adhikaris in the Sangh. This is the real meaning of the word '*swayamsewak*'.

Sangh needed karyakarta (personnel) who can visit various states and villages and start the Sangh-work. *Swayamsewaks* accepted this challenge. Some people left their native place to pursue higher studies. Some others left their native place after completion of their studies. They devoted their entire life for the Sangh work. This is how a chain of *Pracharaks* (Organisers) came into force. They went to places unknown to them, learnt the local languages and started *Sangh shakhas*. There is no external control over Sangh, as all its requirements (be it personnel or money) are met by *swayamsewaks* alone. Sangh is a completely autonomous and independent organization. *Swayamsewaks* are its biggest strength. And the growth of the Sangh depends entirely on the *Swayamsewaks*. It is not dependent on any government. Governments have generally been against Sangh all the time. Governments have hatched various conspiracies to bring down Sangh. However, Sangh has successfully met all these challenges and has come out with all its purity like the gold that emerges pure out of the furnace. *Swayamsewaks* are the main cause behind all this success. The word '*swayamsewak*' has such a wealth of meaning attached to it.



Swayamsewaks taking materials to serve flood affected people in Andhra Pradesh.



Swayamsewaks performing last rites of people who died in the landslide at Malingaon of Pune in 2014.

Rashtriya

Now, '*Rashtriya*' is the only word that remains to be explained. Actually, this is the first word in the name of the Sangh. Hence, it is the most important word.

In Sangh, why people are organized, taught values and why do they work without expecting anything in return?

It is for the sake of the nation. What is the meaning of nation? Some people define nation as a country. Though this is not wrong, this answer is incomplete. Some other people define nation as a State (Government). This is also not correct.

Nation means people; people who live within a geographical boundary. This shows that the relationship between the nation and the country is similar to one between fish and water; i.e., both fish and water are totally different entities, yet they are bound together. State is an arrangement for governance, which keeps on changing. It could be a dictatorship, a democracy or a monarchy. The nature of State keeps on changing, but the nature of nation does not.

So, *Rashtra* means people. Which people make up the nation? There are three requirements that make up a nation.

- Rule 1 - What do the people think and feel about the geographical area they live in? Do they consider their country as their motherland (*Matrubhoomi*), or a land of pleasure (*Bhoghbhoomi*)? A mother holds a superior and sacred place

in a person's life. When we consider someone as our mother, there is a sea-change in our attitude towards her. The purity and the importance of a mother is a unique experience to mankind. An animal cannot even understand or feel mother's bond. On a similar vein, the country and its geographical area are non-living entities. However, when it is addressed as motherland, it gets personified and that too with reverence. Poet *Bankim Chandraji* says :-

“*Tvam hi Durgadashapraharandhariniim*”(You are Goddess Durga with ten weapons),
“*Kamala Kamaladalviharini*” (You are Goddess Lakshmi),
“*Vani Vidyadayini*” (You are Goddess Saraswati who gives us wisdom),
“*Vandemataram*” (I salute you, mother).

A nation is made of people who are happy and proud to salute their motherland. This is the first condition.

- Rule 2 - People live in a particular area for quite a bit of time. Then gradually they have their own history with many incidents. Some incidents would have given them happiness and some, sorrow. The people who get to know (see/hear/read) about these incidents, share the same feeling - be it of joy or sorrow. A nation is made up of such people. When we know of *Shivaji Maharaj's* victory, we feel elated. Why? What did Shivaji give us? We read about *Rana Pratap's* defeat and his roaming about in the forests, we feel sad. Why? We share the experience, too, and as we don't like ourselves roaming about in the forest, we feel sorry. *Guru Govind Singh's* sons were martyred by building a wall around them. Tears roll down our eyes on hearing this incident. Why? What is the relationship between those children and us? We read about *Jhansi Rani's* battle, and we feel bad about her defeat.

We feel happy when we read that the *Chaphekar* brothers assassinated W.C. Rand. A nation is made up of people who share the feelings and emotions that they come to know or read about as their own. This is what is meant when it is said that people of a nation share its history.

- Rule 3 - This rule is the most important. A nation is made up of people who apply the same criteria to decide what is right and wrong. This criterion is called as culture. Ravan is bad. Ram is good. Kansa is bad. Krishna is good. Kauravas are bad, Pandavas good. Everyone implicitly understands this. That is the reason why children are not named Ravan or Kansa. Similarly, eloping with other's wife, sending one's father to the prison, not returning the confiscated State, disrobing one's own sister-in-law - all these are wrong.

Our ideals are :-

- * *Ram* who went to the forest abandoning his coronation ceremony on the wishes of his step-mother.
- * *Krishna*, who destroyed the evil forces.
- * *Gautam Buddha*, who left the palace in search of happiness on seeing the sorrow of people is worthy of worship to us.

When a beautiful lady belonging to the enemy's family was captured and brought to his court Shivaji honoured her and ensured her safe return to her family- he is our role model. Why? Because, he had demonstrated our culture through his actions.

A nation is made up of people whose culture is the same and those who believe right as right and wrong as wrong without any caste or religious bias.

In brief, this is a nation of those who feel this country as their country, their motherland, treat its history as theirs, feel proud about the same, and also while saying ‘*Vandemataram*’. Who are these people that share the history and revere the value-system of their nation? They are “*Hindus*”. Hence, this nation is called ‘*Hindu Rashtra*’, i.e. *Rashtriya* means *Hindu*. Our organization, our culture, all the work we do, our sacrifice and all our efforts are for the nation i.e., for the *Hindus*.

This makes clear who is a *Hindu* - those who accept this nation as their motherland, and those who accept its culture as theirs, are *Hindus*. They may or may not do idol worship; they may or may not accept *Vedas*; they may or may not accept *Ram* and *Krishna* as incarnations; they may speak any language; they are all *Hindus*. Hence *Jains*, *Buddhists*, *Sikhs*, *Aryasamajis*, *Lingayats* are all *Hindus*. For example, those who believe in idol worship are *Hindus* in the same way as *Aryasamajis*, who do not believe in idol worship. There is no insistence on idol worship here. Those who believe in it do it and the non-believers don’t. Those who say that they do not believe in idol worship and so will break the idols, destroy the temples and feel proud about it, cannot be *Hindus*. Hence they cannot be ‘*rashtriya*’ (nationalists) as well. As long as Muslims and Christians consider those who destroyed Hindu temples and people involved in mass conversions as their role models and glorify them, cannot be considered as nationalists. To become a nationalist, one has to bring a change from within. This is the meaning of *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh*. Only after this is understood, one can understand the *Sangh* philosophy and get an answer to the question why the *Sangh* is organizing *Hindus* alone.

Why organize only *Hindus*? The answer to this question is very simple. The fate and future of this nation is closely linked to the *Hindus*. The name of the nation is *Hindu*. It is a life and form

of the nation. Weakness of *Hindus* means weakness of the nation. Strength of the *Hindus* is the strength of the nation. Wherever *Hindus* become a minority, there is a danger of that area getting detached from our motherland. Our country was partitioned and Pakistan was born in 1947. Why was Pakistan born?

Political pandits may give umpteen reasons for it, but the basic reason is, *Hindus* became a minority in that part of the country. Afganistan was a part of our nation in past. It also became separate. The reason - *Hindus* became a minority there. Today we talk about the Kashmir problem. The ‘problem’ is in that part of Jammu-Kashmir where the population of *Hindus* is just 5%. It may actually be even lesser. The reason for the insurgency and terrorism in Nagaland and Mizoram, is because *Hindus* have become a minority there. The nation’s strength increases when *Hindus* become organized. Insurgency or riots do not happen in places where *Hindus* are organized. There peace prevails and the non-*Hindus* live happily too. It should now be clear why *Sangh* organizes *Hindus*.

Who is a *Hindu*? We have explained this clearly before. Hence organising *Hindus* means organising the nation. There is no sectarianism in this. The reason - *Hindus* are not sectarian. *Hindus* have assimilated multiple religions into their fold. This is an organisation which takes people across all castes and beliefs.



Swayamsewaks taking materials to help the calamity-hit brethren in Uttarakhand in June, 2013.



Swayamsewaks serving food to the cyclone affected people in Odissa.

Sangh Program

Daily *Shakha* is the most important program in *Sangh*. *Shakha* can be held in the morning, evening or night but it has to be held at a scheduled time daily. Every day, '*Bhagwa Dhwaj*' (Saffron Flag) should be hoisted in the shakha. *Shakha* should start with '*Dhwaj pranam*' (salutation to the flag) and end with '*Sangh prarthana*' (prayer).

The duration of *Shakha* is one hour. It should start exactly at the planned time and end exactly at the completion of one hour. Everyone gets the habit of punctuality through this. As told earlier here, one should devote at least one hour daily for the sake of the society and nation. Only then, it is possible to lead a patriotic life dedicated to the nation with ease. Daily shakha inculcates habits to lead such a life. It is the daily routines that change one's entire life.

Our Dharma tells at the time of death, chanting '*Rama nama*' will enable us to attain *Moksha*; but how will '*Rama nama*' come out of the mouth, at the time of death? For that, it is necessary to practice chanting '*Rama nama*' on a daily basis. Once upon a time, a rice merchant got ill. His life came close to an end. He was laid on a carpet in the floor. In a weak voice he asked "where is Ramlal"? His eldest son replied "I am here, father". Then he asked "Where is Shyamlal"? His second son replied "I am also near you, father". On hearing this, the old man asked "If both of you are here, who is manning the shop". Even at the time of death, if only the shop or business comes to our mind, how can one attain *Moksha*? It is not

possible to chant '*Rama nama*' at the time of death unless it is practised daily.

Attending daily *shakha* enables one to remember the society and forget selfish motives. Such is the significance of the daily *shakha*. Daily *shakha* is a place where values are taught and patriotism revered. *Shakha* is the place where the country is worshipped; this is akin to our action of worshipping God daily and remembering his name.

Every event is important in *shakha*, be it big or small. Even games are played as per *Sangh* method. Our uniform pants, baton (Danda), salutation to the flag (Dhwaj pranam), attention (Daksha), stand-at-ease (Aaram) and all other activities have significance and a definite objective. All these develop our values of unity, bravery and chivalry. The small and simple things instill good values in the mind. The positive changes are called values. Culture is created and developed through good values. At the same time, degeneration of values tends to erode the culture. Human beings become cultured through their values and become distorted through their valueless life. Only animals go by nature, but human can go by culture.

Two bulls reached a spot where they sighted green grass. One was a fat bull and the other, a lean and weak one. The fat and healthy bull cannot think that the other bull being weak and hungry needs the grass more and allow it to eat first. It is the nature of the bull and all animals. Human beings can grow above this physiological instinct. He/she can remain hungry and feed others. That is culture. But the animals are free from perversity also. The bull, after eating enough, won't bundle and take the grass leftover. There is no such guarantee in case of a human being, who can become greedy. That is the reason for a value system to be put in place. The home and the educational institutions are the places to teach this value system.

The *shakha* programmes enable one to learn and rise above the caste-creed differences and get a 'we are one' feeling. The games enable learning about the collective conduct as a group. The practising of military drill (*Samata*) gives us the values of discipline and obeying orders. Thus our *shakha* is a school where unity, social behavior and discipline are taught. Winter camps, planning sessions (*Baithak*), annual training camps (*Sangha Shiksha Varga*), discourses, and weekly get-togethers are planned based on the same objective. Through these programmes, *Sangh* has removed the feelings of castism, untouchability, socio-economic differences etc. It has instilled the minds of *swayamsewaks* with a feeling that all *Hindus* are one. *Sangh* expects *Swayamsewaks* to use these values which they have learnt in *Sanghasthan* (place where shakha takes place) in their family, work place and social circle. Definitely, *swayamsewaks* will feel a change in their personal life due to attending *Sangh shakha*. *Sangh* expects positive results and a change in the society through *swayamsewaks*. *Sangh* wants the society united and all the people to have good character and conduct. *Sangh* believes that *shakha* will act as a catalyst for bringing about this social change in a gradual manner without any conflict.

This is the objective of all the daily and informal programmes of *Sangh* which have been designed after a lot of thought-process.



The Growth of RSS

Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh is an organisation of the entire society. It was not *Doctorji's* objective to create a small group of organised people. Once, in Nagpur, there was an atmosphere of tension between Hindus and Muslims. A leader who was proud of *Hindutva* asked *Doctorji*: “*What will your Sangh do if there are riots in Nagpur?*” *Doctorji* responded, “*I will call all the swayamsewaks to Sangh Karyalaya (office) and ask them to cover themselves in a quilt and sleep.*” This answer may appear to be odd but it has a deeper meaning. *Doctorji* wanted to convey that *Sangh* was not run to create swayamsewaks, who patrol the roads with lathis in their hands during riots, when the general public stays peacefully inside their houses, with the doors and windows locked.

Sangh has a special uniform. However, it is only to be worn on special occasions. It doesn't expect swayamsewaks to roam around all the time wearing the uniform or the black cap. *Sangh* has *Pracharaks* (Full-time workers). They live a saintly life, dedicating their entire life for the purpose of *Sangh* work. However, *Doctorji* did not prescribe any kind of special uniform for them. *Sangh* doesn't want its swayamsewaks to appear different from the society. Marathi saint *Gyaneshwar* never taught anyone to lead an unearthly or abnormal life. And the *Sangh* has put this teaching to practice. *Sangh* and society should be identical; this is the role and the expectation of *Sangh*.

This has a great significance and we have to understand that

in the right sense. Society doesn't remain the same always; nor does it always move in the same way. Society functions through various organs. The importance of these functions may be high or low, nevertheless all these functions are necessary for a prosperous national life. Politics forms one of the spheres of the social life, and education is another. Likewise, there are many more other spheres like industry, culture and economics. And every sphere comprises many constituents, like students, women, farmers, labourers, tribals, economically weaker sections, etc.

Organising the entire society means organising all these spheres as well as these constituents. Sangh karyakartas are working in all these spheres as it is the objective of the *Sangh* to organise the entire society. *Sangh* expects to increase its influence in all the spheres of social life and karyakartas are fulfilling this expectation. What is meant by creation of Sangh's influence in all the spheres of social life? This doesn't mean that the key of every movement, every activity in these spheres vests with the Sangh Adhikaris. This is neither possible nor necessary, and it has never been the expectation of the *Sangh*. Influence of *Sangh* means the impress of the *Sangh* thoughts, and the imprint of the social character envisioned by the *Sangh*.

What is *Sangh* thought or philosophy? This is *Hindu Rashtra*. *Hindu* nationalism means cultural nationalism. That is, every sphere of social life should be saturated with the thoughts of cultural nationalism. In no other nation or country in the world we find any confusion or contention on the issue, what constitutes a nation? However in our nation, the meaning of this word has become a point of contention. The *Sangh* desires that the concept of *Hindu Rashtra* is established in all spheres of social life, without room for any dispute. The *Sangh* is working towards this end.

What sort of character the *Sangh* wants to establish? The *Sangh* intends that one should have a feeling of oneness with the

society; i.e., “This is my society and I belong to this society; so I will fashion my life accordingly and live as a man of character”. Society is made up of individuals. Individuals and society are identical; however, an individual should understand that he lives for the society, society should benefit from his conduct and he will not cause any harm or loss to the society for his personal benefit. This feeling is expressed beautifully in one of the slokas of *Shankracharya*, A devotee tells to the God: “*O Lord! Now that I have had your darshan, the difference between a devotee and God has ended. Duality has become extinct and non-duality has been established. Still, even though I am here for You, You are not for me. Wave belongs to the ocean, whereas the ocean does not belong to the wave.*”

It is the aspiration of *Sangh* that the whole nation is infused with a socially-oriented lifestyle. Karyakartas have been active in various realms of the society, carrying *Sangh* philosophy and its characteristics. In 1925, when the *Sangh* was started, only children (Bal Swayamsewaks) came. In course of time, they became youngsters and brought in other youngsters to the *Sangh* fold. Hence, as a natural extension, at first, the *Sangh* work spread among students. In 1949, *Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad* (ABVP) was started. During that time, Communism had a huge sway. Second World War had just ended. Russia had won the war and was getting transformed into a world super-power. There was a concerted propaganda that communist philosophy was the reason for Russia’s victory/might and that it could alone solve all the problems faced by the world and bring an atmosphere of equality. A generation of intelligent youth was drawn towards this philosophy. When this big storm was blowing across the world and in Hindustan, Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) stood up on the edifice of nationalistic philosophy. Though this is not the place to dilate on the history of the development of Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), it is noteworthy to mention that today it is the largest student organisation of *Bharat* which is a big victory for the nationalistic philosophy.

Our country got independence on 15th August 1947. In 1950, our constitution came into force and we became a democratic republic. The meaning of republic is that there will not be any monarchy but implementation of universal franchise. Everyone is treated equally in a republic. People would elect their political representatives. Swayamsewaks also got the right to vote as citizens of this country. Whom should they vote for? Socialists and communists run their parties based on foreign philosophies. Congress is a home-grown party but it was opposed to *Sangh*. In 1948, *Mahatma Gandhiji* was assassinated. Even though *Sangh* did not have anything to do with the assassination, the Congress government did leave no stone unturned to finish off the *Sangh*. It arrested thousands of Swayamsewaks, Congressmen attacked and ransacked *Sangh* offices (Karyalaya); they looted and burnt swayamsewaks houses. How could swayamsewaks align with such a political party? At that point of time, *Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee* came to *Shri Guruji*, the then *Sarsanghchalak* of the *Sangh*. He was a minister in the first cabinet. He established *Bhartiya Jansangh*. He requested that some workers (*Karyakarta*) be deputed from the *Sangh* for the party work. Staying away from politics, *Sangh* deputed some senior workers like *Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya*, *Atal Bihari Vajpayee*, *Sunder Singh Bhandari*, *Nanaji Deshmukh*, *Kushabhau Thakre*, *Rambhau Godbole*, *Vasantrao Oak*, *Ramprasad Das*, *Pandit Bacchraj Vyas*, *Gopal Thakur*, *Bhaurao Deshpande*, etc., to help *Dr. Mukherjee*.

This happened 65 years ago and the solid work of this team is reflected in the people's love and the strength of the *Bhartiya Janata Party* (erstwhile *Bhartiya Jansangh*). *Bhartiya Janata Party* has lot of things to do - it has to increase manifold the people's love for it, and has to cleanse the political atmosphere in our country. However, it has established itself as the biggest political party of our country. Its clout is so high that all other political parties have come to think that they don't stand a chance against BJP, if they

stand alone in the elections. The BJP has reached the position that the Congress party had held during the first 25 years of independence. This change, of course, has been brought about by the *Sangh swayamsewaks*.

Labour wing was also an important area. Socialists and Communists had a monopoly over this area, because of the wrong notion that these philosophies only could usher in a classless society. According to this philosophy, there are only two classes in the world. The first one includes the capitalists, landlords and industrialists, whereas the other includes the poor and the workers. Between these two classes, enmity exists naturally, as between a snake and a mongoose. Communists claim that all the workers in this world are one and the concept of nation etc. are false. In this atmosphere, a movement based on nationalism was a necessity. *Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh* (BMS) was established in the year 1955 to fulfill this need. Senior pracharak of Sangh, *Shri. Dattopant Thengadiji*, started this organisation. *Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh* made the concept of class struggle invalid. It accepted nationalism as the basis and rejected the foreign concepts. It presented ancient god, *Vishwakarma*, as a role model. People laughed at us saying, we cannot organise the workers as we do not believe in class struggle. What is the position of *Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh* (BMS) today? It is the largest trade union in *Bharat*.

Educational field is also an important area. During the British regime, they introduced and ran the educational system to serve their own interests. This educational system didn't change the colour of our people from black to white, but it changed the mind and thinking of the people. People started believing that everything that is English and Western are good and exemplary (West is Best). The thinking that only English medium education is good became stronger. Then swayamsevaks started a primary school (*Shishu Mandir*) in Uttar Pradesh. That *Shishu Mandir* is a Hindi medium school but the quality of the education provided is not less than the

one provided by convent-schools. It was actually better. These *Shishu Mandirs* later spread all over the country and *Vidya Bharati* was established. Today, there are more than 40,000 educational institutions across the country, run as per *Vidya Bharati's* guidance, having *Sanskrit*, *Yogasana* and other patriotic programmes. The specialty of these institutions is that they are run without taking any aid from the Government.

Religious heads and entities are of great reverence to common people. Individual *Mahants*, *Saints*, *Shankaracharyas* and other *Mathadhipatis* have great influence on the population. It was necessary to bring all these religions heads together and use their institutions and influence for national resurgence. *Sangh's* second *Sarsanghachalak*, *Shri Guruji* took on the tough task of bringing together heads of various sects and sub-sects of *Hindus* and established the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP). From the platform of the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*, the most revered saints proclaimed that untouchability has no place in *Sanatana Dharma*; it should be eradicated. They also proclaimed that those who got converted from *Hinduism* to other religions could come back to their original fold. These proclamations of Dharmacharyas created new consciousness among *Hindus*.

Like this, swayamsewaks established various organisations in the fields of agriculture, tribals, industries, services, culture, etc. They have organised the entire society through their thoughts and disciplined conduct.

Some of the swayamsewaks went abroad for studies and business. They didn't forget the fact that they were *Hindus* and *swayamsewaks*. So they brought together *Hindus* in various countries, including *Kenya*, *England* and *America*. They established *Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh* (HSS), in *Sangh* style. Today, we have our regular activities and branches (shakhas) in thirty-five countries all over the world. Actually, the growth achieved by the *Sangh* is quite surprising.

The Methodology of Sangh Functioning

Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh is not merely a philosophy or an institution, but is also a way of life. Even as there is personal life, there is also social life. And this way of life is synonymous with the *Sangh*. Just like a system evolves in a family in a natural way, in the *Sangh* also such a system evolved. It did not evolve through writing of books or giving lectures. It evolved through living examples. Some basic points of this system are :-

1. In Sangh, all of us are friends and so, all are equal. Sangh has officials (Adhikaris) but that is only as part of administrative arrangements. It is not solely based on any qualifications. It is necessary for Adhikaris to have good qualifications, but Sangh doesn't believe that only a few have all the qualifications. Each member is a friend and an associate of the other. There is no senior-junior disparity in the Sangh.
2. Since everyone is equal there is neither any competition in the Sangh, and so, nor any heartburn or jealousy. An affectionate relationship exists with all.
3. Obeying the instructions and discipline are the specialties of the Sangh system. However, for achieving this, no physical force is used. It is made possible by creating a conducive environment through the programmes of the

Sangh shakha, and the personal conduct of the Sangh Karyakartas. Everyone knows that instructions are not given based on any personal interest. Instructions are given for the collective welfare. That's why the instructions are abided by. When an ordinary *mukhyashikshak* (Chief instructor of the shakha) gives 'Daksha' (attention), and everyone in the shakha, right from *Sarsanghachalak* (President of the RSS) to the ordinary *swayamsewak*, stand in attention. Discipline is maintained in *Sangh* without using any force, because *Doctotji* had put in place a system where 'the rules are same for everyone'. This discipline of the *Sangh* has left an indelible mark on the minds and lives of *swayamsewaks*. All *Sangh* programmes will start on time, and nobody would move or leave till the end of the programme. Everybody will be engrossed in the programme without any distractions - these are the fundamentals.

4. The *Sangh* is an organization of human beings. Human beings are made up of three *gunas* (character's) - *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. No one can guarantee that he/she won't commit any mistakes. Hence, there is a system in the *Sangh* to express one's anger, displeasure or disappointment - i.e. to complain to the senior official (*adhikari*). One can easily approach even the *Sarsanghachalak*. When one finds a mistake or a negative quality in someone else, he should speak about it to a senior. The *Sangh* expects its *swayamsewaks* to talk about the positive qualities only when they talk to/discuss with equals and ordinary *swayamsewaks*. Everyone will have some or other positive qualities and discussions should be concerning that only. The negatives,

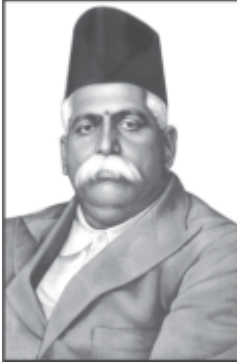
if any, should be brought to the notice of the seniors only, who can talk to the person concerned and provide guidance and opportunity to change the negative quality. It has neither happened in the past nor will it happen in the future that someone changed his negatives because of some public discussion. The Sangh is a family and all the swayamsevaks are part of this family. Hence, if someone does a mistake, it has to be pointed out and corrected by the elders. The Sangh has been running in this way from the beginning. There is no deceit or deception in the *Sangh*, where everyone is pure and soft.

5. Simple living is the *Sangh* system. It has been told that we should not appear to be extraordinary. Sangh karyakarta should lead a simple life. They are expected to be austere - this value is cultivated in the swayamsevaks at a very young age and, hence, there won't be any pomp and show whatsoever in any of the *Sangh* programmes; neither is it desirable. *Sangh pracharaks* stay in different villages, at different places, and in different houses. *Sangh Karyalaya* is available only in bigger cities. Even in *Karyalayas*, mess would be available in one or two *karyalayas* in a state. At the same time, the *Sangh* does not want the *Karyakartas* to take food from eateries or hotels. They take their food in other *swyamsewak's* houses and become part of their family, like a brother to the children of the house or a son to the elders. Young and adolescent *pracharaks* have been residing in households, but there has not been even a single instance of any misbehavior or misdemeanor on their part. This is the specialty of *Sangh*, and this is the character of *Karyakartas*. And this is the *Sangh* system.

Appendix–I

Sarsanghchalaks (All India Presidents) of RSS

First Sarsanghachalak – Doctor Hedgewar



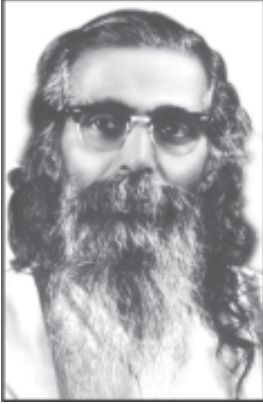
Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was the founder President of *Sangh*. He was born on April 1st 1889. It was the New Year day of *Vikram Samvat* 1946. His mother's name was *Revati Bai*. Doctorji established *Sangh* in the year 1925. In the early days, the *Sangh* shakhas were started in and around Nagpur. In the year 1930, Doctorji participated in the *Jungle Satyagrah* and was imprisoned in Akola Jail. Many patriotic leaders came in his contact during the imprisonment. Once they were released from the prison, shakhas were started all over Vidarbha province. Then came the turn of the whole of Maharashtra.

After the year 1936, Doctorji started sending *Sangh* workers across to other states of the country. By 1940, all states except Assam and Orissa had *Sangh* shakhas. On June 9th 1940, in the valedictory address of the annual training camp (*Sangh Shiksha Varga*) at Nagpur, Doctorji said, “*I am able to see a miniature of the Hindu Rashtra in front of me*”. During his lifetime itself the *Sangh* got established all over the country.

He passed away on June 21st, 1940, at Nagpur. At the time of his death he was just 51 years old.

Second Sarsanghachalak – Shri Guruji

After the death of *Dr. Hedgewar*, as per his wish, *Shri Madhav Sadashiva Golwalkar* became the all India President.



He was known as and called *Guruji* even before becoming the *Sarsanghachalak*. He was born on *Falgun Krishna Paksha Ekadasi* (day of *Vikram Samvat*), 1962 (February 19th, 1906). *Guruji's* father's name was *Sadashiva* and mother's name was *Lakshmibai*. *Guruji* had his primary and secondary education at many places as his father's was a transferable job. He passed his Intermediate exam from Hislop College, Nagpur. He did his graduation from the

Banaras Hindu University (BHU), and he completed his M.Sc. in Zoology from BHU in the year 1928.

In 1930, he was appointed as a professor of Zoology in BHU itself. It is here, where people started calling him '*Guruji*'. He came into the close contact of the *Sangh* during his stay at *Kashi*. After working for two years as professor, he returned to Nagpur and passed the Law exams. However, he never practiced law.

At this time, he got attracted towards spirituality. His visits to the *Ramakrishna Muth* in Nagpur increased. His intimacy with *Doctorji* was also increasing. In the end, the urge to take to spiritual life gained precedence and he reached the *Saragachi Ashram* in Bengal. *Swami Akhandananda*, a brother monk of *Swami Vivekananda*, was heading this ashram then. *Guruji* got '*Sanyasa Deeksha*' (initiation to monkhood) from him. He returned to Nagpur after the Samadhi of *Swami Akhandananda*. After *Guruji's* return to Nagpur, *Doctorji* increased his contact with him. In 1938,

Doctorji appointed him as the ‘*Sarvadhikari*’ (in-charge) of the *Sangh shiksha varga* (training camp), held in Nagpur. In 1939, he became the *Sarkaryavah* (All India General Secretary of the Sangh). After *Doctorji*’s demise, he became the *Sarsanghachalal* (All India President) on June 21, 1940.

He was the *Sarsanghachalal* of the *Sangh* for close to 33 years. The most difficult year during his tenure was 1948. That was the year when the *Sangh* was banned on the pretext of killing of *Mahatma Gandhi*. Due to *Guruji*’s firm and efficient leadership, the *Sangh* came safely out of this test of fire. *Sangh* grew multifold in these 33 years. *Sangh* work reached all districts of the country. The influence of the *Sangh* work naturally spread to other walks of social life as well. During this period, various organisations were started, including the *Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad*, *Bhartiya Jana Sangh*, *Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh*, *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* and *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*. *Vishwa Vibhag* (sangh work abroad) also got a concrete shape during this period.

In 1971, *Guruji* was diagnosed with Cancer. He got treated for the same in Mumbai. Post-surgery, he took some rest and resumed his national tour. However his health got further deteriorated during the *Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha* baithak in March 1973, in Nagpur. He passed away on June 5, 1973 in Nagpur.

Third Sarsanghachalal – Shri Balasaheb Deoras

The full name of our third Sarsanghachalal is *Madhukar*



Dattatreya Deoras. He was born on *Margashirsham Shukla 5, 1915*. His entire education took place in Nagpur. He passed his matric from the famous New English High School. He passed his BA and LLB from Morris College. However, he didn’t start any law practice. He wanted to devote his entire life for

Sangh work. *Dr. Hedgewar* sent him to do Sangh work in Bengal province, but he was called back to Nagpur and was handed over the responsibility of Nagpur Sangh work.

He had held various responsibilities in the *Sangh*, including that of the Nagpur Nagar Karyavah, *Saha Sarkaryavah* (All India Joint General Secretary), *Sarkaryavah* (All India General Secretary) in 1965, and in the year 1973, after the demise of *Shri Guruji*, he became the *Sarsanghachalak*. When he became *Sarsanghachalak*, he was 58 years old and was stricken by Diabetes. However, without worrying about his health he focused his attention on the further growth of the *Sangh*, that was established by *Doctorji* and grown by *Guruji*. During his tenure, service activities were given a new dimension in the *Sangh* work. Today more than 1,52,388 service projects are carried out by swayamsevaks in the name of *Seva Bharati*. *Seva Bharati* operates multiple service activities, including cultural centres for children, village schools, medical centres, orphanages, leprosy clinic, etc. *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* and *Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram* also run such service activities separately. They are not included as a part of *Seva Bharati*'s service projects. At present, the number of seva projects of the *Sangh* and its affiliates has crossed *one lakh fifty thousand*.

In 1975, Prime Minister *Indira Gandhi* declared national emergency and banned the *Sangh* under this pretext. She did not ban all the political organizations that were speaking against her politics and administration. However, she banned the *Sangh* with demonic intention of eliminating the *Sangh*. Anti-*Sangh* views were publicized widely. Thousands of *Karyakartas* were arrested under the black law '*MISA*' and put behind the bars. She also restricted the freedom of the common man. The *Sangh* participated in the people's movement to bring back democracy in our country. *Sangh* made sure that the movement became victorious. This great work was carried out during the tenure of *Balasahebji*.

In 1992, *Balasahebji's* health condition deteriorated further. Travel became impossible for him and he found it difficult to speak. In 1994, he took the decision of his retirement and named *Shri Rajendra Singh* as his successor, the fourth *Sarsanghachalak* of the *Sangh*. *Balasahebji* started the tradition of retiring from the responsibility when one felt he could not contribute actively to the *Sangh* work anymore. He passed away on June 17, 1996, at Ruby Clinic in Pune.

Fourth Sarsanghachalak - Prof. Rajendra Singh

Third *Sarsanghachalak Shri Balasaheb Deoras* appointed *Prof. Rajendra Singh* as his successor on March 11, 1994, due to his ailing health. For the first time in the history of the *Sangh*, the successor *Sarsanghachalak* was announced by the incumbent *Sarsanghachalak*. From that day, *Prof. Rajendra Singh*, who was fondly called as *Rajju Bhaiyya*, became the fourth *Sarsanghachalak* of *RSS*.



Rajju Bhaiyya was born in 1922. His father *Shri Kunvar Balvir Singh* was an engineer with Uttar Pradesh State Irrigation department. He retired as Chief Engineer. *Rajju Bhaiyya* did his primary education from Nainital. He passed his matric exam in first class from Unnao district and graduated from Allahabad University. At the young age of 21, he cleared his M.Sc. Physics exams from Allahabad University, with second rank. He was appointed as a professor in the same university immediately.

In the year 1966, seeing the increasing need of growth of *Sangh* work in *Uttar Pradesh*, he voluntarily resigned from the post of the Head of Department of Physics from the university and became a *Sangh pracharak*. In 1978, he became *Sarkaryavah*

(All India General Secretary) of the *Sangh*. Due to health reasons, he retired from this responsibility and started serving the *Sangh* as the *Sah Sarkaryavah* (All India Joint General Secretary), and *Shri H. V. Sheshadri* became the *Sarkaryavah*. On March 11, 1994, the then *Sarsanghachalak*, *Shri Balasaheb Deoras*, appointed *Rajju Bhaiyya* as his successor at the *Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha* (National Executive Meeting).

Shri Rajendra Singh was the first *Sarsanghachalak* to travel abroad to observe the activities of the *Hindu Swyamsevak Sangh*. Towards this purpose, he travelled to *England, Mauritius, Kenya* and *South Africa*.

During his tour to Pune in February 1999, *Rajju Bhaiyya* had a sudden fall and fractured his hip bones. Due to this reason, he could not attend that year's *Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha* (National Executive Meeting), which was held in *Lucknow*. He couldn't completely recover from his ill-health and also developed difficulties to speak in continuously. So he decided to relieve himself from the responsibility. Hence, in the *Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha* (National Executive Meeting), held on March 10, 2000, at *Nagpur*, he announced *Shri K. S. Sudarshan* as his successor. He passed away in Pune on July 14, 2003.

Fifth Sarsanghachalak - Shri K. S. Sudarshan

Shri K. S. Sudarshan was born on June 18, 1931 in Raipur.



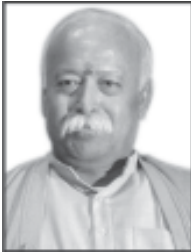
He did his primary education in many places like Raipur, Damoh, Mandla and Chandarpur. He did his BE (Tele-communications) from Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. On completion of his graduation, he became *Sangh pracharak* and started serving the society. In 1964, he was given the responsibility of *Prant Pracharak*

(State Organiser) of *Madhya Bharat*. From 1969 to 1971, he was assigned the responsibility of *Akhil Bhartiya Shareerik Shikshan Pramukh*, and in 1979, he was assigned the responsibility of *Akhil Bhartiya Boudhik Shikshan Pramukh*. In 1990, he became *Sah Sarkaryavah*.

In March 2009, in the *Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha*, in keeping with the glorious tradition of the *Sangh*, *Shri Sudarshanji* recalled the history of the appointment of *Sarsanghachalaks* and the changes that had taken place in the tradition and announced *Shri Mohan Bhagwat* as the next *Sarsanghachalak*. He introduced *Shri Mohan Bhagwatji* as an efficient organizer, studious, sportive, and a person, who had the strength to listen to everyone and a man of amiable disposition. He also reminded of the following comment made by *Shri Babuji*, when *Shri Mohanji* had become *Sarkaryavah*: “*When we look at him, we are reminded of Dr. Hedgewar.*” Even after relieving himself of the responsibilities, he was touring the entire nation for the *Sangh* work. But quite unexpectedly, he suddenly passed away on September 15, 2012, at Raipur.

Sixth Sarsanghachalak - Shri Mohanrao Bhagwat

Shri Mohanji was born on September 11, 1950 in Chandarpur district of Maharashtra. He graduated in veterinary science from Punjabrao Deshmukh Agricultural University in Akola. He dropped out of his Postgraduate studies and became *Sangh Pracharak* during the emergency. His roles are listed here : 1977 - *Pracharak in Akola*; 1981 - *Vidarbha Pranta Pracharak*; 1989 - *Akhil Bharatiya Saha-Shareerik Shikshan Pramukh*; 1991 - *Akhil Bharatiya Shareerik Shikshan Pramukh*; and for a year *Akhil Bharatiya Pracharak Pramukh*. In the year 2000, he became *Sarkaryavah* and since 2009 he is leading *Sangh* as its sixth *Sarsanghachalak*.



Appendix – 2

RSS Prarthana

नमस्ते सदा वत्सले मातृभूमे
त्वया हिन्दुभूमे सुखं वर्धितोऽहम् ।
महामङ्गले पुण्यभूमे त्वदर्धे
पतत्वेष कायो नमस्ते नमस्ते ॥ १ ॥

प्रभो शक्तिमन् हिन्दुराष्ट्राङ्गभूता
इमे सादरं त्वां नमामो वयम्
त्वदीयाय कार्याय बद्धा कटीयं
शुभामाशिषं देहि तत्पूर्तये ।
अजय्यां च विश्वस्य देहीश शक्तिं
सुशीलं जगद् येन नम्रं भवेत्
श्रुतं चैव यत् कण्टकाकीर्णमार्गं
स्वयं स्वीकृतं नः सुगं कारयेत् ॥ २ ॥

समुत्कर्ष निःश्रेयस्यैकमुग्रं
परं साधनं नाम वीरव्रतम्
तदन्तः स्फुरत्वक्षया ध्येयनिष्ठा
हृदन्तः प्रजागर्तु तीव्राऽनिशम् ।
विजेत्री च नः संहता कार्यशक्तिर्
विधायास्य धर्मस्य संरक्षणम् ।
परं वैभवं नेतुमेतत् स्वराष्ट्रं
समर्था भवत्वाशिषा ते भृशम् ॥ ३ ॥

॥ भारत माता की जय ॥

Translation of the content of Prarthana

Forever I bow to Thee, O Loving Motherland! O Motherland of us *Hindus*, Thou hast brought me up in happiness. May my life, O great and blessed Holy Land, be laid down in Thy cause. I bow to Thee, again and again.

We, the children of the *Hindu Nation*, bow to Thee in reverence, O Almighty God. We have girded up our loins to carry on Thy work. Give us Thy holy blessings for its fulfillment. O Lord! Grant us such might as no power on earth can ever challenge, such purity of character as would command the respect of the whole world and such knowledge as would make easy the thorny path that we have voluntarily chosen.

May we be inspired with the spirit of stern heroism, which is the sole and ultimate means of attaining the highest spiritual bliss with the greatest temporal prosperity. May intense and everlasting devotion to our Ideal ever inspire our hearts. May our victorious organised power of action, by Thy Grace, fully protect our Dharma and lead this nation of ours to the highest pinnacle of glory.

VICTORY TO MOTHER INDIA.

Appendix – 3

Ekatmata Mantra

यं वैदिका मन्त्रदृशः पुराणा,
इन्द्रं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ।
वेदान्तिनोऽनिर्वचनीयमेकं,
यं ब्रह्मशब्देन विनिर्दिशन्ति ॥१॥

शैवा यमीशं शिव इत्यवोचन्,
यं वैष्णवा विष्णुरिति स्तुवन्ति ।
बुद्धस्तथाऽर्हन्निति बौद्धजैनाः,
सत् श्री अकालेति च सिक्खसन्तः ॥२॥

शास्तेति केचित् प्रकृतिः कुमारः,
स्वामीति मातेति पितेति भक्तया ।
यं प्रार्थयन्ते जगदीशितारं,
स एक एव प्रभुरद्वितीयः ॥३॥

Meaning of Ekatmata Mantra

The One the *Vaidikas* of yore, the *Mantra-drashtas*, call as *Indra*, *Yama* and *Matrishwan*, the *Vedantees* as *Brahma* the indefinable;

The One who is praised as *Shiva* by the *Shaivites*, as *Vishnu* by the *Vaishnavites*, as *Buddha* by the *Buddhists*, as *Arhan* by the *jains* and as *Satsriakal* by the *Sikhs*;

The One to whom some pray as *Shasta*, as Nature by certain others, and as *Kumara*, as *Swami*, as *Father*, and as *Mother* by still others; that Lord of the universe is one and the same, the One without a second.



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