

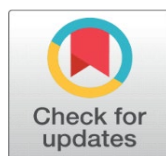
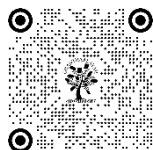
THE LEADERSHIP OF AN IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENT: A STUDY OF 'RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH MOVEMENT' IN BHARAT

Pranay Kumar Tiwari¹, Alok Kumar², Akash Rathi³

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Govt. P. G. College, Chharra, Aligarh, U.P.

²Professor, Department of Sociology, C.C.S University (Campus), Meerut, U.P.

³Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, C.C.S University (Campus), Meerut, U.P.



Corresponding Author

Pranay Kumar Tiwari,
pranay.vijai@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

A social movement without organization or leadership can hardly be thought of. The basic premise behind the analysis of leadership is that they are the chief architect of the phenomenon we call social movement and that social movement can never occur in a vacuum. Leadership in a social movement plays a major role in mobilizing the mass base. The individual who performs this task of mobilizing people for action is called the leader. Although we are accustomed to identifying a social movement with a single leader, it is more accurate to think in terms of a group of leaders often organized in a hierarchy. In the present paper, the question of leadership has been studied in the context of the 'Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Movement'. The study tries to investigate the life history of the leaders in general and founder in particular which includes various aspects such as their family background, education level, and bringing up, extraordinary talents of the leaders. Further, an attempt has been made to depict the contributions which different leaders have made to this organization. Data were collected from the available literature and interviews of knowledgeable members who themselves have been involved in the activities of movement for more than five decades.

Keywords: Social Movement, Leadership, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, RSS Movement, Life History

1. INTRODUCTION

No social movement begins all of a sudden just because thousands of people feel that they have a common problem. In most of the movements, we will find that they were shaped by a leader. While analyzing movements from a sociological perspective, one could inevitably find that, in the initial phase or even later on, one person or a small group has motivated the others to start a movement. These leaders have ideas about the movement, the shape it will take, and the nature of its demands. (Rao, 1978)

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individual who performs this task of mobilizing people for action is called the leader. Although we are accustomed to identifying a social movement with a single leader, it is more accurate to think in terms of a group of leaders often organized in a hierarchy.

Leaders are the agents of mobilization of a movement and are the promoters of its organizational structure. It is the leadership that promotes the pursuit of goals, develops strategies and tactics for action, and formulates an ideology. The penetration of the movement in society, the loyalty and involvement of its members, and the consensus of different social groups all depend upon the leader's actions. Leaders emerge from a certain social base, have certain interests, and may possess certain personality traits that render them the capability to serve the role of leadership in movement situations. (Melucci, 1996). Leadership performs the following five functions for social movements-

- i. Leaders define the objectives of the movement, which implies that the ability of the leaders is not only to formulate the aims of the movement but also to establish a system of priority and adapt them to the changing conditions.
- ii. Leaders provide the means for action. They have to gather and organize the available resources and channelize them towards the realization of movement goals.
- iii. Leaders maintain the structure of the movement by guaranteeing interaction and cohesion among the movement participants.
- iv. Leaders are also responsible for mobilizing the support base of the movement. They are to preserve the constituency's consensus over the objectives of the movement and to attract growing investments from members.
- v. Finally, the leader has to maintain and reinforce the identity of the group. She/he has to furnish incentives of solidarity. (Melucci, 1996)

M.S.A Rao suggests that many social movements tend to be characterized by collective leadership with a division of labor among different types of the elite. For him, the business elite supports various activities of the movement by giving donations whereas the political elite takes leadership positions in the movement. (Rao, 2000). Alberto Melucci suggests that while analyzing the leadership of any social movement one should focus on the processes of formation of leadership and the relations between the leadership and the support base, the components of the action of the leadership, and its integrative and innovative role. (Melucci, 1996)

2. THE PROBLEM

Several kinds of social movements have been studied by sociologists. To mention a few, we can quote the Bhoodan Gramdan Movement (Oommen, 1972), Ramkrishna Mission Movement (Gupta K., 1974), Dalit Sahitya Movement (Bhoite, 1977), Lingayat Movement (Venugopal, 1977), Urban Social Movement (Gupta D., 1977), SNDP and Yadava Movement (Rao, 1978), Naxalbari Movement (Mukherji, 1987), Peasant Movement (Singh, 1988), Yug Nirman Movement (Kumar, 2016) and many others.

At the same time, certain social movements are going on and aim at the betterment of society as a whole but have been less studied and reported in sociological literature. Thus there is a need to study such kinds of movements. It is in this context the present study focuses on a social movement that has been going on for more than nine decades in the form of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh started by a medical doctor, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.

Founded in Nagpur on Vijay Dashmi Day of 1925, today Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has spread all over India and in more than 60 other countries. There are more than six million members with 59266 shakhas (Local Centres) spread in 29 states and 7 union territories. It has around 36 affiliated organizations making it the largest voluntary organization in the world. Still, there is virtually no scholarly study of the RSS. As a result, despite such a vast social phenomenon, sociologists have given very little attention to this movement and its impact on individuals, families, and the nation as a whole. Therefore, there is a need to study such a social movement that has spread so wide.

To study and analyze any social phenomenon we must have a frame of reference. A frame of reference for a study of any social movement comprises its historical background, its social basis and organization, its ideology including its objectives, strategies, etc., and response patterns of other social groups in society to the movement. In the substantive issues of the study of social movements, sociologists (e.g. Oommen, 1972; Bhoite, 1977;) have suggested to focus on the

emergence/origin, leadership, ideology(aims, objectives, methods, etc.) organization, and, consequences (impact) of the social movements. A review of select literature on social movements also suggests to focus on these aspects.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh movement has been on the scene for over nine decades not only in India but in different parts of the world. In the hierarchy of the RSS organization, the Chief(or Sarsanghchalak) is at its apex as the head. He is the guide and philosopher of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Since the inception of this organization in 1925, six people have served as Sarsanghchalak. The movement owes its origin to Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (who was also the first Chief), a medical professional who abandoned his lucrative career as a medical practitioner to participate in the freedom struggle. The present study tries to comprehend the nature of the leadership provided by these 'Sarsanghchalaks' of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

4. METHODOLOGY

For exploring the leadership of the movement, largely secondary sources such as books, magazines, pamphlets, and reports which were available in the Meerut headquarters (Shankar Ashram) and Delhi Headquarters (Keshav Kunj) have been relied on. At the same time, this secondary data has been supplemented and verified through interviewing knowledgeable office bearers of RSS available in Meerut District (Meerut Mahanagar in RSS Terminology).

With the above-mentioned framework in mind, the next few pages would try to trace and comprehend the leadership qualities of the first Sarsanghchalak, that is, Dr. K.B. Hedgewar in greater detail and briefly on the later five Sarsanghchalaks.

I. THE FOUNDER-FIRST 'SARSANGHCHALAK' (CHIEF)

a) EARLY CHILDHOOD

Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was born on April 1, 1889, Varsh Pratipada, or the first day of the Hindu calendar (Vikram Samvat) in the Telugu Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmin family. He hailed from a family that was originally from Kandkurti village, a small village in Bodhan Taluka Nizamabad District of Telangana state. Keshav's mother Revati Bai was well known for her simple lifestyle with innate spirituality and his father Baliram Pant, was a firm believer in Vedic rituals and ceremonies. Keshav was the fifth child. They had six children - three daughters and three sons.

Baliram Pant encouraged his two elder sons to take to Vedic education. But Keshav, from his early childhood, showed a different temperament, not compatible with his surroundings. As a result after completing his primary education in a Sanskrit school, he was sent to the Neil City School of Nagpur, the oldest and most reputed public school in the Province.¹ (Sinha, 2015)

Thus, Dr. Hedgewar spent his early childhood in a very spiritual and religious atmosphere which in later years helped him while laying up the foundation for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

b) A BRILLIANT STUDENT

Keshav was doing good in his studies, but nature had more tests in store for him. Nagpur was devastated by the plague in 1902. It is said the epidemic took a toll on about a crore of lives. Keshav's father threw himself wholeheartedly into the task of performing the final rites of innumerable victims of the epidemic. Unfortunately, Keshav's parents too caught the epidemic and died.

Keshav was only thirteen when he had to watch the grim spectacle of the funeral pyres of his parents on the same day. Despite this tragedy and the less conducive environment at home, his interest in his studies continued unabated supported by the fact that his name invariably appeared among the top five of the class.² (Sinha, 2015)

This shows that Keshav had a strong determination to study and perform well even at a time when the family was going through a very tough phase.

c) BORN PATRIOT

A patriot from birth, Dr. Hedgewar was different from other children of his peer group. At the tender age of eight, he refused to participate in celebrations to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the coronation of Queen Victoria of Britain in June 1897 and threw the sweets distributed to him at his school (Seshadri, 2017)

¹ These facts were also narrated by Dr. Darshan Lal Arora, Age 80, UP Paschim Kshetra Karyakarini Sadasya, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

² These facts were also narrated by Mr. Ajay Mittal, Age 68, Meerut Prant Prachar Pramukh, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

Hedgewar's journey of patriotism began in 1904 from Akhada of Shivram Guru in Nagpur when he met Dr. Balkrishna Shivram Moonje, a man of nationalist and revolutionary temperament and among the foremost followers of Lokmanya Tilak. (Sinha, 2015:6) Keshav's first taste of national politics came when he was studying in high school. On Vijay Dashmi Day of 1907, he bravely led a procession on Dusserah at Rampayali shouting "Vande Mataram" and asking for freedom of the country from Britishers. (Anand, 2019)

This zeal for independence in his mind increased day by day. In the year 1908, he organized a student revolt against the 'Risley Circular' of 1906 which prohibited the raising of slogans like 'Vande Mataram' and 'Tilak Maharaj Ki Jai'. A British school inspector who was on routine inspection in Keshav's school was greeted with a ringing slogan of 'Vande Mataram'. Irrked by this, the inspector through the Chairman of the School Managing Committee demanded an apology which Keshav flatly refused. As a result, he was expelled from school and had to move to the National School "Vidya-Griha" in Yeotmal, Pune to complete his matriculation.³ (Sinha, 2015)

The above events clearly point to the fact that Young Keshav was blessed with the quality of innate patriotism, something uncommon with children of his age.

d) A REVOLUTIONARY

In the early 20th century, Bengal became a land of revolutionaries. At that time as Kashi was to Hindus so was Calcutta for the revolutionaries. Under the pretext of pursuing higher studies, Hedgewar opted for Calcutta's National Medical College in 1910 where his real intention was to be a part of the revolutionary activities. He played a significant role in one of the leading revolutionary groups of that time called Anushilan Samiti in which his code name was 'Koken'. Despite all his activism, Hedgewar's academic excellence continued to manifest itself in the examinations. He secured 70.8 percent marks in the examinations in September 1914, obtaining his L.M.S Degree, and was offered a lucrative job in Bangkok which he refused.⁴ (Seshadri, 2017)

Thus, the primary objective of Hedgewar in Calcutta was to participate in the revolutionary movement for the freedom of this country under the pretext of pursuing higher studies.

e) A LIFE OF 'SANYASI' (MONK)

The revolutionary movement in Bengal had significantly weakened by 1914-15 and as a result, Hedgewar, by end of 1916, returned to Nagpur as a qualified doctor at a time when there were only 75 medical practitioners in the entire Central Provinces & Berar. But Dr. Hedgewar, despite his family's economic plight and an opportunity to prosper as a Doctor, did not lose sight of his principal objective in life of serving the nation wholeheartedly. Remaining a bachelor, he preferred to become the 'Doctor of the nation'.⁵ (Sinha, 2015)

It is simply an example of extreme sacrifice where an individual is devoting his time and energy to the cause of the nation and ignoring the plight of his own family. This highlights the sense of boundless love Dr. Hedgewar had for this nation.

f) AN ORGANISER

After realizing that there is a lackness of discipline among the revolutionaries and the absence of a political and national awakening among the common masses, Dr. Hedgewar diverted his attention to the National movement launched by the Indian National Congress.⁶ He became a member of Congress in 1919 and through its platform began the task of public awakening. With the growth of his activities in Congress, the assigned responsibilities to him also increased. Whether it was the responsibility of gathering subscribers to the proposed journal "Sankalp" or managing preparation for Congress sessions (especially the one which was held in Nagpur in 1920), he performed the task very aptly and successfully. In the 20th session of Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, Dr. Hedgewar as a member of the Reception Committee successfully managed nearly 15000 delegates and 7 to 8 thousand spectators. Apart from Congress, he worked in Hindu Mahasabha in various responsible positions. (Seshadri, 2017)

Dr. Hedgewar's participation as a member of the Indian National Congress and Hindu Mahasabha showed his rare organizing skill, humility, and service-mindedness.

g) MAGNANIMITY DESPITE IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

³ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Shubham, Age 24, Meerut Bhag-1 Pracharak, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

⁴ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Jatan Swarup, Age 73, Meerut Vibhaag Sanghchalak, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

⁵ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Amarjeet Sachdeva, Age 70, Shastri Nagar Sanghchalak, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

⁶ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Ravi Dutt, Age 67, Shradha Nagar Sanghchalak, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

By 1920, Mahatma Gandhi with his initial success with Satyagraha in Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda had been established as the numero uno in Indian politics. He launched the Non-Cooperation Movement in the background of the passing of the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, and the Khilafat Agitation with greater emphasis given by Gandhiji on the latter. The Khilafat agitation was aimed to restore the Caliphate in Turkey. Gandhi saw in this an 'ideal' opportunity to expand the social base of the struggle. Dr. Hedgewar sensed danger in this move of Gandhiji for 'Hindu Muslim Unity'. But being a nationalist he had a single thing in mind: "opposition to imperialism and goal of complete independence. He kept his ideological differences separated from the anti-imperialist struggle. This reasoning compelled him to wholeheartedly participate in the Non-cooperation Movement. Dr. Keshav's speeches at that time were very fiery and as a result, the government arrested him in May 1921 on charges of 'sedition' for his two speeches delivered in October 1920. Doctorji prepared to plead his case himself. It was no surprise that the presiding judge exclaimed: "His defense is even more seditious than his original speech!". He was awarded one-year rigorous imprisonment which he spent in Ajani Jail, Nagpur.⁷ (Anand, 2019)

These events lead us to the conclusion that for the freedom of this country, Dr. Hedgewar was ready to keep aside his ideological differences.

h) A VIGILANT OBSERVER AND A SOLUTION SEEKER

Dr. Hedgewar encountered a completely altered political environment when he rejoined the national movement after spending a year in jail. The Non-Cooperation Movement (Launched on 1 August 1920) gradually died down due to the abolishment of Caliph and with the Chauri Chaura incident on 5th February, Gandhiji called off the movement on 12th February 1922. The ousting of the Caliph had naturally spread despair and disappointment among the Muslims in India but their leaders cleverly converted their follower's discontent into an anti-Hindu hysteria. As a result, everywhere Muslims rose in anti-Hindu rebellions in 1923. They slaughtered cows and attacked Hindu temples. Mahatmaji, too, was so greatly shocked by these happenings that he began at Delhi a 21-day fast in the house of Maulana Mohammed Ali, in the presence of Dr. Ansari and Abdul Rehman. (Damle W. A., 1987)

Dr. Hedgewar delved deep into the meaning of all these developments and at about the same time, the historical treatise "Hindutva" by Veer Savarkar reached Doctorji's hands. Savarkar's inspiring and brilliant exposition of the concept of 'Hindutva', marked by incontestable logic and clarity, struck a chord in Doctorji's heart.

Even as Doctorji's mind was deeply pondering over the method to unite Hindus he continued to be busy within the Congress doing a variety of public activities. In 1922 he was appointed a joint secretary of the Provincial Congress and tried to organize a disciplined volunteer corps as part of the congress to arrest the pronounced indiscipline among the workers at every level. But the experiment didn't yield⁸ (Sinha, 2015). During the period between 1921-1923, the dormant Hindu Mahasabha which was formed in 1915 to present Hindu interest was revitalized. The Presidential Address to the Hindu Mahasabha Session of 1923 (in Benares) by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and 1925 (in Calcutta) by Lala Lajpat Rai demonstrated the intent to arrest the deterioration and decline of Hindus and to effect the improvement of Hindus as a community. In 1924, even Mahatma Gandhi found the shortcomings of the Hindu community by saying that "An average Hindu is a coward and an average Muslim is a Bully". Similarly Pt. Nehru describes those days in his autobiography called Hindus as given to 'stupor and a baseless slordliness' (Seshadri, 2017)

During this time, the majority of congress leaders instead of finding a solution to these communal rioting closed their eyes. Instead of finding the reasons for these communal rioting they were busy cementing the so-called 'Hindu-Muslim' Unity. Dr. Hedgewar carefully observed the social environment and attempted to find a solution for the same in consonance with the ethos of Indian Traditions.

i) ESTABLISHMENT OF RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH

In the same year, Doctorji gathered together Bhauji Kawre, Appaji Joshi, Vishwanathrao Kelkar, and other friends and also a few political workers of the Central Provinces, and placed before them his ideas concerning organizing the Hindus and took feedback. It is not wrong to say that this was one of the important events where the seeds for setting up of RSS

⁷ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Avneesh Pathak, Age 38, Karyavaha-Meerut Mahanagar, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

⁸ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Surendra, Age 50, Meerut Prant Seh Prachar Pramukh, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

were sown⁹(Anand, 2019). According to VN Shende(Author of Param Poojneeya Dr.Hedgewar, published in 1941), "the ten years of his(Dr. Hedgewar) life from 1915 to 1924 were spent in minute observation and analysis of the various political movements happening in the country and diagnosing the ills plaguing the nation and finding solutions for them."(Sinha, 2015).In early 1925, Dr.Hedgewar went to meet Swatantrya-Veer Sawarkar in Ratnagiri and spent two days in a useful exchange of views(Anand, 2019)

Lastly, the July 1924 Hindu-Muslim communal riots in Nagpur made Doctorji search for the answer to the questions such as: "How is it that Muslims, who are so few, are so fearlessly attacking the Hindus? And why are not the Hindus, who constitute the majority, even able to protect themselves? After a lot of brainstorming Doctorji realized that it is the lack of cohesion and self-respect among Hindus which has led to this miserable condition and the only lasting solution was, therefore, to instill confidence and unite the Hindu community¹⁰(Anand, 2019).Further, he felt that neither the Congress nor the Mahasabha was suited to stir Hindus into cohesive force.

Though he was an active participant in Indian National Congress till 1928(the congress session was held at Kolkata in 1928) but he found Congress activities to be concentrated on appeasing Muslims and thus unable to unite Hindus. Similarly, Hindu Mahasabha from starting was an organization with a political orientation hence a separate organization was required which would work on character and nation-building.Thus with the mission of recharging the people with the true spirit of national character and cohesion, Dr.Hedgewar thought of establishing a Sangh(organization).On 27th September 1925, about 15-20 young men gathered in Doctorji's house. Chief among them were Bhauji Kawre, Anna Sohni, Vishwanathrao Kelkar, Balaji Huddar, and Bapurao Bhedi. Doctorji announced to the gathering: "We are inaugurating the Sangh today"¹¹(Sinha, 2015)

Thus,the very idea of founding Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh can be traced to the time when self-oblivion had overtaken society.There were countless efforts done by various leaders for political independence but nothing was being done to achieve cultural independence in the minds of the Indian people.It was against this backdrop that a country-wide movement in the form of RSS was launched in 1925.

Hedgewar's attempt in 1925 was modest to start with and at outset, the activities of the Sangh were confined to Nagpur. Quality rather than quantity was the major criterion for the selection of the swayamsevaksto the Sangh. The spread of the RSS in the initial years was, therefore, not much impressive. To reinforce the shakatraining further Hedgewar organized the first training camp in 1927. (Basu et.al., 1993).In the early 1930s, the RSS began to spread itself beyond its Marathi-speaking base.Hedgewar with time made some changes in the practices and rituals of the Sangh such as breaking away from idolatrous RSS rituals viz worship of Hanuman and some other practices. The prayer was adopted in Sanskrit to make it nationally acceptable.¹²Dr.Hedgewar toiled night and day and by 1940, the RSS had a nationwide presence except for Assam, Orissa, and Kashmir. This tremendous work spanning fifteen years did take its toll and on the morning of June 21, 1940,Dr. Hedgewar breathed his last.(Damle W. A., 1987)

II.'SARSANGHCHALAKS'(CHIEF) AFTER DR.K.B. HEDGEWAR MS.GOLWALKAR

Dr.Hedgewar before his death had nominated M.S. Golwalkar('Guruji') as the next sarsanghchalak and from 1940 onwards the task of steering the 15-year-old organization came on the shoulders of Guruji as he was fondly called by his admirers.He with his continuous movement throughout India made it possible for RSS a countrywide organization.He not only sharpened the Hindutva ideology of the RSS but also consolidated it enormously by the establishment of its two most important affiliates, the BJS in 1951 and the VHP in 1964. His emphasis on Sangathan and the pracharak system made the saffron brotherhood a formidable force in the times to come(Bhishikar,1999:15-21), (Damle W. A.,

⁹ These facts were also narrated by Mr.Vinod Bharti, Age 63, Sanghchalak-Meerut Mahanagar, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20,2020

¹⁰ These facts were also narrated by Mr.Tapan, Age 51, Prant Sangathan Mantri Vidya Bharti, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20,2020

¹¹ These facts were also narrated by Mr.Jayanti Prasad, Age 62, Meerut Bhag-1 Sampark Pramukh, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20,2020

¹² These facts were also narrated by Mr.Arun Jindal, Age 70, Vibhaag Sampark Pramukh, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20,2020

1987). Thus, it would be apt to say that though the first Sarsanghchhalak established the RSS, it was in the times of Golwalkar that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh became a nationwide phenomenon.

MADHUKAR DATTATREYA DEORAS

In 1973, when Guruji passed away, the responsibility was passed on to Sri Balasaheb Deoras (Madhukar Dattatreya Deoras) the third Sarsanghchhalak. Though the fight against untouchability and support for reforms in Hindu society had been a silent work of the Sangh for a long time, in his tenure of twenty years, the Sangh worked on the menace of untouchability with more emphasis. Balasaheb once said, "If untouchability is not bad then nothing is bad in this world. Untouchability must go – lock, stock, and barrel"¹³ (Anand, 2019). Conclusively, one can say that it was due to Balasaheb's emphasis on the eradication of untouchability, that the chapter on social service started in the activities of the RSS Movement.

PROF. RAJENDRA SINGH

After Balasaheb Deoras, Prof. Rajendra Singh in 1994 became the fourth Sarsanghchhalak. Rajju Bhaiya was the first Sarsanghchhalak who also traveled outside India to those countries where RSS swayamsevaks had started working primarily under the name of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh. Further, he laid great emphasis on expanding the RSS footprint amongst marginalized sections of society through "Sewa Prakalps" (service projects). (Anand, 2019). Thus, it can be said that, in his tenure, the focus of RSS in addition to its main work of character building was to expand its outreach outside India.

K S SUDARSHAN

K S Sudarshan in the year 2000 was the fifth Sarsanghchhalak. It was during his tenure that Sangh called for a policy that would help the indigenous industry grow, and provide more employment to the skilled and unskilled laborers and blue-collar workers. He was instrumental in the creation of the anti-globalist Swadeshi Jagran Manch. It was Sudarshan who developed the mixed martial arts ('Niyudh') which the RSS trains its swayamsevaks in shakha and various camps.¹⁴ (Anand, 2019) (Damle W. K., 2019). In brief, it would not be wrong to say that, Sudarshan focused on the development of self-reliant India through the growth of indigenous industries after a decade of Liberalisation, Privatisation, and Globalisation (LPG) reforms.

DR. MOHAN BHAGWAT

In 2009, Sudarshan passed on his responsibility as Sarsanghchhalak to Dr. Mohanrao Bhagwat. A veterinary doctor by training and second-generation swayamsevak from Nagpur, Mr. Bhagwat's vision covers a spectrum of public discourse and puts forward the RSS viewpoint, from women empowerment to the economic model for India. Recently, he delivered two very important speeches on 17-18 December 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi.¹⁵ These speeches were made in one of the first-of-its-kind outreach programs by the RSS, in which Bhagwat addressed prominent personalities from all walks of life. He later also answered questions in a Q&A session. These speeches can be called the guiding framework for RSS activities in present times. It is under his leadership the RSS is marching currently on its way to accomplish its mission of a united, strong, and prosperous Bharat.

5. CONCLUSION

The role of leadership in a social movement is to mobilize the people towards specific goals by developing strategies and tactics for action. The leader formulates the ideology of the movement and provides means for the maintenance of the integration of the movement participants.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in general and its leadership, in particular, derives a lot of lives from the first Sarsanghchhalak. Dr. K. B. Hedgewar lent a new ideological and organizational expression to the Indian nation by founding the RSS whose ethos is synonymous with India's ancient civilization, culture, and identity. Dr. Hedgewar toiled night and day to lay a secure foundation for the strengthening and growth of the Sangh. That tremendous work spanning fifteen years did take its toll, and Dr. Hedgewar succumbed to illness on 21st June 1940 - at the comparatively young age of 51.

¹³ These facts were also narrated by Mr. B. K. Tyagi, Age 69, Meerut Bhag-1 Sanghchhalak, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

¹⁴ These facts were also narrated by Mr. Sher Singh, Age 40, Nagar Sharirik Pramukh, at the time of interview conducted by researcher in the Meerut District of Uttar Pradesh between Oct 1-20, 2020

¹⁵ These speeches and Q & A session have been also published in a book form called "Future Bharat: An RSS Perspective", Vimarsh Prakashan, New Delhi.

From June 1940 onwards, the Sangh began its journey under the extraordinary ideological and organizational stewardship of M.S. Golwalkar, the second Sar-Sanghachalak. He widened the ideological base of the Sangh, making it intelligible to lay villagers and urban intellectuals alike. In 1973, the responsibility was passed on to Sri Balasaheb Deoras (Madhukar Dattatreya Deoras, the third Sar-Sanghachalak. In his tenure of twenty years, the growth of the Sangh, apart from geographical spread far and wide, has been meteoric, with leaping numbers of varied service projects and ever-expanding horizons of the Sangh-inspired organizations. Balasaheb Deoras passed on the baton of Sarsanghchalak to Prof. Rajendra Singh in 1994. He in turn delegated his responsibility to K S Sudarshan in the year 2000. In 2009, Sudarshan passed on his responsibility as Sarsanghchalak to Dr. Mohanrao Bhagwat. To finally conclude, we can say that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is the essence of the life of these leaders in whose footsteps the present leadership is marching ahead on its way to accomplish its mission and translate its vision of a united, strong, and prosperous Bharat.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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None

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