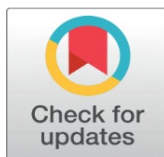
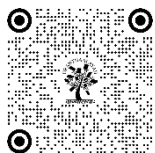


ROLE OF RSS IN NATION-BUILDING THROUGH SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

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ABSTRACT

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is one of the largest voluntary organizations in the world, with a deep-rooted presence in India's socio-political landscape. Founded in 1925 by Dr. K.B. Hedgewar, the RSS has played a significant role in shaping India's national identity and contributing to various social and developmental initiatives. The organization operates on the principle of selfless service (sewa) and has been actively engaged in various spheres such as education, rural development, disaster relief, healthcare, and social harmony.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is one of the largest voluntary organizations in the world, with a deep-rooted presence in India's socio-political landscape. Founded in 1925 by Dr. K.B. Hedgewar, the RSS has played a significant role in shaping India's national identity and contributing to various social and developmental initiatives. The organization operates on the principle of selfless service (sewa) and has been actively engaged in various spheres such as education, rural development, disaster relief, healthcare, and social harmony.

This article explores the role of RSS in nation-building through its social contributions, highlighting its impact on various aspects of Indian society.

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1. FOUNDATION AND IDEOLOGY

The RSS was founded with the vision of strengthening India's cultural and national consciousness. Dr. Hedgewar emphasized discipline, self-reliance, and service to society as the fundamental pillars of the organization. The RSS adopted a unique approach to nation-building by focusing on character-building, unity, and selfless service.

Over the decades, RSS has expanded its activities beyond ideological propagation and engaged in grassroots work to uplift society. The organization believes that a strong nation is built through strong individuals who are physically, mentally, and morally sound.

2.2. MAJOR SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF RSS

1) Education and Character Building

RSS has played a significant role in the field of education, particularly through its affiliated organizations such as:

Vidya Bharati: One of the largest educational networks in India, running thousands of schools, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Vidya Bharati schools focus on value-based education and inculcate patriotism among students.

Ekal Vidyalaya: A movement dedicated to providing education in remote tribal areas, ensuring that children from marginalized communities receive basic literacy and skills training.

Shishu Mandirs and Saraswati Shishu Vidyalayas: These schools focus on a blend of modern education and traditional values.

The RSS emphasizes character-building as a key aspect of nation-building. Through shakhas (daily gatherings), it instills discipline, physical fitness, and moral values among the youth, preparing them to serve the country.

2) Rural Development and Self-Reliance

Recognizing that India's progress depends on its villages, RSS has actively worked towards rural development through initiatives such as:

Deendayal Research Institute (DRI): Founded by Nanaji Deshmukh, DRI focuses on sustainable rural development through organic farming, self-employment, and education. The model villages developed by DRI in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh serve as an example of self-reliant communities.

Gram Vikas Yojana: RSS-affiliated organizations run numerous programs for village upliftment, including sanitation, water conservation, and vocational training.

Empowering Farmers: Initiatives like Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) support farmers through training, cooperative movements, and advocacy for their rights.

3) Healthcare and Public Welfare

RSS and its affiliated organizations have been instrumental in providing healthcare services to the underprivileged. Some notable contributions include:

Seva Bharati: An organization that runs hospitals, mobile clinics, and blood donation camps across the country. It provides medical assistance in remote areas where government healthcare facilities are lacking.

Free Medical Camps: RSS volunteers organize health check-up camps, cataract surgeries, and maternal health programs, benefiting millions.

Arogya Mitra and Naturopathy Centers: The promotion of Ayurveda, yoga, and natural healing techniques is a key aspect of RSS's healthcare initiatives.

4) Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation

One of the most commendable aspects of RSS's work is its immediate and large-scale response to natural disasters. Some examples include: 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy: RSS volunteers played a crucial role in rescuing victims and providing medical aid. 2001 Gujarat Earthquake: RSS's relief operations helped thousands of affected families with food, shelter, and rehabilitation. 2004 Tsunami: Sangh volunteers were among the first responders, rebuilding homes and providing psychological counseling to victims.

COVID-19 Pandemic: RSS played a major role in providing food, oxygen, medical aid, and awareness campaigns to fight the pandemic. The efficiency and dedication of RSS volunteers in disaster management highlight their commitment to national service.

5) Social Harmony and National Integration

RSS has consistently worked to promote unity and social harmony across different communities in India. Some initiatives in this regard include: Samajik Samrasta Abhiyan: A movement to eliminate caste-based discrimination and foster social cohesion. Rashtra Sevika Samiti: The women's wing of RSS, empowering women through education, self-defense training, and leadership programs. Muslim Rashtriya Manch: An initiative to bring Muslim communities closer to nationalist values and foster inter-community dialogue. By emphasizing common cultural and historical roots, RSS has contributed to strengthening the fabric of Indian society.

6) Youth Development and Nation-Building

Youth empowerment has been one of RSS's primary focuses. Through organizations like: Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP): One of the largest student organizations in India, working on educational reforms, campus activism, and leadership training. Bajrang Dal: A youth organization that works for the protection of Hindu culture and traditions. RSS's youth-oriented programs help inculcate leadership qualities, patriotism, and a sense of responsibility among young Indians.

3. CRITICISM AND CHALLENGES

While RSS has been praised for its social contributions, it has also faced criticism regarding its ideological stance. Critics argue that its association with Hindutva ideology sometimes leads to polarization. However, RSS leaders have consistently maintained that their focus is on national unity and social service, rather than political gains.

The organization has also faced legal and political challenges at various points in history, including temporary bans. Despite this, it has continued to expand its outreach and contribute to society through constructive work.

4. CONCLUSION

The RSS has played a significant role in nation-building through its vast network of social service initiatives. From education and rural development to healthcare and disaster relief, the organization has made a lasting impact on millions of lives.

Its emphasis on discipline, character-building, and selfless service continues to inspire individuals to contribute to society. While it has faced criticism, its commitment to national service remains unwavering. In the coming years, RSS is likely to continue playing a crucial role in shaping India's social and cultural landscape.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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