

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Nation-Building: Social Contributions in Historical Perspective

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Abstract: *The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, played a significant yet indirect role in India's struggle against British colonialism and the nationalist movement. While the organization did not engage directly in mass political actions like those led by the Indian National Congress (INC), the RSS contributed through its emphasis on cultural nationalism, Hindu unity, and social service. This study examines the ideological contributions of the RSS to the nationalist movement, its role in counteracting British colonialism, and the impact of its social activities during the independence struggle. Through its focus on strengthening Hindu society and promoting self-reliance, the RSS aimed to lay the foundation for political freedom by first revitalizing India's cultural and social fabric. The study highlights the RSS's efforts in providing relief during national crises, organizing community-building activities, and promoting physical and moral discipline through its shakhas (branches). These contributions, though often criticized for their divergence from the INC's secular approach, played a key role in shaping the intellectual and cultural resistance to British rule, leaving a lasting impact on post-independence Indian society and politics.*

Keywords: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Indian Nationalism, British Colonialism, Cultural Nationalism, Social Service Activities

