

# IN BAD FAITH?

## BRITISH CHARITY AND HINDU EXTREMISM



"I recognized two people pulling away my daughter Shabana. My daughter was screaming in pain asking the men to leave her alone. My mind was seething with fear and fury. I could do nothing to help my daughter from being assaulted sexually and tortured to death. My daughter was like a flower, still to see life. Why did they have to do this to her? What kind of men are these? The monsters tore my beloved daughter to pieces."

**Medina Mustafa Ismail Sheikh, then in Kalol refugee camp, Panchmahals District, Gujarat**

This report is dedicated to the hundreds of thousands of Indians who have lost their homes, their loved ones or their lives because of the politics of hatred. We stand by those in India struggling for justice, and for a secular, democratic and tolerant future.

# IN BAD FAITH? BRITISH CHARITY AND HINDU EXTREMISM

## INFORMATION FOR READERS

- ▶ A separate report summary is available from [www.awaazsaw.org](http://www.awaazsaw.org). Each section of this report also begins with a summary of main findings.
- ▶ Section 1 provides brief information on Hindutva and shows Sewa International UK's connections with the RSS. Readers familiar with these areas can skip to:
- ▶ **The key sections of the report.** Sections 2–4 look at Sewa International UK (the fundraising wing of HSS UK), its activities around the Gujarat earthquake 2001 and its other supported projects.
- ▶ Section 5 documents extensive links between the HSS UK family of organizations and the Indian RSS.
- ▶ For readers unfamiliar with the RSS or Hindutva, background information is given in Appendices 4–8.
- ▶ A glossary of Indian terms is given at the end of the report (Appendix 9)
- ▶ Updates to the report are available at [www.awaazsaw.org](http://www.awaazsaw.org).

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## A NOTE ON METHODS

The report is based on: site visits to Gujarat villages in September 2003; interviews in Gujarat from March–May 2003; interviews in the UK, US and other parts of India during 2003; and analysis of paper and electronic documents, primarily those produced by Hindutva groups.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Because of their role in funding, promoting or glorifying RSS organizations that have been directly responsible for or implicated in serious, large scale sectarian violence, hatred or violation of human rights in India:

- ▶ The charitable status of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK, Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK and Kalyan Ashram Trust UK (all branches of the extremist RSS family) be withdrawn by the UK Charity Commission.
- ▶ The Charity Commission take appropriate action against the trustees of HSS. HSS / Sewa International fundraising appeals for Indian causes were not transparent and did not disclose to the public that funds were being raised for and sent to extremist and sectarian RSS organizations.
- ▶ Donors and the public refuse to give funds to the HSS, Sewa International, the VHP UK and their allied organizations.
- ▶ Politicians, public and voluntary sector organizations, religious and community groups publicly dissociate from the HSS, the VHP UK and their allied organizations.

## SECTION 1: SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK AND HINDUTVA

### SECTION SUMMARY

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- ▶ The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS – National Volunteers Corps) is a paramilitary, all-male political organization founded in the 1920s and dedicated to turning India into an exclusive 'Hindu nation' based on 'Hindu strength' and 'Hindu unity'. RSS founders were strongly inspired by Fascist and Nazi ideas and the RSS was modeled on Fascist youth organizations. The RSS and its allies have been repeatedly named by judicial inquiries for their role in religiously-motivated violence over several decades. The RSS has been banned three times in India, twice for its role in fomenting religious hatred and serious anti-minority violence. M. K. Gandhi's murderer was an RSS activist.
- ▶ The RSS's world-view is 'Hindutva', an extremist anti-minority ideology of Hindu supremacy formed in the 1920s. Hindutva has little relation to Hindu religions. Rather, it is based on the claim that India only belongs to those who 'share the blood' of Vedic-Aryans and who consider India as their holyland. Hindutva claims that Indian citizens who are Muslim or Christian are not 'true' Indians. If they do not swear allegiance to the RSS's ideology, they should be treated as foreigners and potential enemies. According to RSS followers, India has to be turned from a secular democratic state in which all citizens are equal into a Hindu nation-state in which Hindus have absolute supremacy.
- ▶ The RSS has a large 'family' (*sangh parivar*) of closely related organizations that share its aims and world-view. RSS affiliates, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP – World Hindu Council), have been involved in large scale anti-minority violence or hatred, including riots and pogroms in which thousands have died.
- ▶ The Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK (HSS UK) is the UK branch of the RSS and shares the RSS's aims and ideology. The HSS UK is a registered charity. Sewa International UK (SIUK), though not a registered charity, is the fundraising arm of the HSS UK.
- ▶ SIUK is directly linked with the RSS and its affiliates, including Sewa International India and Sewa Bharati; the latter is a key recipient of SIUK funds. SIUK's claim to be a non-sectarian, non-religious and non-political organization that 'does not provide funds for anything other than humanitarian relief' is false. Its main purpose is to raise funds for and support a distinct family of organizations associated with the extremist RSS.
- ▶ Sewa International India and Sewa Bharati are dedicated to building a Hindu nation based on Hindu extremist ideas, glorifying the RSS, recruiting for the RSS and expanding RSS physical and ideological training cells (*shakhas*) in India.
- ▶ Sewa Bharati has been openly involved in Hindutva extremist political work in India, including promotion of RSS ideology and politics. The state government of Madhya Pradesh revoked its license because of alleged violence against Christians. Allegations of violence by Sewa Bharati against Christians in Madhya Pradesh continue.
- ▶ We do not think it is a coincidence that the two Indian states where Hindutva networks, hatred and violence have grown phenomenally in recent years both had natural and human tragedies (the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, the Orissa cyclone in 1999) followed by massive amounts of funding to Hindutva organizations under the guise of humanitarian charity.

## HINDUTVA VIOLENCE IN INDIA

I am the first enemy of the Muslims... Killing Muslims was necessary. All Muslims had to be taught a lesson... If the Muslims do not learn, it will be very harmful for them.

**Harish Bhatt, Gujarat state vice president, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, describing the killing of 2,000 Indians, almost all Muslims, in Gujarat during 2002**

Virtually every judicial commission of inquiry officially appointed to investigate communal riots since Independence and Partition has indicted organizations affiliated with or allied to the RSS / VHP / BD / BJP combine, including the Maharashtra-based Shiv Sena, for their role in violent crimes against India's minorities.

**Concerned Citizens Tribunal on the Gujarat 2002 massacres, led by former chief justice of India, V R Krishna Iyer**

In India since the early 1980s, there has been a massive growth of violent Hindu extremist political movements and organizations. These organizations follow a supremacist ideology called Hindutva. Hindutva has little relation to the religion of Hinduism. Instead, **Hindutva is an ideology formed in the 1920s and 1930s and influenced by Fascism and Nazism. It claims that India belongs only to Hindus and that Hindus are a single 'race', people, culture or nation. India has to be turned into an exclusive Hindu nation-state in which minorities have limited or few rights of democratic citizenship. Minorities are viewed by Hindutva organizations as enemies, traitors, polluters and alien foreigners.** From their beginning, Hindutva organizations have opposed secularism, freedom of belief and the democratic and tolerant values of the Indian constitution.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers Corps), formed in 1925-1926, is at the core of the family of Hindutva organizations operating in India.

- ▶ The RSS is modelled on Italian Fascist youth movements that were growing at that time. Its founders (K. B. Hedgewar and B. S. Moonje) and its second leader (M. S. Golwalkar) were all strong admirers or supporters of both

Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

- ▶ The RSS is not a democratic organization but based on obedience to and veneration of its supreme leader.
- ▶ The RSS is not a formally registered society in India and is not regarded as a charity. It claims not to keep any bank accounts and it does not have to pay income tax. The RSS, its women's and student affiliates, and the VHP are notified under section 5 of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 1976 (FCRA) as organizations of a political nature. The Act bans such organizations from receiving any foreign funds, unless they receive prior permission from the central government on a case by case basis.
- ▶ The family of RSS-spawned organizations is known as the *sangh parivar* or just *sangh* (meaning 'organization').
- ▶ The key *sangh parivar* belief is that India belongs only to Hindus; all other religious communities, and those Hindus who refuse to accept RSS leadership, are considered enemies of the country. The ideology of the *sangh parivar* is 'Hindutva'. This is a rejection of the secular and civic idea of Indian nationhood and citizenship in favour of an extremist and discriminatory idea of an exclusive 'Hindu nation-state', called a *Hindurashtra*.
- ▶ The RSS's key method of recruiting and organizing cadres is called *sangathan* – the consolidation of all Hindus under its hate-driven ideology in order to create a Hindu nation-state. RSS volunteers working to build the 'Hindu nation' are called *swayamsevak*s and RSS workers / activists are called *karyakartas*.
- ▶ The RSS is organized through cells called *shakhas* in which uniformed members undergo military drills, physical, ideological and weapons training, and prayers to its saffron flag. In RSS *shakhas*, images of Hindu Gods or Goddess are absent. The 'god' of the RSS is the 'Hindu nation' and members are required to venerate the RSS's first two supreme leaders, K. B. Hedgewar and M. S. Golwalkar.

Hindutva organizations have repeatedly flouted the law, acted illegally, undermined judicial

processes and the criminal justice system, infiltrated the federal state, and systematically targeted and massacred Indian citizens who are Muslims or Christians.

Since the late 1960s, the RSS has been repeatedly named in judicial commissions and enquiries into serious incidents of religiously-motivated violence in India. This included the murder of M. K. Gandhi by Nathuram Godse, an RSS propagator. The RSS has been banned three

times in independent India, twice because of its association with violence and hatred. Over the past two decades, **there have been very serious incidents of violence against Muslim and Christian communities by Hindutva organizations, including the VHP, the RSS, the Gujarat BJP and the Bajrang Dal. These incidents include the killings in Bhagalpur in 1989, in Bombay in 1992–1993 and in Dangs district, Gujarat from 1997 and 1998–1999. Over 5,000 Indians were killed in these various events.**

## SANGH PARIVAR AND VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 1

LOCATION / DATE	ESTIMATED NUMBER KILLED, WHERE KNOWN	SANGH PARIVAR INDICTED BY:
Bhiwandi 1970	78	<b>Justice D.P. Madon Commission:</b> 'The organization responsible for bringing communal tension in Bhiwandi to a pitch is the Rashtriya Utsav Mandal [an arm of the Jana Sangh, the then RSS political wing].'
Jalgaon 1970	43	<b>Justice D. P. Madon Commission,</b> as above.
Tellicherry 1971	251	<b>Justice Joseph Vithyathil Commission:</b> 'It was only after the RSS and the Jana Sangh set up their units ... that there came a change in the situation. Their anti-Muslim propaganda, its reaction on the Muslims ... and the communal tension that followed prepared the ground for the disturbances.'
Jamshedpur 1979	127–137	<b>Commission of Inquiry:</b> 'The dispute on the route of the procession became sharp and agitated reactions from a group of persons ... who systematically distributed pamphlets to heighten communal feelings and had organizational links with the RSS.'
Kanyakumari 1982		<b>Justice Venugopal Commission:</b> 'The RSS methodology for provoking communal violence is: a) rousing feelings in the majority community by propaganda... b) deepening fear in the majority community by a clever propaganda that the [minorities'] population is increasing... c) infiltrating into the administration... e) spreading rumours to widen the communal cleavage...'
Bhagalpur 1989	At least 918	<b>Commission of Inquiry, Majority Report of Justice Ram Chand Prasad and S. Shamshul Hasan:</b> 'The climax was reached when the BJP and VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) workers led by their leaders demonstrated...'
East Delhi 1992	19	<b>People's Union for Civil Liberties:</b> 'The December 11 incidents... [were] a vicious police operation carried out with communal bias, with so-called Hindutva activists and local [thugs] with a view to unleash terror on members of the minority community.'
Bombay 1992–1993	At least 1,700	<b>Human Rights Watch:</b> 'The violence in Bombay emerged out of an organized and systematic ideological campaign directed primarily against India's Muslim minority... During the preceding months, a movement ... including the BJP, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Shiv Sena, had called for the construction of a temple on the site of the [Babri] mosque as an integral move in their struggle for Hindutva, or Hindu rule.'
Gujarat 2002	2,000	<b>Concerned Citizens' Tribunal</b> (chaired by former Chief Justice of India V.R. Krishna Iyer): 'The leadership of large mobs running into thousands was provided by easily identifiable elected representatives of the BJP (including cabinet ministers), and others from the VHP, the Bajrang Dal and the RSS...'

<sup>1</sup> Our purpose here is to demonstrate that the RSS and its family have repeatedly been indicted for violence over several decades; this is not to exonerate the police or other political parties who played a major role in several of these incidents.



**The Gujarat pogroms in 2002 were the most chilling illustration of the rise of Hindutva. From 27 February 2002, at least 2,000 Indian citizens, the vast majority Muslim, were killed – most over the course of three days – and over 200,000 displaced in the worst violence seen in India over the last decade.** The pogrom was concentrated in the towns and villages of Gujarat. The violence continued for several months and involved the active cooperation of RSS leaders that head the Gujarat state government. It followed the killing of 58 Hindus on a train just outside Godhra town in Gujarat, reportedly by a Muslim mob. The Gujarat carnage was unprecedented in its brutality, its planning and methodical execution. The violence included the systematic rape and mutilation of women and girls, the killing and burning of adults and children and the destruction and arson of homes, businesses and property.

The carnage was condemned by numerous governments, the European Union and human rights organizations worldwide. Numerous Indian and international human rights reports directly indicted the RSS and its affiliates in the violence. In April 2002, a Human Rights Watch Report concluded that:

The groups most directly involved in the violence include the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council, VHP), the Bajrang Dal, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that heads the Gujarat state government.<sup>2</sup>

A survey in 2002 by Citizen's Initiative, Ahmedabad of almost 2800 Muslim families affected by the violence named these same organizations as involved in the carnage<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, in 2002, a Concerned Citizens Tribunal headed by Justices V.R. Krishna Iyer, Hosbet Suresh and P.B. Sawant detailed extensive eye-witness testimony that named these same organizations for involvement in the atrocities<sup>4</sup>.

## HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE UK?

British citizens were victims of RSS and VHP-inspired violence: three members of the Dawood family from Yorkshire, on holiday in India, were killed during the Gujarat carnage in 2002. The Indian RSS also has highly active organizations working in the UK. They have spread RSS ideology, provided extensive financial and political support for Hindutva organizations in India, and attempted to gain influence among Hindus in the UK, especially among youth. They have received support from political parties, local authorities, education authorities, MPs and members of the royal family. The UK organizations pretend to be simply religious or cultural organizations that represent Hindus and they attempt to disguise their links with political extremism in India. Several UK organizations raise funds from the general public in the name of charity and channel them to RSS front organizations in India. UK organizations linked to the RSS include:

- ▶ Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS UK, a registered charity, charity number 267309), the UK branch of the RSS.
- ▶ Sewa International UK (SIUK, the fundraising and 'service project' of HSS UK) which raises funds for RSS projects in India.
- ▶ Kalyan Ashram Trust (KAT, a registered charity, charity number 261327) which raises funds for RSS 'tribal' projects in India.
- ▶ Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK (VHP UK, a registered charity, charity number 262684), the UK branch of the Indian VHP.
- ▶ Overseas Friends of the BJP (OFBJP UK), which provides support in the UK for the BJP political party which is part of the RSS family.

The close relation between the HSS UK, the VHP UK and the Indian RSS is described in Section 5. The following table shows how the HSS UK family of organizations exactly parallels the Indian RSS and its affiliates.

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch, *'We have no orders to save you': State Participation and Complicity in Communal Violence in Gujarat*, Human Rights Watch, New York, April 2002 Vol. 14, No. 3(C). Human Rights Watch, *Compounding Injustice: The Government's Failure to Redress Massacres in Gujarat*, Human Rights Watch, New York, July 2003 Vol. 15, No. 3 (C).

<sup>3</sup> Citizens Initiative Ahmedabad, *Ten hard facts: survey of victims in Ahmedabad*, (Period of survey: 4 – 13 March, 2002), Citizens Initiative / Centre for Social Justice, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Concerned Citizens Tribunal, *Crime Against Humanity: an inquiry into the carnage in Gujarat, volumes I and II*, Concerned Citizens Tribunal / Citizens for Justice and Peace, Mumbai, 2002.

THE UK AND INDIAN *SANGH PARIVAR*

## TABLE 2

UK *SANGH PARIVAR***Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK**

- ▶ Initiated 1966, registered as charity in 1974, charity registration number 267309
- ▶ Key decision making bodies are annual Akhil UK Pratinidhi Sabha, and three monthly Central Executive Committee (KKM)
- ▶ Key training event for workers is annual Sangh Shikshak Varg
- ▶ Has around 75 weekly shakhas, attended by around 1500 members called 'swayamsevaks'
- ▶ Reverence and devotion to saffron flag, K. B. Hedgewar and M. S. Golwalkar
- ▶ Has same hymns and prayers, and celebrates same festivals as RSS
- ▶ Considers Indian RSS head as its supreme leader

**Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK**

- ▶ Formed 1971, acquired charitable status in 1972, charity registration number 262684
- ▶ Branch of VHP India operating in UK, part of Vishwa Hindu Parishad international section
- ▶ Has 12 UK branches

**Hindu Sevika Samiti UK**

- ▶ HSS UK women's affiliate formed in 1975
- ▶ Structure mirrors HSS UK
- ▶ Key training event for workers is annual Samiti Shikshak Varg
- ▶ Has about 30 weekly shakhas attended by around 500 women and girls

**Overseas Friends of the BJP UK**

- ▶ Formed 1991
- ▶ Lobbies for UK support of Indian BJP

**Friends of India Society International**

- ▶ Formed in mid-1970s during 'emergency' period in India
- ▶ Supports various *sangh parivar*-linked political projects

**Sewa International UK**

- ▶ Formed 1991, became private limited company in 2002, company number 04482628
- ▶ Uses the charity registration number of HSS UK, 267309
- ▶ 'Service project of HSS UK'
- ▶ Key fundraising for Indian RSS affiliates

**Kalyan Ashram Trust UK**

- ▶ Registered as charity in 1970, charity registration number 261327
- ▶ Established to raise funds for Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram projects in India

**National Hindu Students Forum UK**

- ▶ HSS UK student affiliate, formed 1991
- ▶ Shares address of HSS UK, key activists also HSS UK members
- ▶ Largest body of Hindu students in UK

**Hindu Sahitya Kendra**

- ▶ Formed in 1984
- ▶ HSS UK literature dissemination outfit

**Deendayal Research Institute**

- ▶ Ideological unit
- ▶ Named after senior RSS worker, ideologue and founder of a Hindutva political party in 1950s

**Hindu International Medical Mission**

- ▶ HSS UK medical affiliate

INDIAN *SANGH PARIVAR***Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (India)**

- ▶ Formed in 1925–1926 as paramilitary male organization
- ▶ Key decision making bodies are Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha and Central Executive Committee (Kendriya Karyakari Mandal)
- ▶ Numerous Shikshak Vargs (training camps for instructors)
- ▶ Branches are called 'shakhas' – daily physical and ideological training cells attended by several million members called 'swayamsevaks'
- ▶ Reverence and devotion to saffron flag, K. B. Hedgewar and M. S. Golwalkar

**Vishwa Hindu Parishad (India)****Vishwa Hindu Parishad India – Overseas section****Vishwa Hindu Parishad International**

- ▶ VHP formed in 1964 as RSS 'religious' affiliate
- ▶ VHP at forefront of anti-minority campaigns and violence in India

**Rashtra Sevika Samiti (India)**

- ▶ RSS women's affiliate, formed 1936
- ▶ Structure mirrors RSS
- ▶ Organizes Samiti Shikshak Vargs

**Bharatiya Janata Party (India)**

- ▶ Political party formed in 1980 by RSS activists
- ▶ Senior leaders are RSS members

**Sewa Bharati (India) / Sewa International (India)****Gram Bharati (India)**

- ▶ RSS 'service' & rural project wings

**Vidya Bharati (India)****Saraswati Shishu / Vidya mandirs****Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (VHP)**

- ▶ RSS / VHP education projects / schools

**Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (India)**

- ▶ RSS adivasi ('tribal') projects

**Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (India)**

- ▶ RSS student affiliate
- ▶ Largest body of Hindu students in India

**Hindu Vivek Kendra (India)**

- ▶ Hindutva literature dissemination

**Deendayal Shodh Sansthan (India)**

- ▶ Ideological unit
- ▶ Publishes journal *Manthan*
- ▶ Named after senior RSS worker, ideologue and founder of a Hindutva political party in 1950s

**National Medicos Organization (India)**

- ▶ RSS medical affiliate



**Figure 1: HSS UK annual training camp 2001. Images of RSS founder Hedgewar, RSS second supreme leader Golwalkar and RSS map of India at front**

## SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK

Yet another development is the establishment of an international organization titled SEWA INTERNATIONAL which now has branches in many countries. Sewa International will look after the interests of seva [RSS service] related issues not only in the respective countries where they have chapters but also take up GLOBAL level care of sewa [service] work carried out under the Sangh [RSS] ideology<sup>5</sup>.

*Hindusthan is Hindu Rashtra—K.S. Sudarshan.* The Sarsanghchalak [supreme leader] of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Shri K.S. Sudarshan has chalked out a systematic approach to be adopted by Sangh swayamsevaks [RSS members] *to reach out to the last person in the village through various developmental programmes and bring them all within its organizational fold...* The Sarsanghchalak [RSS head] emphasised the need for special efforts to expand the Sangh

[RSS] network in the remote parts of the country. He pointed out that various political parties realised the significance of Hindus getting united, which could ultimately change the very contour of the nation's polity.<sup>6</sup>

Sewa International UK (SIUK), formed in 1991, is the 'service project' of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, the UK branch of the RSS. SIUK has become in a short space of time a high profile organization that raises funds for what it says are welfare, education and development projects in India. It claims to be a non-sectarian, non-religious and non-political humanitarian organization. It presents itself as working for the good of humanity, focusing on education, poverty and natural tragedies in India. It is widely presented as simply an Indian or Hindu charity. SIUK has received the support of royalty, MPs and councillors, lord mayors, many local authorities, schools, large companies, prominent individuals, voluntary and community groups and members of the South Asian communities. SIUK received considerable coverage in the UK in

5 K. Suryanarayana Rao (All-India RSS Service Head), *Seva Disha — Building an Integrated and Self-Reliant Society*, Chennai, 1997, <http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha>.

6 Manik Madhukar Kher, 'Hindusthan is Hindu Rashtra', *Organiser*, 1 February 2004. The three-day camp at Raipur was attended by the VHP, Bajrang Dal, the RSS student affiliate, ABVP, and the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram.

the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that centred on Gujarat state in 2001. It said it raised £4.3 million for Gujarat earthquake relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. It has also raised funds for various other service and educational activities in India. SIUK is not a charity, but uses the charity registration number of the HSS UK (267309) to collect donations from the general public. It is also a limited company (company number 04482628, date of incorporation 11 July 2002.) The company registered address is the Leicester office of the HSS UK<sup>7</sup>.

Our point is not about whether SIUK funded service activities in India, or whether or not these have benefited individuals. Nor does our argument concern the detail of the financial accounting procedures of SIUK. We show in this report that **the main purpose of SIUK is to raise funds in the UK for RSS projects in India in order to directly help the expansion of the extremist RSS's networks across Indian society in line with the long term political and sectarian aims of the RSS. SIUK was established primarily to raise funds for one clear, distinct political family of organizations entirely related to the RSS. The vast bulk of SIUK efforts are directed to the principal aim of furthering the extremist RSS's goals.** One of SIUK's slogans is 'service to humanity is service to God'. We think a much more accurate slogan would be: 'fundraising for RSS service networks to create a Hindu nation'.

In response to a *Channel 4 News* report in December 2002 which said that SIUK had raised funds for an organization, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), that was directly involved in the Gujarat carnage, HSS UK and SIUK stated:

HSS and Sewa International denies all the allegations and will whole heartedly continue to help the Charity Commission with its on-going enquiries, in order to clear its name of ALL the biased and malicious allegations that have been raised. HSS and Sewa International confidently and unequivocally states that it does not provide funds for anything other than humanitarian relief and rehabilitation. Sewa International has never

sent money to any parties with the intention of spreading communal violence or hatred, either directly or indirectly. Recent reports which centre totally on the communal violence in Gujarat bear no relevance to any of the relief work or projects supported by Sewa International.<sup>8</sup>

HSS / SIUK denied they had the *intention* of funding organizations for the purposes of hatred and violence. This is an easy denial to make. However, given the seriousness of the Channel 4 allegations, HSS / SIUK did not make the *relevant* denial – that organizations they fund and support have not been involved in hatred or violence. HSS / SIUK also state that the violence in Gujarat during 2002, which directly involved the VKA, bears no relevance to projects it supports and funds, which include the VKA. HSS / SIUK do not make the *important* denial – that the VKA has not been involved in violence or hatred. **We do not think it is a coincidence that the two Indian states where Hindutva networks, hatred and violence have grown phenomenally in recent years both had natural and human tragedies (the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, the Orissa cyclone in 1999) followed by massive amounts of funding to Hindutva organizations under the guise of humanitarian charity.**

## SIUK: A PART OF THE RSS HINDUTVA MISSION

...Sewa International is not an RSS-backed organization. The allegation is totally false and misleading, Sewa International is a Sewa Project of HSS. A malicious propaganda is going on against Sewa international by the Left wings of UK.<sup>9</sup>

In an interview in 2002, the vice-chair of SIUK denied that it is 'backed' by the RSS. However, this interview was from *Organiser*, the main Indian weekly of the RSS. In fact the Indian RSS considers SIUK to be an integral part of work and mission. There are numerous strong ties between SIUK and the Indian RSS that occur through:

- Direct links between SIUK and the RSS

7 As at December 2003, the status of this company at Companies House UK was listed as 'Proposal to Strike Off'. *Current Appointments Report for Sewa International Limited*, Companies House, London, compiled 29 December 2003.

8 Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK & Sewa International UK, 'Statement', 4 March 2003, <http://www.sewainternational.com>.

9 AL Sharma, 'Sewa International encourages social integration, not social division', *The Organiser*, 29 December 2002.

- ▶ Strong, extensive links between the HSS UK and the RSS (described in Section 5)
- ▶ Links with Sewa Bharati, the RSS service affiliate in India
- ▶ Links with Sewa International India, which coordinates international fundraising for and publicises RSS and VHP projects
- ▶ Various other ties between SIUK and other RSS affiliates

The former Indian RSS supreme leader, Rajendra Singh gave a talk titled 'code of guidelines to workers' to HSS members in north London on 24 April 1995. The first guideline is to Sewa International on its areas of priority<sup>10</sup>. If SIUK is not backed by the RSS, why would the most senior RSS figure in the world consider it his remit to provide codes of guidance for it?

RSS publications list SIUK and the Kalyan Ashram Trust UK as examples of the RSS (sangh) organizations the UK or as 'sangh work abroad'<sup>11</sup>. An RSS brochure published on the occasion of the World RSS Camp held in Gujarat in December 1995 describes the activities of the HSS UK, Sewa International, Kalyan Ashram Trust UK, the VHP UK and other UK organizations as part of the RSS's Hindutva mission in the UK<sup>12</sup>. One article in this RSS publication is authored by the SIUK vice chair who discusses the Ayodhya temple campaign in the UK. (The Ayodhya temple campaign is a political VHP/RSS project which led to the illegal destruction by Hindutva mobs of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya in 1992 and which led to bloody riots throughout India.) The RSS's 'service department' similarly states that Sewa International is an RSS project working under the sangh's ideology<sup>13</sup>.

The former HSS UK full-time worker, Ram Vaidya, one of two sons of M.G. Vaidya, a senior

RSS figure and media spokesperson, came to the UK in 1999 to evaluate the work of HSS UK and expand and consolidate HSS work in Europe. In a report to the HSS UK central executive committee on 13 May 2001 in Coventry, he made recommendations regarding SIUK work around the Gujarat earthquake that stressed the need to expand HSS physical and ideological training cells (shakhas) and undertake charitable work with 'detached involvement'<sup>14</sup>.

The VHP UK Manchester branch newsletter also stated 'Sewa International (UK) is a service project of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) which is working closely with the RSS and VHP in India to provide aid to the victims of the earthquake.'<sup>15</sup> SIUK's anniversary report on its earthquake work includes a message of support from 'Mananiya K. S. Sudarshanji' – the 'venerable' K.S. Sudarshan, who happens to be the supreme leader of the Indian RSS<sup>16</sup>.

The SIUK vice-chair also co-wrote a report on the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 with two very senior RSS officers. This celebrated the RSS and its members, and stated that:

It is indisputably impossible to fathom the import of the training being imparted to the Swayamsevaks [RSS members] through RSS shakhas [cells]. Challenges faced during the natural or other calamities provide the right testing ground for the thus trained Swayamsevaks. The disaster management skills exhibited by the Swayamsevaks [RSS members] and Karyakartas [RSS activists] during the most difficult and painful hours in Gujarat right after the dreadful tremors, is an excellent case in study.<sup>17</sup>

SIUK's website shows extensive associations with RSS projects, though the RSS itself is rarely mentioned. The email address listed for the contact

10 S. Tattawadi, *Sarsanghchhalak Goes Abroad: a collection of lectures delivered by Prof. Rajendra Singh on foreign land*, Suruchi Prakashan, 1995, p.9.

11 S. Tattawadi, *Sarsanghchhalak Goes Abroad: a collection of lectures delivered by Prof. Rajendra Singh on foreign land*, Suruchi Prakashan, 1995, pp. 77-78.

12 *Sanghshaktih Vijetreeyam*, Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Pratishthan, Ahmedabad, 12 December 1995. The other organizations listed are Hindu Sevika Samiti UK, FISI, NHSE, OFBJP, the Hindu Marathon, Bharat Vikas Parishad International UK and the Hindu International Medical Mission (HIMM UK).

13 K. Suryanarayana Rao (All-India RSS Service Head), *Seva Disha – Building an Integrated and Self-Reliant Society*, Chennai, 1997, [http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha/sevadisha1/rss\\_seva\\_vibhag.html](http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha/sevadisha1/rss_seva_vibhag.html)

14 *Sangh Sandesh*, May – June 2001, vol. XII, no. 3, p. 20.

15 VHP UK Manchester Branch, *VHP Newsletter*, April 2001, Issue 20, p. 4.

16 Sewa International UK, *Gujarat Earthquake – 26 January 2001 Anniversary Issue. One Year After*, undated, p. 5. The other three messages of support were from an SIUK officer, a member of the House of Lords and a UK Gujarati organization.

17 'Report of the visit to Earthquake struck Gujarat by Sewa Team comprising of Dr. Yashwantji Pathak, Sah-Sanyojak Vishwa Vibhag, Shri Arjun Lalji Sharma, Sewa International UK and Shri Shyam Parande on 5-7th February 2001', [http://www.hssworld.org/seva/Gujarat/sewa\\_report.html](http://www.hssworld.org/seva/Gujarat/sewa_report.html).

person for Sewa Bharati Gujarat, a key recipient of SIUK funds, begins 'rssgujarat@'<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, Sewa Bharati Gujarat's letterhead states it is 'Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Inspired'. SIUK's address is the HSS UK Leicester office, which was itself inaugurated by the former RSS supreme leader, Rajendra Singh in 1995. The SIUK / HSS headquarters is called 'Keshav Pratishthan', named after the Indian RSS founder, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.

## LINKS WITH SEWA INTERNATIONAL INDIA

SIUK is closely associated with Sewa International India. On the latter's homepage ([www.sewainternational.org](http://www.sewainternational.org)), SIUK and the US-based India Development and Relief Fund, and only these two, are listed as 'associated organizations'<sup>19</sup>.

Sewa International India, based in New Delhi, is an openly ideological and political project that promotes RSS and Hindutva ideas. It was formed by the RSS, promotes international fundraising activities for RSS and VHP projects in India, and promotes RSS projects among Indians outside India. The main purpose of Sewa International India is to organize all Hindus under RSS ideology. Its website states that the ultimate aim of all its work is Hindu *sangathan* – the 'consolidating and strengthening of Hindu society' and the need to 'constantly seek unifying factors and jettison divisive factors'<sup>20</sup>. Its website extols the RSS and its leaders and celebrates the work of RSS members. It is very closely related to Sewa Bharati, the RSS's service wing, and its website is virtually exclusively focused on Sewa Bharati and RSS projects. The general secretary of Sewa International India is Shyam Parande, who is also in charge of the RSS external affairs cell. His mailing address is listed as the RSS headquarters in Nagpur<sup>21</sup>. In December 2000, he confirmed that HSS UK and therefore SIUK are branches of the Indian RSS<sup>22</sup>.

## SEWA BHARATI'S SUPREMACIST AGENDA

Sewa Bharati is the main recipient of funds from SIUK. It is the RSS service affiliate, founded in 1979. It became very important after 1989, when the RSS decided to expand its service sector. The senior vice president of Sewa Bharati, New Delhi, D. V. Kohli said, 'We make no secret of the fact that we are members of the RSS'<sup>23</sup>. Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh was implicated in violence against Christian communities, leading the state government to revoke its license to operate there<sup>24</sup>, and its role in violence against Christians continues<sup>25</sup>.

Sewa Bharati runs a very large network of RSS service projects in India. These often overlap with those of Vidya Bharati (the RSS education and schools network), the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (the violent RSS affiliate working among 'tribal' groups), *ekal vidyalayas* (VHP-organized 'one-teacher schools') and other projects of the VHP. The key question is not whether RSS affiliates provide services to groups, some funded from the UK and US, but about the aim, nature and ultimate political purpose of such services. The fundamental aim of these projects is to penetrate communities through service activities in order to promote RSS ideology and organization. For example, Sewa International India's website<sup>26</sup> shows how work undertaken by Sewa Bharati is explicitly based on political recruitment for the RSS, expanding the RSS physical and ideological training (*shakha*) network and training new workers for the RSS. Its work in a slum in Uttar Pradesh is described in the following way:

The Sangh has a tradition of converting strangers into friends, friends into Swayamsevak [RSS volunteers], and Swayamsevak into karyakartas [RSS activists]... Soon some fifty students from ten Bastis [slums] also started attending. Different classes had to be

18 Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, *Coming Together*, September 2001.

19 <http://www.sewainternational.org>.

20 <http://www.sewainternational.org/social.html>.

21 <http://www.organiser.org/23feb2003/page10.htm>.

22 Deepshikha Ghosh, 'Rediscovering their Religion', *India Abroad*, 8 December 2000, <http://newsarchives.indiainfo.com/2000/12/08/rss.html>.

23 Edward Luce and Demetri Sevastopulo, 'Blood and money', *Financial Times*, 20 February 2003.

24 Sudha Ramachandran, 'US firms linked to extremist Indian cause', *Asia Times*, 10 January 2003.

25 T. J. Rajalakshmi, 'Terror in Jhabua', *Frontline*, 14–27 February 2004.

26 [www.sewainternational.org](http://www.sewainternational.org) is the Indian site, [www.sewainternational.com](http://www.sewainternational.com) is the UK site.



Figure 2: Homepage of Sewa Bharati showing RSS founder Hedgewar and the RSS map of 'India' with the RSS saffron flag held (bizarrely) by the goddess 'Bharatmata', <http://www.sewabharati.org>.



Figure 3: Another Sewa Bharati website showing RSS founder Hedgewar and second RSS supreme leader, Golwalkar. <http://www.sevabharati.org>.

organized. After the day's tuition, the Bhagwa Dhwaj [RSS saffron flag] is hoisted and the Prarthana [RSS prayers] too takes place. On Sundays, a regular full-fledged Shakha [RSS cell] is conducted... Sewa, Sangh and Hindutwa [service, the RSS and Hindu supremacism] could thus enter the Basti [slum]. After this, the karyakartas [activists] of Sewa Bharati and Sangh started visiting the Basti frequently. As a result, two residents of the Basti have now become full-time karyakartas [activists] working with Vanvasis [the RSS term for adivasis, the 'tribal' peoples]. Even when the Bahujan Samaj Party [Dalit-Muslim political party] fever gripped the neighbourhood, hundreds of youths of this region held aloft the flag of Hindutwa [Hindu supremacy]. Even now, a daily Shakha [RSS cell] takes place in the Ambedkar Park, where the attendance averages 30-35.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh, speaking about 'tribal' groups, said:

I hope you will kindly agree that, even one girl taken over today by us and brought up in environment prevailing in our institutions will not only bring herself above, but also surcharge the atmosphere in her tribe besides her own family. It may appear unbelievable, but it

is even numerically true that one single such girl, will grow in to 500 or more such males and/or females, having the precious ancient culture of this divine land i.e. BHARAT, endeared at their hearts.<sup>28</sup>

Sewa Bharati's work is openly linked to the need to build a 'Hindu nation'. The former all-India head of the RSS service wing said:

Bharat is a Hindu Nation... The deprived masses of poor and ignorant of our society also have an inherent strength and ingenuity in them to contribute to the all round development of our Nation. Once they are awakened they get back their lost personality. They are to be welded together to form the backbone of the nascent Nation.<sup>29</sup>

Sewa Bharati has also openly engaged in political activity with the RSS and the VHP. For example, on 17 January 2002 at Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, a large Hindu gathering aimed at 'tribal' groups was attended by the supreme leader of the RSS, K.S. Sudarshan who warned 'Christian missionaries' to halt their activities. Sadhvi Rithambara, the inflammatory VHP representative also attended this meeting. An RSS publication stated that 'As a result, on 17 January the whole area was filled by the upsurge of Hindutva-inspired Vanavasi ['tribal'] brothers, sisters and mothers'<sup>30</sup>. Sewa Bharati described how the purpose of this event was to convert 'tribals' into RSS followers.

Sewa Bharati started its activity at about 5 years back with a single OTS (One Teacher One School)... Behind the success of Hindu Sangam is the devotion and hard work of 350 Ekal Vidyalayas [one-teacher schools], and 250 whole time workers of Sewa Bharati. They travelled continuously to practically every village for 3 months and visited about 3 Lakhs 25 thousand [325,000] families and established a place of worship by putting a photo of Bajrangbali (Shri Hanumanji). They also taught them how

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sewainternational.org/social.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Vishnu Kumar, 'Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh', 25 July 2000, <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0700/68.html>.

<sup>29</sup> K. Suryanarayan Rao, 'Concept of service — sewa and worship', *Sanghshakti Vijetreeyam*, Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Pratishthan, 21 December 1995, p.30.

<sup>30</sup> RSS Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (RSS general council) resolution, Bangalore, 17 March 2002, reprinted in J. Dayal (ed.) *Gujarat 2002: untold and retold stories of the Hindutva lab*, volume 1, Media House, Delhi, 2003, pp. 1139-1140.

to worship and also made them learn and sing Bhajans [Hindu hymns]... Similarly, Bhagwa [RSS saffron] flags were also hoisted on practically each and every Tribal house... The gathering, in agreement time and again encouraged the speakers by shouting slogans such as 'Jai Shri Ram, Jai Hanuman, and Keshav ki jai jai [victory to the RSS founder] – Madhav ki jai jai [victory to the RSS's second leader]' etc. The patriotic feeling was also quite evident as the slogan Jai Bharat Mata ki [Victory to the Holy Motherland!] was also frequently heard from the crowd... The whole environment in and around Jhabua was pervaded with the enchantment of the slogans in praise of Shri Ram, Shri Hanuman and Bharat Mata. The whole city was full of saffron flags.<sup>31</sup>

The political importance of Sewa Bharati's work among 'tribal' groups also became clear through the involvement of the BJP in this same event.

The much publicised congregation – the idea of which is said to have been conceptualised at the RSS meet in Nagpur in early 2001 – was organized by Sewa Bharati – an RSS outfit... Though initially, the BJP kept away from the campaign, later it joined hands with Sewa Bharati and the top BJP leaders including its state president Vikram Verma attended a meeting at Jhabua on January 6 to work

out arrangements for the Hindu Sangam [gathering]. The BJP's interest in the campaign is seen as an attempt by the party to get a foothold in the tribal areas of the state something which has been eluding it so far.<sup>32</sup>

Sewa Bharati has also been involved in political campaigns with the VHP.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad today demanded that foreign missionaries working in India should go back to their respective countries as they were involved in forcible conversions and also in stoking insurgency in the North-East... In a simultaneous development, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh today decided to fully back the nationwide campaign launched by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch [RSS 'nationalist' development affiliate] to raise public awareness among the people about the threat posed by multi-national corporations. As part of this campaign, the RSS and its frontal organizations such as the Bharatiya Janata Party, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh [RSS labour affiliate], Bharatiya Kisan Sangh [RSS farmers affiliate], Sewa Bharati, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad [RSS student affiliate] and the VHP will join the Chetna Yatra organized throughout the country by the SJM.<sup>33</sup>

31 Vishnu Kumar, *Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh, 'Adarniya Bandhuwar'*, 23 January 2002, <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0102/98.html>.

32 Sanjay Sharma, 'Stop conversions, RSS chief warns missionaries', *Sify News*, 18 January 2002.

33 'Quit India, VHP tells missionaries', *Indian Express*, 1 October 1998.



## SECTION 2: THE GUJARAT EARTHQUAKE 2001

### SECTION SUMMARY

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- ▶ In the aftermath of the devastating Gujarat earthquake in 2001, the RSS attempted to control relief work and attempted to prevent other NGOs from providing relief. RSS cells (shakhas) were initiated in relief camps. Serious allegations of discrimination in earthquake relief to Muslims and dalits were made. Serious allegations of violence and intimidation by the RSS of other NGOs undertaking relief work were made. Earthquake relief work was accompanied by Hindutva hatred and violence against Christians.
  - ▶ SIUK became a high profile fundraising organization after the Gujarat earthquake. SIUK raised around £2.3 million for its India Quake Appeal from the UK public, though it also claimed to have raised £4.3 million.
  - ▶ In key Gujarat earthquake fundraising appeals, SIUK did not disclose its associations with the HSS UK and the RSS, it did not state that it was fundraising exclusively for RSS affiliates, and it did not state the sectarian or political agenda of the RSS or its affiliates
  - ▶ SIUK misled donors and the general public who wanted simply to contribute to humanitarian causes in India. It even misled its own patrons of the earthquake appeal who were kept unaware of the link between SIUK and the RSS.
  - ▶ Funds raised in the UK by SIUK for earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation were for a major RSS affiliate, Sewa Bharati Gujarat. Like all RSS affiliates, Sewa Bharati is explicitly committed to building a Hindu nation based on Hindutva extremist ideology, recruiting for the RSS and using service work to expand the network of RSS physical and ideological training cells.
  - ▶ About a third of funds sent for earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation were for building sectarian, highly controversial RSS schools. These are primarily run by Vidya Bharati, the RSS educational affiliate. RSS schools are intended to inculcate RSS ideology among schoolchildren and recruit them to the RSS. Vidya Bharati's teaching material was condemned by India's statutory National Council for Educational Research and Training as blatantly promoting bigotry, fanaticism and hatred. The funding of RSS schools by SIUK is a key example of the financing of hatred in India.
  - ▶ Some funds for earthquake reconstruction were for the RSS's Lok Kalyan Samiti in Chanasma village, which has been directly implicated in the violent 'cleansing' of all Muslims from the village and the illegal occupation of premises and land belonging to the statutory Muslim waqf board.
  - ▶ Another RSS project, Jankalyan Samiti, was a recipient of SIUK earthquake funds. The Jankalyan Samiti's Maharashtra branch has been involved in violence against Christians and Christian organizations.
  - ▶ A medical project funded by SIUK is named after the RSS founder and run by the RSS medical affiliate.
  - ▶ SIUK claimed to fund the rebuilding of anywhere from 10 to 25 villages. It also claimed to have 'totally funded' the rebuilding of 10 villages. However, records show six villages in which SIUK funds were used for reconstruction and rehabilitation. In these villages, there was also at least one other agency sharing the financial burden.
  - ▶ British donors unwittingly gave funds that were channelled by SIUK to the RSS's Sewa Bharati and used to build RSS schools, fund RSS organizations implicated in violence, and promote the RSS's political and ideological agenda.
- The state of Gujarat in western India experienced a devastating earthquake on 26 January 2001. The Gujarat earthquake was one of the two most violent earthquakes to have affected India in recorded history. A month after the earthquake, the official death toll was put at almost 20,000, with almost 170,000 injured, 600,000 people displaced, about 350,000 homes destroyed and over 840,000 homes damaged. These figures increased considerably as the actual scale of the disaster became known. The earthquake resulted

in a massive national and international disaster relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation effort involving numerous Indian and international NGOs, governments, groups and individuals. The main phases of activities were immediate rescue and relief, temporary rehabilitation of victims, a massive process of reconstruction of destroyed homes, businesses and villages, and finally, the permanent rehabilitation of victims. The focus of these operations was mainly Kutch district, particularly around the town of Bhuj, near the earthquake epicentre.

## THE CONTEXT

The RSS in India was very keen to promote itself as the key organization that provided relief and assistance in the aftermath of the earthquake. Similarly, both SIUK (tacitly) and Sewa International India (explicitly) promoted the role of the RSS and its members during the relief operations, but failed to mention the work of organizations that are unrelated to the RSS family. Moreover,

...a greater aim and effect of these rescue and relief operations... is to create the impression among the people that [the RSS] are practically the only ones who are active on this front and implicitly as well as explicitly discredit the work of other organizations, local and national. Another aim is to actually penetrate the government rescue efforts in a manner in which the activity becomes part of an RSS patronage machine.<sup>34</sup>

The RSS's Sewa Bharati was the main recipient of SIUK's earthquake-related funds. We do not wish to minimize any of the sincere relief efforts by non-sectarian volunteers and donors who raised funds entirely in good faith for SIUK. However, since it often appeared to many people in Britain that SIUK, and thus Sewa Bharati, were the main organizations doing anything regarding the relief operations, we want to briefly highlight the

larger context of relief operations. The Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) was the main body for coordinating and overseeing and managing relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts following the earthquake. As at 3 September 2001, it showed the involvement of 77 secular and religious NGOs in planning to construct some 46,000 permanent shelters<sup>35</sup>. Sewa Bharati is listed as planning about 620 permanent shelters. A further survey<sup>36</sup> in Kutch district showed 76 NGOs, including several UK-based NGOs, working in Bhuj (the earthquake epicenter); of all these we were able to identify four that were directly RSS-affiliated. The pattern that emerges from these surveys is mainly of the involvement of RSS organizations in education work, some shelter reconstruction and some health projects.

## DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DALITS AND MUSLIMS

How did the RSS-affiliates operate on the ground during the relief operations and later reconstruction? Reports claimed that the RSS was distributing relief selectively to higher caste victims and neglecting dalits and Muslims<sup>37</sup>. The RSS was also organizing training cells (shakhas) in relief camps. A team of human rights organizations found that:

The role of the RSS in getting relief to the upper castes among the Hindus in particular has been blatant. In Anjar, for example, the well-tended RSS camp which houses only Hindus and barring a handful of exceptions, only caste Hindus, sits cheek by jowl with another in which the far poorer population of the homeless Anjarites – Muslims mostly and a substantial number of lower caste Hindus – live. All of this is being accepted without question and rationalized on the basis that we cannot expect anything other than that people will 'naturally' help 'their own'.<sup>38</sup>

34 Radhika Desai, *Gujarat Earthquake of January 26, 2001: relief, rehabilitation and discrimination*, Indian Social Action Forum, 4 June 2001, p.10.

35 Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, *Coming Together*, September 2001. This issue of *Coming Together*, compiled by the Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan and the United Nations Development Programme, contains extensive information and data on the work carried out by NGOs across a very wide range of fields in Gujarat. Sewa Bharati primarily emerges through the education projects.

36 Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, *Coming Together*, August 2001.

37 Earthquake Affected Relief and Rehabilitation Services, 'Earthquake Relief: Issues Of Concern', EARSS Documentation Centre, Ahmedabad.

<http://www.onlinevolunteers.org/relief/earss0213-concerns.html>. For further details, see EARSS documentation at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GUJARATDEVELOPMENT>. See also: Indian Centre for Human Rights and Law, *Gujarat Earthquake, January 26, 2001 – Background for the Indian People's Tribunal*, August 17-20, 2001, pp. 26-27.

38 Radhika Desai et al, 'Human rights investigation team finds rampant discrimination against dalits and Muslims in quake-hit Kutch and Saurashtra', *Press Release*, 2 April 2001.

## INTIMIDATION OF OTHER NGOS

Further reports alleged that RSS organizations were hijacking relief supplies donated by other agencies<sup>39</sup>. Reports also claimed the RSS was violently preventing other international NGOs from undertaking relief operations in Kutch. Ironically, the RSS accuses these organizations of receiving foreign funds.

RSS does not want any organization from outside to come and carry out any relief work in Kutch. It does not want any NGO that received foreign funds to work in Kutch. It has decided to send all the NGOs out of Kutch within 15 days resorting to physical violence if they do not leave the place voluntarily. RSS has already begun using violence. In Adhoi, Kotada and Ratnal villages where Gantar [an NGO] is doing relief work, RSS workers (a large crowd of 2000 or more) went and threatened the volunteers...RSS accuses NGOs of receiving foreign funds [for] converting people to Christian religion.<sup>40</sup>

In our interviews, village representatives in Gujarat were surprised that anyone would be interested in distinguishing between Sewa Bharati and the RSS, the VHP, Bajrang Dal and other *sangh parivar* organizations, since locally the same people were often involved in each. The relief and rehabilitation work of Sewa Bharati was intimately associated with promotion of the RSS's sectarian agenda. In relief work at Adhoi village, VHP priests were giving nightly lectures to villagers on the need to be vigilant against Christians and Muslims.

## SIUK'S INDIA QUAKE APPEAL

Many British NGOs and individuals were involved in fundraising efforts around the earthquake. However, one UK organization achieved a particularly high profile: Sewa International UK. It dominated much of the publicly visible fundraising work for the earthquake in the UK. It launched a national appeal for funds, the Gujarat Earthquake / India Quake Appeal, and a website through which online donations could be made.

It coordinated, through the HSS UK network, numerous community-based fundraising activities, ranging from street collections to independent events organized by other groups and institutions in order to raise money. SIUK's India Quake Appeal received the patronage of four members of the House of Lords (Dholakia, Parekh, Patel, Bagri), two Members of the House of Commons (Barry Gardiner, Gerry Sutcliffe) and several prominent Asian business people, including Nat Puri, Laxmi Mittal, Manubhai Madhvani and G. K. Noon. Numerous large corporations donated money to the appeal. We are not implying that patrons, non-sectarian supporters and any individual or corporate donors were aware of the RSS connections of Sewa International UK or the HSS UK, nor are we implying that patrons, non-sectarian supporters or donors acted out of any considerations other than humanitarian concern following the earthquake. We have seen statements from local councillors, business people and students which show that during fundraising events SIUK was presented to community groups, companies and student bodies simply as a Hindu or Indian charity and the nature of its links with the HSS UK or RSS were not disclosed. These donors would not have given funds if they knew the links and associations with extremist hate politics. Our focus is not therefore on donors but on the use of SIUK funds to promote the hate-driven political agenda of the RSS.

The message given by SIUK through its website ([www.sewainternational.com](http://www.sewainternational.com)) and its publicity material was that fundraising was for humanitarian aid. This included pictures of injured children and adults, village devastation, and slogans such as 'rebuilding lives and homes'. Few well-meaning people could object to giving funds for what appeared to be a neutral humanitarian cause. What few donors and even patrons of the India earthquake appeal were aware of was that:

- ▶ SIUK was not a registered charity but used the charity registration number of the HSS UK to raise funds.
- ▶ The association between SIUK and the HSS UK was often not stated. While SIUK did state

39 Amit Sengupta, 'Dalits, minorities cry discrimination', *Hindustan Times*, 7 February 2001; Sheela Bhatt, 'Tents now decide the social hierarchy in Bhuj', *Rediff.com*, 5 February 2001.

40 EARRS Documentation Centre / Fr. William Macwan, 'RSS creating havoc in the name of conversion with Quake relief — Abhiyan NGOs in Kutch' 10 April 2001. <http://www.ambedkar.org/News/RSScreating.htm>.

## HINDUTVA INTIMIDATION

### **We were told about the following incidents of intimidation by the RSS and its allied organizations against other NGOs:**

BSC [a voluntary organization] decided to carry the work forward through the rehabilitation phase and hence set up its rehabilitation base camp at a village named Rajansar in Bhachau taluka. In the course of our visits to various villages we did find voluntary organizations of various kinds, some of them secular and many of them overtly religious. We did observe to some extent the communalization and casteization of relief. But what was more intriguing was the presence of some 'preachers' from the Sangh Parivar who were spreading communal poison in the villages. They were providing relief to those who needed it but were also holding 'religious discourses' in the evenings, in which they were using extremely provocative and derogatory language against the Muslims and warning the people to beware of Christian missionaries in the guise of relief workers. Rumours of conversions, distribution of bibles and crosses had started doing the rounds; and people were getting restive. Some of the BSC staff members in fact listened to one such speech in a village named Adhoi in the month of April, and were worried about the provocative language used and the exhortation to oppose the 'evil designs' of the minorities. The local RSS and VHP activists spread the rumour that the volunteers who came under this programme had been trying to convert people into Christianity. They collected a sizeable mob and went looking for Christians among the relief workers camping in Adhoi. Soon afterwards an unruly mob of almost 2000 people ransacked the relief tent set up by ActionAid India in Adhoi under its Sneh Samudaya (a programme to provide relief and trauma coun-

selling to the victims from the most vulnerable groups like widows, orphans and the handicapped). Unfortunately they identified the sole Christian youth named Denis in this group of student volunteers and abducted him. Denis... came through a network of NGOs in Gujarat... and was not even remotely connected with any Christian agencies. Just because he had a Christian name, [he] was accused of trying to proselytize and was threatened with lethal weapons, locked up in a room, assaulted and terrorized by the leaders of the mob... Denis was released after sometime by the mob, but only after ransacking the Sneh Samudaya tent and warning the volunteers to leave the village immediately.

On 27 January 2001, the day following the earthquake that struck Gujarat... the first task [Citizen's Initiative] undertook was to fan out all over Ahmedabad to assess the rescue operations and see to it that technical and expert help was made available as fast as possible. I was with the team that visited a number of collapsed buildings in Maninagar area of Ahmedabad City. To our surprise we found all the collapsed buildings cordoned off by the RSS volunteers. They were ostensibly trying to control the inquisitive crowd; but in spite of informing the RSS leaders present there that we could coordinate the availability of sophisticated equipment, we were very curtly told to leave the place and that everything was being taken care of. This happened in three housing complexes that had collapsed. We learnt that the actual rescue operations were being done by the army personnel still struggling in their operations with limited equipment, but we were prevented from meeting the army officers to get a first hand understanding of the needs. The irony of the situation was that finally the rescue in some of the most difficult cases

was possible only after the Citizen's Initiative managed to get the Swiss Rescue team into the area with the help of senior Government officials.

On 30 January 2001, a team of volunteers from Citizens' Initiative... reached Bhachau town in Kutch District to offer relief assistance wherever required. The Government machinery was functioning from the traffic island at the main junction and the team was headed by... a senior IAS officer. The leaders of the CI team approached him for assistance and information and to their shock they were told that the RSS was in complete control of the rescue and relief operations in Bhachau town, and there was no more assistance needed. They objected to this observation of the officials and demanded precise information; this seemed to have brought them back to their senses and subsequently they provided information as to the relief and rescue needs in the rural areas. A perfunctory round of the ill-fated Bhachau town (where almost 8000 people died) was enough to establish the same pattern we saw in Ahmedabad; the army at work and the RSS volunteers cordoning off the areas where such operations were going on.

Volunteers from Janpath [a voluntary organization] were running a helpline service for children in distress called 'Child Line' from a tent in the traffic island in Bhachau. Activists of the VHP abused them and shouted that they were Christian missionaries trying to proselytize. They threatened the volunteers and asked them to vacate the place within 24 hours. The volunteers in Child Line happened to be quite tough; they refused to be cowed down by the threats and dared them to carry out their threat.

it was a 'service project of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK'; this was often in non-prominent places and sometimes absent entirely. The SIUK homepage in December 2002 stated 'registered charity' without mentioning the HSS UK. Similarly, the HSS was not mentioned at all in SIUK's fundraising video for the earthquake<sup>41</sup>, which simply gave the charity registration number of HSS UK, implying that SIUK was itself a registered charity.

- ▶ The Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK is a Hindu supremacist organization having a close, long-standing association with the RSS.
- ▶ The RSS and its affiliated organizations are implicated or have been involved in some of the worst anti-minority violence India has seen over the last fifteen years. They have a hate-driven agenda and their aim is to turn India into an exclusive Hindu nation.

SIUK's Gujarat earthquake fundraising video also claims that what it calls 'dedicated Sewa International volunteers' were the 'first on the scene to coordinate the relief operation' after the earthquake – but fails to mention that any such volunteers would have been RSS members and not members of SIUK<sup>42</sup>. Neither of the two fundraising videos<sup>43</sup> on SIUK's website mention the HSS at all. Individuals raised funds and donated in good faith to the Gujarat Earthquake / India Quake appeals of SIUK, but many would not have done so had they known that SIUK was an HSS project or that it was associated with the Indian RSS. Lord Adam Patel, former patron of SIUK's earthquake appeal resigned in shock after the connections between SIUK and the RSS were made public. That a patron of the SIUK's largest ever appeal did not know the nature of SIUK's links and agendas says a great deal about the way SIUK conducted itself.

## SEWA BHARATI'S USE OF VILLAGE RECONSTRUCTION FUNDS

SIUK's first anniversary report on the Gujarat rehabilitation<sup>44</sup> was produced to show SIUK's achievements one year after the earthquake. The



**Figure 4: SIUK homepage from 15 December 2002 which makes no mention of the fact that it is a project of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, and simply states 'REGISTERED CHARITY'.**



**Figure 5: SIUK homepage from December 2003 which now states that it is a 'service project' of the HSS UK, after increased media attention and the investigation by the Charity Commission.**

report states that SIUK worked in action with Sewa Bharati, but does not mention that Sewa Bharati is an RSS organization, in fact one of the most important RSS affiliates in India. Of the four messages of support in the report, one is from the RSS supreme leader in India, K. S. Sudarshan and another is from SIUK's chairperson, who is also the service head of the HSS UK. Included in the list of SIUK contacts across the UK are HSS trustees, HSS activists and VHP UK activists.

SIUK states a figure of over £4 million raised in the earthquake appeal, and said elsewhere that it raised £4.3 million. The report shows that £1 million was a single donation by the Puri Foundation, and another £1 million was collected by the Shri Kutch Leva Patel Community (UK), a Kutchi patidar organization in the UK also said to be working closely with Sewa Bharati in India. SIUK directly raised around £2.3 million for Gujarat earthquake relief; the other £2 million related to two single donations from separate organizations.

SIUK's fundraising video stated that 'Sewa International are adopting and reconstructing twenty five villages, providing each village with

41 <http://www.sewainternational.com/video/sewa1.asf>.

42 <http://www.sewainternational.com/video/sewa1.asf>.

43 <http://www.sewainternational.com/earthquake.htm>, <http://www.sewainternational.com/video/sewa1.asf>.

44 Sewa International UK, *Gujarat Earthquake – 26 January 2001 Anniversary Issue. One Year After*, undated.

houses, schools, community halls, shops, water tanks, hospitals, road and other facilities'<sup>45</sup>. In its anniversary report, under the title 'Progress so far', the report provides a detailed list of the villages reconstructed or planned to be rebuilt. The report states that 'house construction in 8 villages has already started, with 2 more villages on the cards'. A list of ten villages is given, detailing the number of houses created and the value of the project in Indian rupees and US dollars. It also provides further details of village halls, community centres, health centres and schools, including the state of construction of schools in six Gujarat districts<sup>46</sup>. This information from its anniversary report is given in Appendix 2. Exactly the same data are presented in Sewa Bharati Gujarat's progress report for the period ending 30 September 2001<sup>47</sup>. However, Sewa Bharati Gujarat received funds not only from SIUK but other international RSS-related bodies, including the US-based India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF)<sup>48</sup>. Indeed, another report from September 2002 by Sewa International India lists the funding agency for two villages (Jivapar and Visnagar) as only 'IDRF', though these are in SIUK's progress report. In fact, in this Sewa International India report, only two villages, Mithapasvaria and Chapredi, are listed with SIUK as the funding agency<sup>49</sup>. However, nothing in the anniversary brochure tells us that funds used or earmarked for village reconstruction by Sewa Bharati may have been raised by organizations other than SIUK, or that government contributions were a significant part of the costs. Most important is SIUK's claim made on its website in May 2001 which states that:

Sewa Bharati in partnership with Sewa International are rebuilding twenty-five villages along with fifty primary schools and one hundred community centres.

*Ten of the villages are totally funded by Sewa International (UK).*<sup>50</sup>

A document we obtained from sources in Gujarat shows how approximately £1.9 million raised by SIUK was to be used by Sewa Bharati in Gujarat<sup>51</sup>. We also have grounds for believing that all of the approximately £2.3 million raised by SIUK during its India Quake Appeal was for Sewa Bharati, an RSS organization.

This Sewa Bharati document shows six villages funded by SIUK, not the ten claimed in its anniversary report or the ten it claimed to be 'totally funding' on its website or the twenty five it said it was adopting and reconstructing in its fundraising video. The six villages are Chapredi, Mithapasvaria, Sayan, Badanpur, Rapar and Rampura and five of these are discussed in detail later. Two 'schools projects', a Bhunga project (bhunga is a house structure used in some regions of Kutchi Gujarat), an emergency relief medical centre, a mobile hospital in Kutch, a mobile dispensary and a proposal for a 'disaster management institute' are also listed.

One of the recipients of SIUK funding is the Dr Hedgewar Rugnalay. Given SIUK's denials that it is backed by the RSS and its claim that it is not sectarian, it seems strange that one of the key projects it has funded under earthquake relief is named after Keshav Hedgewar<sup>52</sup>, the founder of the RSS and promoter of a hate politics of Hindu supremacy. The Rugnalay is a project of the National Medicos Organization, the RSS medical affiliate founded in 1977 and having a strongly ideological purpose. The National Medicos Organization is described by Sewa International India as:

Working with close relation and ideology

45 <http://www.sewainternational.com/video/sewa1.asf>

46 One item on its website from 21 July 2001 (six months after the earthquake and associated fundraising) states that 'Sewa International UK will fund 5 villages and that it will be supporting the reconstruction of Mitha Pasvaria (Anjar), Chapredi (Bhuj), Rapar (Morbi), Bhadra (Bhuj), and Chawbari (Bhachau)' – though some of these villages are different from the ones finally chosen. However, the same item also mentioned construction activity having been launched or starting in the following other four villages: Devgarh, Mayapur, Jakhotra and Jivapar, <http://www.sewainternational.com/archive9.htm>. Another item from May 2001 refers to adopted villages being conditional on agreements reached with the state government and mentions government contributions – [http://www.sewainternational.com/gujarat\\_quake\\_rehab.htm](http://www.sewainternational.com/gujarat_quake_rehab.htm). Nevertheless, the argument stands, since the anniversary report detailing ten villages was produced after these statements.

47 Sewa Bharati Gujarat (Poornavasan), 'Progress report for period ending 30.09.2001'.

48 <http://www.idrf.org/dynamic/modules.php?name=Hncontent&pa=showpage&pid=191>.

49 Rajesh Sinha, 'Rehabilitation work near completion: a visit report by Rajesh Sinha', 10 September 2002, <http://www.sewainternational.org/rajrepo.htm>. The same two are also listed by the Gujarat RSS media outfit, Vishwa Samvad Kendra, with Sewa Coventry UK, and Sewa Nottingham UK named as the donor agencies, [http://www.vskgujarat.com/like\\_minded\\_organization/sewa\\_bharti.htm](http://www.vskgujarat.com/like_minded_organization/sewa_bharti.htm).

50 [http://www.sewainternational.com/gujarat\\_quake\\_rehab.htm](http://www.sewainternational.com/gujarat_quake_rehab.htm).

51 Sewa Bharati Gujarat, 'Costing Summary for Projects Financed by Sewa International UK', Sewa Bharati Gujarat, Ahmedabad, not dated.

52 Buried in SIUK's website is a report that states that 'the hospital is run by the National Medicos Organization, which is another one of the many arms of the RSS organization, along with SEWA Bharati', <http://www.sewainternational.com/archive8.htm>.

of RSS having nodal point medical/dental students and doctors. The students and doctors work in co-operation of sewa vibhag [RSS service wing] and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram [a violent RSS affiliate working among 'tribal' groups].<sup>53</sup>

A report<sup>54</sup> by Sewa International India states that Jivapar village, listed in SIUK's anniversary report, was renamed 'Keshav Nagar', 'Keshav' being the first name of the RSS cult founder.<sup>55</sup> The renaming of villages after the extremist RSS cult founder is part of a larger political agenda that seeks to normalize and habilitate a dangerous organization. We are aware that SIUK also funded homes for some Muslim families. SIUK makes much of this, celebrating the eight homes given to Muslims in its rebuilt Chapredi village<sup>56</sup>. However, this does not alter the *primary aim* of SIUK fundraising: to fund RSS affiliates and promote the RSS's dangerous and divisive Hindutva activities.

## THE FUNDING OF RSS SCHOOLS

Set in a quiet forest, the private institution [in Waghai, Gujarat] appears to be an ideal place to study – except that its 28 pupils don't seem to be getting a very fair education. Many of the boys are too young to realize it, but near Shivaji's image are paintings of several leaders of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu chauvinist organization that runs the school. A short Hindi poem inscribed under Shivaji's portrait affords a glimpse of what the students learn. 'If it weren't for Shivaji,' the ballad goes, 'we would all be circumcised.' The message: Shivaji saved Hindus from being forcibly converted to Islam.<sup>57</sup>

The Sewa Bharati document shows that two schools projects make up about 31 percent of SIUK funds (approximately half a million pounds) and village reconstruction makes up about 56

**SEWA BHARATI GUJARAT SCHOOLS – PROJECT 2**

**TABLE 3**

	NAME OF SCHOOL	VILLAGE	TALUKA	DISTRICT	SEWA INTERNATIONAL'S CONTRIBUTION (RS. 100,000)
1	Shri Sarasvati Vidya Mandir	Mandvi	Mandvi	Kutch	11.85
2	Shri Sarasvati Vidya Mandir	Bhachu	Bhachu	Kutch	15.00
3	Shri Sarasvati Primary School	Kalavad	Kalavad	Jamnagar	5.00
4	Lok Kalyan Trust	Chanasma	Chanasma	Patan	10.00
5	Shri Sarasvati Shishumandir	Chakarkotda	Anjar	Kutch	23.86
6	Shri Sarasvati Shishumandir	Ratnal	Anjar	Kutch	21.65
7	Shri Sarasvati Vidya Mandir	Adipur	Anjar	Kutch	11.30
8	Shri Sarasvati Shishumandir	Antarjal	Anjar	Kutch	12.00
9	Shri Sarasvati Shishumandir	Gadpadar	Anjar	Kutch	19.30
10	Shri Sarasvati Vidya Mandir	Radhanpur	Radhanpur	Patan	15.00
11	Shri Sarasvati Vidya Mandir	Thara	Kankrej	Banaskantha	5.00
12	Shri Sarasvati Vidya Mandir	Surajkardi	Dwarka	Jamnagar	15.00
13	Maharashtra Shikshan Mandal	Saijpur	Ahmedabad	Ahmedabad	21.30
14	Shri Sarasvati Shishumandir Middle Section	Bhuj	Bhuj	Kutch	28.00
15	Shri Sarasvati Educational Complex up to High school For land 5000 Sq.Mt. For Building	Bhachu	Bhachu	Kutch	70.00
16	Border Jankalyan Samiti	Madhapar 'Bani' West	Bhuj	Kutch	20.95
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>305.21</b>

Source: 'Details of New Projects to be taken up by Sewa Bharati Gujarat. Schools – Project 2', Sewa Bharati Gujarat, Ahmedabad, not dated.

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.sewainternational.org/upa-nmo.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Rajesh Sinha, 'Rehabilitation work near completion: a visit report by Rajesh Sinha', 10 September 2002, <http://www.sewainternational.org/rajrepo.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> Mithapasvaria, adopted by SIUK, was renamed after reconstruction to 'Ramnagar' (loosely translated as 'the god Ram's town'). Another village, Badanpur, was renamed as Siddhnath (a reference to the Hindu deity Ganesh). Another village, Chapredi, was renamed 'Atalnagar' after the BJP prime minister of India.

<sup>56</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, September – October 2003, p.11.

<sup>57</sup> Ajay Singh, 'A real textbook case', *Asiaweek*, 26 March 1999.

percent of SIUK funds (approximately a million pounds). The medical projects make up about 4 percent, and the disaster management institute about 9 percent of all allocated funds.

The proportion allocated to schools appears to be high, making up almost a third of all funds by SIUK for Gujarat earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation, though it would seem that permanent shelters and capital infrastructure should have been key priorities. SIUK school funding is listed in the Sewa Bharati document under 'Schools Project 1' and 'Schools Project 2'. 'Schools – Project 1' included government contributions and made up about 7 percent of SIUK's funding. The information we have so far on 'Project 1' shows three Jodiya schools having large RSS boards and plaques that confirm SIUK involvement. However, revealing information from Sewa Bharati Gujarat on the much larger 'Schools – Project 2', amounting to almost a quarter of SIUK funds, is given in Table 3. Unlike Project 1 schools, these are said by Sewa Bharati Gujarat to be independent of any government funding.

**Every single school under its Schools Project 2 was an RSS school, financed by funds raised in the UK in the name of earthquake rehabilitation and reconstruction.** Sarasvati Shishu Mandirs and Sarasvati Vidya Mandirs are names for RSS schools, usually run by Vidya Bharati, the RSS's educational affiliate. Vidya Bharati describes its purpose as:

To develop a national system of education which may mould the posterity into such a youthful generation as fully saturated with the feelings of Hindutva and patriotism.<sup>58</sup>

A common curriculum and literature is used throughout Vidya Bharati schools<sup>59</sup> which systematically promotes RSS ideology among schoolchildren. Vidya Bharati's website states:

The message of Hindutva has worked wonders. During the birth centenary year of Dr. Hedgewar [RSS founder], the students prepared his biography in 18 tribal languages and these were published in

book form by Vidya Bharati. In due course of time, this project will bring many people of that area into the main stream of Hindutva and prepare them to stand once again as sentinels of Bharatiya Sanskriti [the RSS view of Indian culture].<sup>60</sup>

Vidya Bharati is similarly open about the need to ideologically indoctrinate children from as young an age as possible.

In India formal education of the child starts at 5+... Seeds of English way of life and conversation are sown at this very tender age. Vidya Bharati has started 'Shishu Vatikas' in large number to protect the initial stage of children from getting vitiated with the virus of western culture. There is a psychological endeavour to reduce the weight of the bag and *encourage play-way methods of inculcating Hindu ideology in the tiny-tots*.<sup>61</sup>

In 1993, India's National Council for Educational Research and Training, a statutory body charged with producing, supplying and evaluating textbooks and teaching materials, issued a report on Vidya Bharati materials used in Sarasvati Shishu Mandirs. The report said that much of the material in the so-called Sanskrit Jnan ('cultural education') series was 'designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation' and that Vidya Bharati schools are being 'clearly used for the dissemination of blatantly communal ideas'. The report went on to state that:

The Committee recommends that the educational authorities of Madhya Pradesh and other states should disallow the use of this series in the schools. The state governments may also consider appropriate steps to stop the publication of these materials which foment communal hatred and disallow the examinations which are held by the Vidya Bharati Sansthan on the basis of these materials.<sup>62</sup>

58 [http://www.vidyabharati.org/aim\\_education.asp](http://www.vidyabharati.org/aim_education.asp).

59 [http://www.vskgujarat.com/like\\_minded\\_organization/vidya\\_bharti.htm](http://www.vskgujarat.com/like_minded_organization/vidya_bharti.htm).

60 <http://www.vidyabharati.org/haflong.asp>.

61 <http://www.vidyabharati.org/shishu.asp>.

62 Extracts of NCERT's report are reproduced in *Communalism Combat*, October 1999.



The report also noted that Vidya Bharati text-books: promoted Aryan supremacy; claimed that ancient Greek, Chinese and other major civilizations were all Hindu-Aryan; celebrated the destruction of the Babri mosque; claimed that the stone in the Kaaba at Mecca was originally a Hindu object of worship (Shivalingam); claimed that Islam was spread by means of 'rivers of blood'; and claimed that Christian conspiracies existed that aimed to divide India.

The link between RSS schools and RSS recruitment was highlighted in an investigation by the UK *Financial Times* which reported a commissioner for Dhar (a town in Madhya Pradesh) as saying:

... dozens of Sangh Parivar schools funded by foreign donations have been opened up in his district over the past 12 months. Volunteers who teach at such schools frequently organize Shakhnas, or RSS paramilitary training sessions, he says. The drills, modelled on those devised by Benito Mussolini, Italy's dictator in the 1920s, often take place on school premises. 'The schools are part of an integrated RSS attempt to split the community along communal lines so that Madhya Pradesh will go the same way as Gujarat,' Mr Dubey says.<sup>63</sup>

Similarly, the national Indian daily, *The Hindu* reported:

Vidya Bharati is, says its head Dinanath Batra, one of the 'organizations through which the Sangh's vichardhara [RSS ideology] is propagated'. Its aim is to provide an education which will turn out 'self-less citizens... suffused with the spirit of Hindutva'... The walls of Vidya Bharati's schools do speak, to those willing to listen. They are lined with calendar art images of 'mahapurush' [great men] – RSS gurus, M.S. Golwalkar and Baliram Hedgewar, Shankaracharya, Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekananda, Shivaji, Rana Pratap, Subhash Chandra Bose, Chandrashekhar Azad, sometimes Sardar Patel, but not Mahatma Gandhi...<sup>64</sup>

**British donors were unwittingly providing funds for Gujarat earthquake relief that went to the RSS's key affiliate Sewa Bharati, and of which a large proportion went to fund the expansion of the RSS's hate-driven schools in Gujarat.** About half a million pounds went towards the two schools projects, of which the vast proportion (around £450,000) went to RSS schools. This is a key example of way that overseas funds are used for furthering hatred in India.

## OTHER RSS PROJECTS

Two other earthquake projects shown by Sewa Bharati as funded by SIUK need noting. The Lok Kalyan Trust in Chanasma village is an RSS affiliate. Chanasma, formerly a peaceful village in Patan district, witnessed a period of considerable violence by Hindutva mobs against Muslims from 1999. By 2002 this violence had escalated and become a 'cleansing' by Hindutva and Bajrang Dal mobs of all Muslims in the village. The Lok Kalyan Trust allegedly illegally obtained land in the village that was previously used as burial grounds by Muslims. Muslim graves were dug up, bodies removed and saffron flags planted. The takeover of Muslim land was done by intimidation and subterfuge, illegal entry, constructing a 'temple' on the land, and getting a resolution passed in the local municipality in December 1999 to transfer land and premises belonging to the Muslim waqf board (a statutory agency) to the Lok Kalyan Trust. **SIUK funded an RSS organization directly implicated in the forcible religious 'cleansing' of a Gujarati village and responsible for the illegal occupation of statutory premises formerly under the charge of Muslims.**

The Border Jankalyan Samiti is also listed as an organization funded by SIUK. Jankalyan Samiti is the name for an RSS network of health and service organizations that emerged after 1989. In Maharashtra, the Jankalyan Samiti has been responsible for violent attacks on Christians – Jankalyan activists attacked Shruti, a voluntary group in Nandugarh, Latur district which is run by the Catholic Health Association of India<sup>65</sup>. Gujarat state shares a border with Pakistan, and the border areas have become a focus of considerable RSS-and especially VHP activity in recent years.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Luce and Demetri Sevastopulo, 'Blood and money', *Financial Times*, 20 February 2003.

<sup>64</sup> Anjali Mody, 'Manufacturing Believers', *The Hindu*, 10 February 2002.

<sup>65</sup> *Asian Age*, 11 July 1998.

## ANTI-MINORITY VIOLENCE IN CHANASMA

**The following are extracts of a fact-finding team's report<sup>66</sup> on the events at Chanasma village (our translation, original in Gujarati).**

In the wake of the Bajrang Dal [VHP youth wing] onslaught, around 550 Muslim men, women, children and old people have been forced to flee the town of Chanasma in Patan District and the town's Navgaja Pir burial ground has been occupied and saffronized. Muslim graves in the burial grounds have been dug out and the earth leveled. Green sheets covering the pir's [revered Muslim preacher] grave (Dargah) have been replaced by white sheets. The square structure for lighting lamps on the Dargah has been converted into a temple by building a typical temple dome over it, painting it saffron colour and adorning it with a trident and a white flag. An iron birdhouse for pigeons has been erected in the middle of the vast waqf-owned

burial site. ...Numerous saffron flags are fluttering over the Dargah, the ramparts and the birdhouse. The slogan 'Victory to the Holy Motherland!' is scribbled all over the Dargah. A new four-foot wall construction without plaster, built to annex the waqf land, is in full view. It is obvious that high caste Hindus conspired to seize the land because situated in their midst the waqf land was both an irritant and a precious resource in the growing town. Intent on gang rape and with swords drawn, the Bajrang Dal mob surrounded Indiranagar, the Muslim quarters of the village. If the Dalits of Chanasma had not given refuge to Muslim women in the Dalit quarters for the whole night, Chanasma would have seen a repetition of gang rapes on the scale of Surat (1993). 'We are not prepared to go back to the town. Our mothers, sisters or daughters are not safe there', say the frightened migrant Muslims of

Chanasma. Only a few days prior to our team's visit Muslims from the nearby village of Vadavali were attacked at the bus stand in Chanasma town, a town where more than eighty percent of the population is Patel by caste. Chanasma municipality passed a resolution on 12.2.1999 to donate the Muslim waqf-owned land to the high caste Hindus' Lok Kalyan Trust, Chanasma. How can Chanasma Municipality resolve to pass the waqf's land to others? You can imagine the situation of the minority community in a town where the municipality can pass with impunity such resolutions outside its jurisdiction... Right now some 550 powerless and frightened Muslims from 130 families are living under the open skies in scorching heat. Neither social workers nor friendly organizations have so far come to their aid.

<sup>66</sup> *Chanasma na Musalimo ni Hijrat*, Council for Social Justice, Ahmedabad, 2001.

## SECTION 3: THE SEWA INTERNATIONAL – FUNDED VILLAGES

### SECTION SUMMARY

- ▶ An alarming chain links unsuspecting donors in the UK to the active political promotion and glorification of the extremist RSS in Gujarat. UK donors gave funds in good faith to SIUK for humanitarian reconstruction and rehabilitation following the 2001 Gujarat earthquake; these funds went from SIUK to the RSS's Sewa Bharati which managed the work, with additional funds from government agencies; work was started through RSS ceremonies, or completed villages were inaugurated by very senior RSS officers – SIUK funds Sewa Bharati; the RSS hands over the completed village to residents. The extremist RSS and its dangerous ideology were actively promoted in Gujarat through these processes. The Hindutva political agenda of the RSS was explicit in the reconstruction and opening ceremonies of several villages funded by SIUK. The agenda to glorify and expand the RSS was well known by SIUK but not revealed to donors. SIUK enthusiastically promoted extremist organizations in India whose activities, history and ideology would horrify most British donors.
- ▶ One village (Chapredi) funded by SIUK included an important dedication plaque glorifying the RSS, its founder and its affiliates. A Hindu temple topped with saffron flags and funded through SIUK was also built in this village. No evidence was found of SIUK funding the rebuilding of destroyed mosques or churches in any adopted village.
- ▶ The RSS supreme leader, K. S. Sudarshan, presided over the foundation stone laying ceremony for one village (Mithapasvaria) funded by SIUK. The new village was 'handed over' to residents by an RSS joint general sec-

retary. Chief guests included the western sector RSS head (who is also a Sewa Bharati Gujarat trustee), and the Gujarat state RSS service section head. There was no clear organizational distinction between Sewa Bharati Gujarat and the RSS.

- ▶ The RSS supreme leader, K. S. Sudarshan, undertook the opening ceremony for another village (Rapar) funded by SIUK. At the ceremony, Sudarshan stressed the need to expand RSS organizations and networks in the area. Funds were raised for this village through a multicultural event in the UK.
- ▶ RSS physical and ideological training cells (shakhas) were initiated by Sewa Bharati during the rebuilding of another village (Badanpur) funded by SIUK.
- ▶ In the villages claimed to have been 'totally funded' by SIUK, we found substantial government or other NGO contributions.

Approximately £1 million from SIUK went to Sewa Bharati for reconstructing six villages. SIUK said it had 'totally funded' the construction of the villages. The RSS Gujarat media section reported that four of the villages (Badanpur, Rampura, Sayan, Rapar) were funded by the Government of Jharkhand<sup>67</sup>, a BJP ruled state. Sewa Bharati Gujarat documents also show substantial government funds for these villages<sup>68</sup>. With Chapredi village, another NGO constructed permanent housing and other buildings at the original village location. We look below at five of the six villages in order to evaluate SIUK's claim that it is a non-sectarian, non-religious, non-political organization that only provides funds for humanitarian relief and rehabilitation.

We are aware that SIUK funded some homes for Muslims and we are aware of the extent and quality of the reconstruction work overseen by

<sup>67</sup> [http://www.vskgujarat.com/like\\_minded\\_organization/seva\\_bharti.htm](http://www.vskgujarat.com/like_minded_organization/seva_bharti.htm).

<sup>68</sup> The details below are from Sewa Bharati Gujarat and show SIUK's figures with government contribution in brackets (all amounts in Rupees 100,000): Mithapasvaria 114.60 (97.26), Chapredi 233.72 (172.92), Sayan 41.49 (26.7), Badanpur 47.62 (29.37), Rampura 61.46 (38.98), Rapar 126.64 (75.02). Sewa Bharati, 'Details of Completed / Outgoing Projects: Villages', Sewa Bharati Gujarat, Ahmedabad, not dated. The area of government contributions during the earthquake rehabilitation was based on the official assessment of the severity of damages to buildings and the proportion of buildings, houses and infrastructure damaged. The government offered six different packages of funding. In cases of complete village reconstruction and rehabilitation funded under one government package, NGOs and government agencies typically worked in partnership, with the government contributing fifty percent of costs and the NGO expected to contribute a minimum of fifty percent of costs. Full consultations with villagers was a requirement, especially when complete village relocation rather than same place reconstruction was involved.

Sewa Bharati. This is not the point. The key issue is that SIUK used earthquake funds as a vehicle for the promotion of a hate-driven and divisive organization whereas numerous other NGOs undertook reconstruction and rehabilitation work transparently and on a large scale without promoting an extremist and dangerous political agenda. We show Hindutva supremacist strategies at work in what should have been purely humanitarian activity. There was a chain of links the exact nature of which SIUK never made transparent. At one end, in Britain, were genuine, non-sectarian donors who gave funds in good faith to SIUK. At the other end, in Gujarat, was the expansion and glorification of the extremist RSS and its networks. SIUK knew exactly what it was doing and how it suited the aims and agenda of the RSS.

## CHAPREDI VILLAGE (BHUJ SUB-DISTRICT, KUTCH DISTRICT)

Chapredi was considered an important, high profile village by SIUK. It was adopted by the Coventry branch of SIUK and by 'the people of Coventry' and visited by a SIUK delegation in January 2002, which included Barry Gardiner MP, representatives of the Labour Friends of India, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Coventry and the former Lord Mayor of Derby. Chapredi was adopted by two NGOs: Sewa Bharati, which reconstructed the village at a new site; and the Malayala Manorama Charitable Trust, which reconstructed the village at its original location. Rebuilding by Sewa Bharati was also done with financial contributions from the Vajpayee Nagar Vikas Yojna, a government rural infrastructure development programme. The Sewa Bharati-rebuilt Chapredi, renamed 'Atalnagar' after the BJP prime minister, was opened in March 2002.

Whereas SIUK denied the nature of its RSS links, the RSS backing is stated very clearly on Sewa Bharati boards in the village. A dedication plaque in the new village (original in Gujarati, translation ours) states:

### *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*

Venerable Keshav Baliram Hedgewar established the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in 5026, 1926 in the Christian calendar, on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashmi. Removing all the differences in social life, creating a united society based on Hindutva and through it creating a powerful, autonomous and wealthy nation is the goal of the Sangh. The



Figure 6: The sign reads 'Atalnagar [i.e. Chapredi], Bhuj block. Village rebuilt by Sewa Bharati Gujarat, inspired by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh'.



Figure 7: RSS dedication plaque at rebuilt Chapredi village, translation given in text.

Sangh, a great tree created from a seedling is a national organization and an idea with international appeal. The Sangh is a vehicle for work. Its volunteers raised in the culture of the daily Shakra, selfless service, clean character and disciplined society are directed towards many fields. Let us spread the Sangh's work among all classes of this society by kindling the values of love and charity.

*Sewa Bharati – Gujarat*

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh inspired Sewa Bharati is always and forever at the forefront of service and support of victims at the time of natural or man made disaster. The trust formed to help affected areas in disasters such as the Morbi floods, the terrible drought in Saurashtra and Kutch, the horrible plague in Surat, the earthquake in Latur, the destructive hurricanes in Saurashtra, Andhra and Orissa is Sewa Bharati – Gujarat. Victory to the Holy Motherland!

In response to a *Channel 4 News* investigation into SIUK, the latter stated that it 'has never sent money to any parties with the intention of spreading communal violence or hatred, either directly or indirectly'<sup>69</sup>. **Examples such as the plaque at Chapredi demonstrate the funding, promotion and glorification by SIUK of an organization and an ideology that is dedicated to religious hatred and whose members and affiliates have been involved in politically and religiously-motivated violence. SIUK knew that it was funding the promotion of the RSS, its founder and its affiliates in Gujarat. SIUK glorified extremist organizations in India whose activities, history and ideology would horrify most British donors.**

We found no evidence that Sewa Bharati rebuilt any mosques, Muslim shrines or churches damaged during the earthquake. However, it did build Hindu temples using funds from SIUK. The Hindu temple shown right, built in Chapredi and topped with RSS saffron flags, is an example.

Another organization, Malayala Manorama Charitable Trust, associated with the Malayala Manorama newspaper group in Kerala, also reconstructed the village in its original location and built 125 permanent houses<sup>70</sup>. We also did not find in Malayala Manorama's efforts the kind of sectarian propaganda that accompanied RSS work.



**Figure 8: Hindu temple, Chapredi village. A plaque in front of the temple states 'This temple has been built from donations received from Shree Radha Krishna Cultural Centre, Coventry, Sanatan Dharam Hindu Temple, Coventry & Hindu Temple, Coventry, UK. Donor agency: Sewa International (UK)'.**



**Figure 9: 'Gateway' to Chapredi village, stating the name of Malayala Manorama.**



**Figure 10: Bird feeding shelter (chabutra) and community pavilion built in Chapredi with the help of Malayala Manorama.**

<sup>69</sup> Sewa International UK, 'Sewa International's statement on Channel 4 allegations', 16 December 2002.

<sup>70</sup> *The Tribune*, 4 June 2003; Government of India, 'Quake-Wiped Chapredi takes rebirth; Dr. Joshi hands over key to village-head', Press Release, 3 June 2003

## MITHASPASVARIA VILLAGE (ANJAR SUB-DISTRICT, KUTCH DISTRICT)

This village was adopted by 'Derby and Nottingham cities' and is another village that SIUK claimed to totally fund. A document from Sewa Bharati Gujarat shows that there was also a government contribution of Rupees 9,726,000 towards reconstructing the village<sup>71</sup>. This village has 164 households, of which four households are Muslim. Sewa Bharati had constructed 154 units in the village. When we visited the village in the summer of 2003, the Muslim families were not found living in the newly constructed houses of Sewa Bharati at the new site, but were instead living in the old village area. The foundation stone laying ceremony for Mithapasvaria village was undertaken on 17 April 2001 by the supreme head of the Indian RSS, K. S. Sudarshan. It was also renamed 'Ramnagar' ('the town of Ram'). Sewa International's banner was prominently displayed behind the RSS leader and other RSS senior figures.

A plaque at the new Mithapasvaria states that the RSS joint general secretary, Madandas Devi (who has also participated in VHP protests regarding the Ayodhya Ram temple issue), handed over the village to residents on 3 June 2002. One of the chief guests at this ceremony was Pravin Maniyar, the western sector RSS media



**Figure 11:** RSS supreme leader K. S. Sudarshan at foundation stone laying ceremony for Mithapasvaria village, near Bhuj, 17 April 2001. The Sewa International banner is displayed prominently. Other individuals include those closely associated with HSS UK. The Sewa Bharati banner (in Gujarati) states its origin as 'RSS inspired'. [www.sewainternational.org/sudar.html](http://www.sewainternational.org/sudar.html).

head who is also a Sewa Bharati trustee. Another chief guest was Bharat Amin who is in charge of the state's RSS service wing. It is in examples like these that the organizational distinction between the RSS and Sewa Bharati becomes highly ambiguous. Why, for example, is virtually every dignitary present at the foundation stone-laying or handover ceremony a senior national or local RSS officer?

It is not simply that Sewa Bharati is 'RSS inspired' but appears to be the RSS acting under another name. SIUK provides funds to Sewa Bharati to rebuild a village, but it is the RSS that 'hands over' the completed village. The extent of direct RSS involvement is significant enough to raise questions about legal regulations that prohibit the receipt of foreign funds by the RSS.

## RAPAR VILLAGE (MORBI SUB-DISTRICT, RAJKOT DISTRICT)

Rapar village was initially adopted by Coventry, UK. SIUK released the following statement:

The Coventry Branch of SEWA International officially adopts Rapar. The village of Rapar, which was totally devastated and destroyed by the Gujarat Earthquake, will be totally reconstructed and adopted by the people from the City of Coventry. Coventry has been asked to be the first city anywhere in the UK to fund the complete rebuilding of a village.<sup>72</sup>

The Government of Jharkhand also reportedly funded the reconstruction of this village. SIUK organized a large fundraising event in April 2001 in Coventry for this purpose. This was a multicultural variety show which raised almost £22,000. SIUK said:

Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities happily worked together to do their little bit...Coventry has emulated the way forward once again – and proved that ALL Religions and Cultures can work together effectively and harmoniously to serve Humanity.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Sewa Bharati Gujarat, 'Details of Completed / Outgoing Projects: Villages', Sewa Bharati Gujarat, Ahmedabad, not dated.

<sup>72</sup> [http://www.sewainternational.com/gujarat\\_quake\\_coventry\\_at\\_work.htm](http://www.sewainternational.com/gujarat_quake_coventry_at_work.htm); another news item also reports that 'Coventry will be adopting the village of Chapredi instead of Rapar according to latest reports from Mukeshbhai Shah of Sewa Bharti in Ahmedabad' [http://www.sewainternational.com/index.php?start\\_from=16](http://www.sewainternational.com/index.php?start_from=16).

<sup>73</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, May–June 2001, vol. XII, no.3, p.21.

These are admirable goals that demonstrate how UK South Asians from different communities can work together to support victims of natural disasters. But how many supporters of the UK fundraising event were aware of the nature of the opening ceremony of the village on 26 April 2002? The media division of the RSS in Gujarat reported this:

Sewa Bharati of RSS constructed the houses at village Rapar, in association with Sewa International (U.K.) and Govt. of Jharkhand [Jharkhand] at a cost of Rs. 2.60 crores. The work has been completed within one year and the civic facilities like road, tapped-water to each house, school, temple, dispensary etc. have been provided to the village. Shri Sudarshanji [RSS supreme leader] addressed a function at this village which was attended by large number of people of nearby villages. He said that people should not solely depend on Govt. help but they themselves should come forward to assist others like Sewa Bharati according to Hindu Sanskruti and Hindu Dharma [the RSS's version of Hindu culture and Hindu religion]. He emphasized that one should not depend for everything from school admission or for job, on MLA or MP [politicians]. Everyone should stand on its own. Villages should develop themselves and therefore, the RSS shakhas are creating an atmosphere of cooperation for people everywhere. He advised the Swayamsevak [RSS members] to create 5 committees for social education, social health, social security, social samrasta ['harmony'] and social prosperity. People are always good but they should be motivated to undertake tree plantation and water conservation activities, he said. RSS is doing such a yeoman sewa [service] activities for which not only people connected with RSS donate money but even those, who are not attached to RSS, also donate funds to Sewa Bharati... Shri Pravinbhai Maniar, the Sampark Pramukh [publicity head] of Western region of RSS stated that for the earthquake affected persons, 1823 new houses are constructed in 14 villages at a cost of Rs. 40.54 crores and 294 school-rooms are constructed in 64 villages at a cost of Rs. 6.57 crores by

Sewa Bharati. Prant Sanghchalak [RSS regional head] Shri Amrutbhai Kadiwala said that we are committed to remain with the people in their time of sorrows as per ideals of Dr. Hedgewar [RSS founder].<sup>74</sup>

**The same pattern emerges: British individuals donate funds in good faith, this time through a multicultural fundraising event in the UK, but these end up being used in India for a project organized entirely by the RSS and its affiliates, aimed at spreading the RSS organization and its cells, and fuelled by an ideology of Hindutva extremism that has resulted in hatred, violence and the death of thousands.**

### **BADANPUR VILLAGE (JODIYA SUB-DISTRICT, JAMNAGAR DISTRICT)**

This is another of the six villages said to be totally funded by SIUK. The Government of Jharkhand was also involved in funding village reconstruction. The dynamics of Sewa Bharati's engagement with 'lower' caste groups in a badly damaged village Badanpur can be compared with Sewa Bharati's involvement in Rampura village which contained a homogeneous and relatively 'higher' caste group and which was not as seriously affected by the quake (see below).

Badanpur village is made up of four mostly 'lower' caste groups and contains 205 families. During the earthquake, about seventy per cent of the village buildings were destroyed. Several NGOs came to the village to assist in rehabilitation and reconstruction. The first of these was SETU from Ahmedabad, which undertook the immediate relief work and constructed 205 temporary dwellings. Soon after, some workers of the RSS camped at the end of the village and donated their labour. Through the RSS group, a new organization came into the village – Sewa Bharati Gujarat. An RSS physical and ideological training cell (shakha) operated throughout the period of Sewa Bharati's rehabilitation work in Badanpur. Children enlisted on an educational programme run by a secular NGO wanted their class times to be changed. On further inquiry it was discovered that the reason for this was a time clash with the RSS shakha started by Sewa Bharati.

Sewa Bharati Gujarat called a meeting of the villagers and discussed their project to build 205

74 <http://www.vskgujarat.com/current/view.asp?msgID=56>

homes. All villagers initially accepted this scheme and agreed to have the village relocated to a new site (relocation was a common option if the proportion of severe damage was assessed to be very high.) However, at the next meeting Sewa Bharati said that the villagers would have to bear the cost of clearing the new land. A dispute eventually emerged between Sewa Bharati and many of the villagers, resulting in 150 villagers removing their names from Sewa Bharati's proposed scheme.

Disputes between villagers then multiplied and have reached a serious level. The reasons given to us for the disputes relate to the inability of Sewa Bharati to create trust among the villagers, and, in particular, a dispute over non-agricultural, publicly-owned common land ('khara' land) used by all the villagers for crop threshing and other activities. Local sources claimed that Sewa Bharati contrived to have this land brought under private ownership on behalf of the 55 families that accepted its scheme, but against the wishes of the other 150 families. By law, this land should have been auctioned publicly, but we were told that Sewa Bharati used its influence with the BJP Gujarat state government officials to get its own way. When the other 150 families occupied this public land, they were vacated by the police. A court case is on-going regarding this issue. However, Sewa Bharati built a new village (Siddhnath) on the disputed land and a handover ceremony was conducted. The 150 remaining families have lost their rights over their public land. We were told that the new village committee formed in Siddhnath is made up of staunch Hindutva supporters and this has resulted in constant clashes in the village.

### RAMPURA VILLAGE (SANTALPUR SUB-DISTRICT, PATAN DISTRICT)

This village is also one of the six said to be totally funded by SIUK although the Government of Jharkhand was funding Sewa Bharati for the construction of houses, the community hall, the water supply network, the water tank and the

drainage network, and the Gujarat state government funded the construction of the school building. The funds allotted to this village by Sewa Bharati from SIUK funding were Rupees 7,323,000 (approximately £108,000)<sup>75</sup>. Rampura contained seventy households, of which sixty-five were from the relatively 'higher' Thakur caste. While parts of the village were damaged by the earthquake, only 5 houses were damaged according to the criteria for complete non-repairable damage used by the government. No other houses were apparently damaged according to any other official criteria of lesser damage. Given the low level of permanent shelter damage it was curious that Sewa Bharati / SIUK had adopted this particular village.

Sewa Bharati had previously been looking for a maximum of two villages in Santalpur sub-district for complete rehabilitation and was ready to adopt any village that would accept a partnership proposal and contribute land. The first village adopted, Vavadi did not agree to complete rehabilitation organized by Sewa Bharati, mainly because of emergence of inter-caste differences among villagers. Sewa Bharati then left Vavadi. Meanwhile Rampura villagers had purchased seven acres of land and approached Sewa Bharati to coordinate rehabilitation. We were told that Sewa Bharati adopted Rampura 'for the sake of fame' despite partial damage (since only five houses were officially recorded under the most extreme damage category.) No other village nearby agreed to contribute land therefore it was not feasible for Sewa Bharati to adopt any other village. More significantly, with the exception of five households, all others belonged to the same caste community and therefore there was very little chance for disagreement. A board at the new village states 'RSS Inspired Sewa Bharati', acknowledges SIUK and shows that the community centre (Samaj Mandir) is named after Deendayal Upadhyaya, possibly the most revered RSS figure after Hedgewar and Golwalkar.

<sup>75</sup> Sewa Bharati Gujarat, 'Costing Summary for Projects financed by Sewa International UK', Sewa Bharati Gujarat, Ahmedabad, not dated.



## SECTION 4: OTHER RSS PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY SIUK

### SECTION SUMMARY

- ▶ Each of the 'supported projects' which SIUK promotes through its website are RSS projects. This is not disclosed by SIUK to the general public or donors. From HSS UK literature it appears that every Indian organization supported by SIUK is an RSS affiliate or is promoted because it is linked to the RSS.
- ▶ SIUK and the Kalyan Ashram Trust UK, a registered charity, raise funds for the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), an RSS organization responsible for considerable violence against Christian and Muslim groups, including during the Gujarat carnage in 2002.
- ▶ The bulk of £260,000 raised by SIUK for Orissa cyclone relief after 1999 went to a key RSS front, the UBSS. The HSS UK said the funds would be channeled through RSS volunteers. It also said it funds organizations that get their workforce from the RSS.
- ▶ SIUK's fundraising for Orissa cyclone relief has been used to finance and expand the extremist RSS's affiliates and networks. Both the Orissa cyclone and Gujarat earthquake appeals demonstrate a pattern in which a natural tragedy is used to enable the dramatic expansion of RSS institutions, especially educational ones, in the afflicted region through the use of funds from overseas.
- ▶ In members' newsletters, HSS UK / SIUK often speak of RSS affiliates in the same breath as the RSS itself. If this amounts to funding the RSS, the VHP, the RSS women's wing or the RSS student wing, then it is a potential violation of FCRA regulations. Since the RSS has manifestly political aims, any foreign funding of the RSS or of organizations that are undertaking the work of the RSS under another name can be seen to contravene the spirit of the FCRA.
- ▶ The main education projects SIUK (including through its 'Sewa Education Aid' wing) raises funds for are RSS and VHP affiliates. These extremist education projects have a strong political purpose for the RSS and the VHP,

particularly in educating children and the young into accepting a pro-Hindutva, anti-minority view of Indian society.

- ▶ SIUK raises substantial funds for 'one-teacher schools'. These are strategic political projects run by the violent and extremist Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Sewa Bharati, Vidya Bharati and other RSS / VHP affiliates.
- ▶ Over a three year period, we found mentioned in HSS UK literature a few thousand pounds donated to non-Indian causes.

### KALYAN ASHRAM TRUST UK

The Muslims are also trying to create chaos in these communities, either by enticing these tribals or by raping the tribal girls by force. The Kalyan Ashram at Sidumbar is trying to put a stop to these activities of Muslims as well as Christians... The workers of Kalyan Ashrams are required to give a tough fight to the Christian missionaries because they keep on harassing the local residents.<sup>76</sup>

Kalyan Ashram Trust (KAT UK) is an HSS UK project formed in July 1970. It is supported by SIUK but is also an independent charity (charity registration number 261327). It has the same address as the HSS UK. Its key focus is on the adivasi ('tribal') populations of India in order to 'bring them into the mainstream of our society,' 'mainstream' being an RSS word for its view of Hindu society. The RSS and VHP 'tribal' projects are extremely important and the activities of the KAT UK are part of this political enterprise. KAT UK's gross income between April 1996 and April 2000 has remained low (the highest gross income shown at the Charity Commission website is £35,496 for the financial year starting April 1998). While KAT income is limited, SIUK also raises funds for similar projects.

Both these organizations have a clear agenda in mind: fundraising for the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), an RSS affiliate which has been involved in anti-Christian violence in Gujarat and

76 S. H. Ketkar, *Amrut Kumbha of Service Streams*, Ekta Prakashan, Pune, quoted in A. K. Sen, 'Deflections to the Right', *Outlook*, 22 July 2002.

elsewhere since the late 1990s and which was involved in considerable anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat during the carnage in early 2002.

Several independent investigations have linked the VKA and its activists to anti-minority violence in India. Human Rights Watch reported in October 1999 that there was a link between attacks on Christians and the activities of the Kalyan Ashrams. Similarly, an important *Channel 4 News* investigation in December 2002 provided extensive evidence of VKA involvement in the Gujarat 2002 pogroms. Channel 4 interviewed a Hindutva activist who said that a VKA leader in the Baroda area of Gujarat, had organized attacks on Muslim villagers during 2002.

He threatened the villagers saying that if they didn't join in provoking the Muslims and burning them, they would also be treated like Muslims and burnt. And he said the government is on our side, nothing will happen to you. So the Kalyan Ashram activists gave the villagers bows and arrows and revolvers and such arms.<sup>77</sup>

Fifty-six people were killed in the village in just a few days and hundreds more injured. Twenty nine mosques were destroyed and thousands of villagers were driven from their homes. The local police also accused this VKA organizer of leading 2,000 tribal people in another large attack. This same VKA organizer was said to be working directly for the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram in Gujarat coordinating 'educational' projects for tribal groups. The Channel 4 team further reported that 'In village after village, we spoke to several victims who blamed the violence on Kalyan Ashram.' A retired Supreme Court judge, P.B. Sawant, who sat on a citizens tribunal on the 2002 Gujarat carnage, told Channel 4 that:

The organization called Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram through which the tribals are being indoctrinated into communal philosophy was roped in and all those who were trained there were also enrolled for violence... The communal violence that erupted as well as the communal indoctrination which has been going on, all these activities were being funded by

this money that came from Sewa International.<sup>78</sup>

## ORISSA CYCLONE 1999

[In Orissa] development and education are key vehicles through which conscription into Hindu extremism is taking place. After the cyclone of 1999, relief work undertaken in a sectarian manner by RSS organizations granted the sangh [RSS] a foothold through which to strengthen enrolment... In Gajapati district, RSS and BJP workers torched 150 homes and the village church in October 1999. A Dalit Christian activist said, 'RSS workers tell me that Christianity brought colonialism to India, and I am responsible for that legacy. How am I responsible?... In June 2002, the VHP coerced 143 tribal Christians into converting to Hinduism in Sundargarh district.'<sup>79</sup>

Excluding the Gujarat earthquake appeal, the largest amount raised by SIUK seems to have been for the Orissa cyclone in 1999 (£260,000).

Sewa International launched Orissa Cyclone Appeal to help the victims of one of the worst cyclones known to the man kind. Nearly £100,000 has already been pledged which is being collected and sent to fund the relief work. *Sewa International is channeling these funds through the well disciplined volunteers of RSS in India. RSS is today the largest voluntary organization in the world.* It has established credibility by providing relief work to victims of earthquake in Maharashtra, cyclone in Gujarat, flood at Morvi in Gujarat, air crash in Haryana and train accident in Punjab irrespective of victims' caste, creed or religion.<sup>80</sup>

SIUK claims that the RSS is non-discriminatory. Yet the RSS glorifies, worships and idolizes figures in its cells (shakhas) such as M. S. Golwalkar who strongly believed in the supremacy of the caste system ('a supreme and scientific social order') and who wanted India to be turned into an aggressive Hindu nation in which minorities

77 Jonathan Miller, 'Funding Gujarat extremists', *Channel 4 News*, 12 December 2002, UK.

78 Jonathan Miller, 'Funding Gujarat extremists', *Channel 4 News*, broadcast 12 December 2002, UK. The term 'communal' is used in India to refer to sectarian hatred or discrimination based on religious, caste and other factors.

79 Angana Chatterji, 'Orissa: a Gujarat in the making', *Communalism Combat*, 2 November 2003.

80 *Sangh Sandesh*, November – December 1999, vol. X, no. 6, p. 16.

had 'no rights whatsoever, not even citizens rights'. After the Gujarat carnage, the general secretary of the major RSS affiliate, the VHP, called for all Muslims to have genetic testing to show that they do not have 'Arab blood'<sup>81</sup>. In 2002, the RSS threateningly said that the safety of minorities lies in the 'goodwill of the majority'. Can the RSS provide services without discrimination to groups it already considers to be alien foreigners, polluters and traitors? SIUK also states the RSS is simply a voluntary organization. This is an attempt to normalize and habilitate a dangerous paramilitary organization devoted to creating an exclusive Hindu nation. There is also slippery way in which the HSS UK / SIUK glorifies the RSS while seemingly talking about RSS affiliates. The RSS is credited above with relief work in Maharashtra, Morbi and Gujarat, yet these same three natural disasters are mentioned in connection with Sewa Bharati's work (see Section 3). Did the RSS undertake this work or Sewa Bharati? Or is this an admission that they effectively one and the same?

HSS UK also admits in its members' newsletter that charitable funds pass from SIUK to RSS volunteers. The main beneficiary of the Orissa appeal was the Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (UBSS), stated to get its workforce from the RSS. In 2000, the HSS UK reported:

We began our tour [of Orissa] with the presentation of a cheque for Rs 1,400,000 (£200,000) at the inauguration ceremony of a youth hostel by ABVP [RSS student affiliate]. The cheque was made payable to Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (UBSS), one of Orissa's leading Non-Government Organizations. It was established in 1982 and has a network of volunteers from all walks of life. It enjoys patronization of the RSS from where it gets disciplined workforce.<sup>82</sup>

UBSS received £200,000 from SIUK in 2000. The address of the UBSS in Orissa is the same as that of the RSS (Sanskriti Bhavan, Chandi Mandir Marg, Cuttack 753008). Other SIUK beneficiaries of the Orissa appeal were Vidya Bharati, the RSS

education affiliate and, apparently, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the RSS student affiliate. The HSS UK also stated that seventy Saraswati Shishu Mandirs (RSS schools) were to be 'rebuilt' and the RSS supreme leader inaugurated one of these. **Both the Orissa cyclone and Gujarat earthquake appeals demonstrate a pattern in which a natural tragedy is used to enable the dramatic expansion of RSS institutions, especially educational ones, in the afflicted region through the use of funds from overseas.** In Orissa, the 1999 cyclone, followed by floods and then a drought, were important factors that enabled the RSS and VHP to massively expand their organizations and schools. There is a very large and increasing number of RSS and VHP fronts in Orissa. The growth of these organizations in Orissa has also led to considerable violence against minority groups. In 1999, Graham Stewart Staines and his two young sons were burned to death by a Hindutva mob led by a Bajrang Dal activist who had also attended RSS cells (shakhas)<sup>83</sup>. Orissa is seen as the next 'Hindutva laboratory' after Gujarat<sup>84</sup>.

A final point needs to be made about SIUK funding in relation to Orissa, a point also relevant to its funding of Sewa Bharati Gujarat. SIUK funds RSS fronts such as the UBSS, seemingly also the ABVP's (the RSS student wing) hostel in Orissa, and Sewa Bharati. HSS UK / SIUK state that they channel funds through RSS volunteers and to organizations which get their workforce from the RSS. They often speak of RSS affiliates in the same breath as the RSS itself in a way that suggests HSS UK / SIUK are aware either that there is a real ambiguity in where the RSS institutionally ends and where its affiliates start or that these particular affiliates are for all practical intents and purposes the same entity as the RSS. If this amounts to funding the RSS, the VHP, the RSS women's wing or the RSS student wing, then it is a potential violation of FCRA regulations that prohibit these organizations from receiving funding from abroad, unless they receive specific prior permission on a case by case basis decided by central government<sup>85</sup>. The intent of the FCRA is to prevent foreign funding from interfering in India's political process. Since the RSS has mani-

81 Concerned Citizens Tribunal, *Crime Against Humanity: an inquiry into the carnage in Gujarat, volumes I and II*, Concerned Citizens Tribunal / Citizens for Justice and Peace, Mumbai, 2002, Annexure 10.

82 *Sangh Sandesh*, March – April 2000, vol. XI, no. 2, p. 3.

83 *The Hindu*, 8 May 1999.

84 Angana Chatterji, 'Learning in Saffron: RSS schools in Orissa', *Dissident Voice*, 13 November 2003; Angana Chatterji, 'Orissa: a Gujarat in the making', *Communalism Combat*, 2 November 2003; Pralay Kanungo, 'Hindutva's Entry into a "Hindu Province": early years of RSS in Orissa', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 2 August 2003.

85 AccountAid India, FCRA – *AccountAid Handbook*, AccountAid India, New Delhi, 2002, p. 105, p. 110, p. 140.

festly political aims, any foreign funding of the RSS or of organizations that are undertaking the work of the RSS under another name can be seen to contravene the spirit of the FCRA.

## SEWA EDUCATION AID

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has now embarked upon a plan to start its 'Ekal Vidyalaya' (single teacher schools) in the border areas to prepare the local people for countering anti-national activities by infiltrators and subversive elements. Such schools were till now being run in remote forest areas and north-eastern states with the aim of creating awareness among the tribals and the poor and preventing their conversion to Christianity by missionaries.<sup>86</sup>

There is considerable venom against Christianity and Islam in the books... taught at the Shishu Mandirs and Ekal Vidyalaya [one-teacher] Schools... The Social Studies, grade IX text of the Gujarat Board has a section with a sub-heading, 'Minority Community', that labels Muslims, even Christians and Parsees, as 'foreigners'. One statement on Christianity in a Shishu Mandirs and Ekal Vidyalaya School book regards the 'conspiratorial policies of the followers of this religion' to be the cause of 'partition of India'. It goes on to say, 'Even today Christian missionaries are engaged in fostering anti-national tendencies in our country because of which there is grave danger to the integrity of present day India'.<sup>87</sup>

Under the name Sewa Education Aid<sup>88</sup>, SIUK raises funds for one-teacher schools (ekal vidyalayas) with the following stated aims:

To combat illiteracy and bring education facilities to the mass rural population,

Sewa international has initiated 'One Teacher Schools' in which a local educated youth is trained and employed as a teacher to run a non-formal school of about 40 children. No capital is required to start such schools. The teacher also becomes a focus of community leadership within the village by generating a sense of pride in the Indian culture and heritage. 30 one teacher schools are clubbed into a 'cluster' for the purpose of efficient administration and proper supervision. Each cluster covers about 60 villages. 70 such clusters have been planned for Bihar, 10 clusters for Orissa and 7 clusters for west Bengal.<sup>89</sup>

The amounts raised and the number of one-teacher schools sponsored by Sewa Education Aid are not insignificant. For the year ending March 2000, Sewa Education Aid had raised over £166,000 (HSS UK reported a target of £200,000), spent almost £85,500 and had a remaining balance of about £162,000.<sup>90</sup> The number of 'sponsored children' had grown from twelve in 1994 to over three thousand in 2000. Work was being undertaken in eleven Indian states, with forty seven one-teacher schools sponsored. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham was also stated to have launched an appeal for £10,000 for Sewa Education Aid.<sup>91</sup> The HSS UK *Trustees Annual Report and Accounts* for the year ended 31 March 2001 shows total funds under direct charitable expenditure for Sewa Education Aid of over £78,500 and again a balance of almost £162,000. It says that Sewa International sponsored two hundred and thirty-five children and thirty-five one-teacher schools.<sup>92</sup> At 31 March 2002, total funds for Sewa Education Aid under donations had increased to about £175,000 and the balance was almost £300,000.<sup>93</sup> Significantly, the HSS UK trustees report for that year also stated that the previous 'sponsor a child' scheme of Sewa Education Aid was being scaled down in order to be replaced by the one-teacher schools scheme.<sup>94</sup>

86 'VHP plans schools in border areas to counter infiltration', *Hindustan Times*, 9 May 2001. See also 'VHP plans meet to counter conversions', *Indian Express*, 27 January 1999, which reports on a meeting in Gujarat of the VHP, the Bajrang Dal and other groups at which the one-teacher schools were discussed.

87 Hindu Swamyamsevak Sangh UK, *Trustees Annual Report and Accounts*, Year ended 31 March 2001, p.13, p.4.

88 In 1999 the HSS stated that Sewa Education Aid had acquired premises, under a short-term lease, which would function both as its offices and the local (Leicester) office of the newspaper *Gujarat Samachar*. *Sangh Sandesh*, July – August 1999 vol. X, no. 4, p.18.

89 <http://www.sewainternational.com/education.htm>.

90 Hindu Swamyamsevak Sangh, *Trustees Annual Report and Accounts* Year Ended 31 March 2000, p. 11.

91 *Sangh Sandesh*, May – June 2000 vol. XI, no. 3, p. 14.

92 Hindu Swamyamsevak Sangh UK, *Trustees Annual Report and Accounts*, Year ended 31 March 2001, p.13, p.4.

93 Hindu Swamyamsevak Sangh UK, *Trustees Annual Report and Accounts*, Year ended 31 March 2002, p.10, p.14.

94 Hindu Swamyamsevak Sangh UK, *Trustees Annual Report and Accounts*, Year ended 31 March 2002, p.3.

The material taught in one-teacher schools is based on that used in all RSS and Vidya Bharati schools and was described by India's statutory National Council for Educational Research and Training as 'designed to promote bigotry, religious fanaticism and outright communal chauvinism based on RSS and VHP agenda in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation'<sup>95</sup>.

The formally private one-teacher schools (ekal vidyalayas) are strategic RSS projects run by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Sewa Bharati, Vidya Bharati, Bharat Kalyan Pratishthan (the VHP fundraising front) and other RSS affiliates. One-teacher schools are presented in the UK as simply literacy projects for poor and neglected 'tribal' groups. However, in India the RSS and the VHP have been explicit about the political purpose of these schools (as indeed have senior RSS leaders in their visits to the HSS UK). One-teacher schools are usually based in adivasi ('tribal') areas, in border regions, in slums and in the north-eastern states of India that contain autonomous ethnic movements. Their prime purpose is not to provide literacy and humanitarian development but to inculcate Hindutva ideology among the next generation of 'tribal' children, educate them to oppose other religious or independent influences, convert them to the RSS version of 'Hinduism' and extend the RSS's penetration into all areas of civil life in India. It is also a relatively inexpensive way for the RSS to penetrate adivasi civil societies. One effect of Hindutva adivasi projects has been a change from previously unusual but now clearly visible participation of some adivasi groups in violence against Christians and Muslims in Gujarat, Orissa and elsewhere.

The VHP considers the purpose of these schools in the border regions as being 'to prepare the local people for countering anti-national activities by infiltrators and subversive elements' and to oppose the influence of Christianity among 'tribal' people<sup>96</sup>. This is part of a fear propagated by the RSS and its current leader K. S. Sudarshan that the presence of other religions in India will mean 'Hindus will become a

minority by 2060...It is essential that we be extremely vigilant over all the efforts to divide Hindu society.'<sup>97</sup> He therefore stressed the strategic importance of such schools for the RSS.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, the previous RSS leader Rajendra Singh stated during a talk to the HSS UK in 1995 that one-teacher schools have reaped political benefits for the BJP and can be used to oppose autonomous political movements in 'tribal' areas.

The number of [converts to Christianity] is increasing greatly leading to the creation of an atmosphere of fear... a few years back, the scheme of 'one teacher schools' was introduced... The effect of this scheme is visible in the Jharkhand region. The Jharkhand movement had popularised a secessionist demand as in Nagaland and Mizoram. But in the last elections the BJP candidate, who was supporting the demand for a Vananchal state as against secession got more votes than the Jharkhand party.<sup>99</sup>

## BHARATIYA SHIKSHA SAMITI

This is a project aimed at providing education for children from the Hindu population (mainly Kashmiri Pandits) of Jammu and Kashmir 'who have been persecuted by Pakistani-sponsored terrorism'. What SIUK does not mention is that Bharatiya Shiksha Samiti is part of the RSS's Vidya Bharati, a sectarian education network based on inculcating RSS ideology among schoolchildren. Vidya Bharati's work in Jammu and Kashmir arose from a meeting of its general body held in 1988 which had the aim of instilling 'self-confidence, courage and the national spirit' among Kashmir's Hindus. By 'national spirit', Vidya Bharati means Hindutva. Vidya Bharati said its schools were necessary because all *government-run schools* in Jammu and Kashmir were 'instilling anti-nationalism in the minds of the new generation in the name of imparting religious education'. In other words, Vidya Bharati opposed state secular education of Indian schoolchildren in Jammu and Kashmir. Vidya Bharati also said RSS-run schools were necessary to counter the madrassas run by the Jamaati-i-Islami. Hence, the

95 C. Palmer and M. I. Baig, 'Creating Indian version of Taliban thru Hindutva Madrassas', *The Daily Mail*, 10 April 2003, <http://dailymailnews.com/200304/10/news/101.html>.

96 *Hindustan Times*, 9 May 2001.

97 'Address of RSS Sarsanghchalak Shri K.S. Sudarshan delivered on Vijaya Dashami 04-10-2003 at Nagpur', <http://www.hssworld.org/usa/>.

98 Kalyani Giri, 'An RSS Officer and a Gentlemen: interview with Sri K. S. Sudarshan. President of RSS', March 2000, [http://www.hssworld.org/usa/houston\\_interview.html](http://www.hssworld.org/usa/houston_interview.html).

99 S. Tattawadi, *Sarsanghchalak Goes Abroad: a collection of lectures delivered by Prof. Rajendra Singh on foreign land*, Suruchi Prakashan, 1995, pp. 54–55.

Bharatiya Shiksha Samiti was given the responsibility of organizing Hindutva education in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>100</sup> Textbooks published by Bharatiya Shiksha Samiti describe the mobs who illegally demolished the Babri mosque at Ayodhya as 'national heroes'.<sup>101</sup>

## SWA ROOPWARDHINEE

This project (whose title in the form given by SIUK refers to the 'enhancement of one's self-image') is described in SIUK's website as a project for 'all round rural development' which works with Vigyan Bharati to cater 'to the educational and cultural aspects of school children in the fringe villages of Pune City.' The website also describes several development activities undertaken by Swa Roopwardhinee, including 'water supply for irrigation and human consumption' the promotion of 'good health and well being', 'cattle wealth', 'eliminate adult literacy' [sic] and 'upliftment of women'.<sup>102</sup> When the US-based Campaign to Stop Funding Hate exposed Swa Roopwardhinee as an RSS associated project funded by IDRF<sup>103</sup>, the campaign received a rebuke from Hindutva supporters who claimed it was nothing more than an adult literacy and slum development project. However, Sewa International India's website lists the purpose of Swa Roopwardhinee as 'motivations for social discipline, character formation, dedication to build Bharat through selfless social service, and lists other activities as 'supplementary objectives'.<sup>104</sup> The former are unmistakably RSS phrases – 'character formation', for example, invariably means attending a cell (shakha).

Vigyan Bharati, the organization that SIUK works with in the Swa Roopwardhinee scheme, calls itself a 'science council'. The 'inspirer, motivator, philosopher and guide of Vigyan Bharati' is the supreme head of the RSS, K. S. Sudarshan<sup>105</sup>. Vigyan Bharati was established in 1992 following a conference in Jabalpur which resolved to promote the compulsory study of Sanskrit for all university research students, and urged governmental educational institutions 'to take

appropriate steps for inclusion of a true picture of the cultural and scientific heritage of India in all text books of primary, secondary and collegiate level in order to inspire the younger generation with national pride and self confidence'.<sup>106</sup> It publishes a journal (*Vigyan Bharati Pradeepika*) that promotes views about the 'scientific' foundation of ancient Indian culture as part of its Hindutva ideology.

## PRABHODHINI GURUKULA

SIUK describes the Prabhodhini Gurukula thus:

Gurukula school was started in 1995 in Hariharpura, a humble village in Chickmagalur district of Karnataka state in southern India. Gurukula is imparting education based on Indian Cultural heritage and values. The need of the hour in India is to look at alternative approaches in education which helps the individual to develop knowledge/skills and attitudes which has its base in Hindu culture. This we believe will develop an individual who has responsibility towards self/family/society and the country.<sup>107</sup>

In another dismissal of state secular education, it also states that:

The current system of education in India in schools has been found to be not suitable. It is linked to western values and not based on the culture and values of the land. Consequently the education imparted is not conducive to building up a self reliant and self respecting society.<sup>108</sup>

Prabhodhini Gurukulas, so-called child centered schools, are a relatively recent development in the RSS's educational activities, alongside its shishu and vidya mandirs and the VHP's one-teacher schools. The gurukulas are organized by the Hindu Seva Pratishthan and the Jana Seva

<sup>100</sup> [http://www.vskgujarat.com/like\\_minded\\_organization/vbprint.html](http://www.vskgujarat.com/like_minded_organization/vbprint.html).

<sup>101</sup> K. N. Pannikar, 'Shourie is wrong', *Asian Age*, 7 July 1998.

<sup>102</sup> <http://sewainternational.com/swa.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.stopfundinghate.org>.

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.sewainternational.org/m-swa.html>.

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.vigyanbharatipradeepika.org/beginning.htm>.

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.vigyanbharatipradeepika.org/institution.htm>.

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.sewainternational.com/projects.htm>.

<sup>108</sup> [http://www.sewainternational.com/projects\\_more\\_info.htm?id=16](http://www.sewainternational.com/projects_more_info.htm?id=16).

Vidya Kendra, both RSS affiliates from Karnataka. The Vikasan Foundation promotes and raises funds for the gurukulas. The aim of the education imparted in the gurukulas is given as 'physical, mental, moral and spiritual development', 'promotion of self discipline and self reliance', 'elevation of national fervor' and 'creation of a healthy and harmonious society'<sup>109</sup>. SIUK is raising funds for an RSS project that seeks to elevate 'national fervour' (militant Hindutva) – a strange charitable purpose. Additionally, each of the goals are RSS phrases. For example, 'physical, mental, moral and spiritual development' is about the RSS approved form of physical and ideological training. Similarly, 'a healthy and harmonious society' refers to the RSS concepts of 'samajik samarasta' and sangathan, in which what are seen by the RSS as divisive factors or Hindu 'disorganization' are to be eradicated.

The content of the education in the gurukulas is based on what RSS affiliates consider to be Hindu or Vedic principles. These educational activities run counter to the principles of national state education in India based on non-sectarian, secular goals that educate children about India's multi-religious diversity, not an exclusive and glorified Vedic or Hindu greatness. The principles of RSS gurukula education include 'Sanskrit taught as a mode of imparting cultural values' and therefore 'No reliance on alien language systems', and 'Understanding India's struggles through the objective study of its long and eventful history' and 'Not studied as sad stories of defeat and subjugation'<sup>110</sup>. Ramesh Rao, a US academic and ardent defender of RSS education states

These gurukulas incorporate lifestyle and cultural agendas, including the nurturing of a strong sense of patriotism, that are aimed at molding a strong, happy, intelligent, and disciplined citizen who believes and leads a simple lifestyle.<sup>111</sup>

He describes one of the daily activities at a girls' gurukula in Karnataka as 'Samiti praarthane (group prayer, saluting of the flag)'. It is not said whether the children were made to salute the flag of the Indian nation or the saffron flag of the RSS, but the accompanying photograph shows unmistakably the salute of the RSS shakhas.

## DEVI AHALYABAI SMARACK SAMITI

This project is a memorial society named after a Hindu personality (Devi Ahalyabai) who is glorified by the RSS women's affiliate because of her duty to Hindu religion. The Samiti run a girls' hostel in Nagpur called Vanvasi Kanya Chattravas (tribal girls hostel), part of a network of women's projects organized by the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, a violent RSS front that also works closely with the VHP<sup>112</sup>. The aim of the project is the so-called development of selected vanvasi ('tribal') girls. In the RSS and VHP worldview, the adivasi populations are seen to have strayed from Hinduism, have adopted other religions (especially Christianity) and require conversion to the RSS world view. Adivasi populations are also seen as potentially subversive by the RSS (mainly because of a range of secessionist and autonomous adivasi movements in India, particularly in the north eastern states), and hence have to 'be protected' from subversion and 'integrated into the national mainstream'. Adivasis are also seen as numerically important for their recruitment potential. The RSS project is not about the protection and preservation of indigenous peoples' rights, beliefs and cultures, but an attempt to substitute these with its ideology. Similarly, the RSS views the independent forums and activism of adivasi groups as a threat to its idea of a united 'Hindu nation'.



**Figure 12: 'Bharat Mata Poojan' at a Karnataka gurukula for girls. Source: Ramesh N. Rao, 'Gurukulas – where children aren't merely schooled', 13 April 2001 [www.sulekha.com/expressions/column.asp?cid=111795](http://www.sulekha.com/expressions/column.asp?cid=111795).**

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.vikasan.org/aboutus.htm>.

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.vikasan.org/principles.htm>.

<sup>111</sup> Ramesh N. Rao, 'Gurukulas – where students aren't merely schooled', 13 April 2001, <http://www.sulekha.com/expressions/column.asp?cid=111795>.

<sup>112</sup> Anosh Malekar, 'Winds of Change – RSS at 75: RSS may get a new boss next month', *The Week*, 20 February 2000.

## THE SCOPE OF SIUK AID

Information on SIUK donations to all, not just Indian, causes is not available in comprehensive form in annual reports of SIUK or HSS UK. Therefore, we scanned the 'Charity News' and 'Sewa International' section of the HSS's bimonthly newsletter, *Sangh Sandesh*, since this is the only publication available that gives information on HSS UK activities, including its charity work. We looked at all issues of *Sangh Sandesh* between March–April 1999 and May–June 2002. This was a complete set bar one missing issue (March–April 2002). The issues covered a period of over three years, and should therefore give a fair representation of the kinds of organizations SIUK supports. The summary findings are given in Appendix 3. Assuming that this is an accurate representation of SIUK's sponsored organizations and donations, where amounts are indicated the highest single amount SIUK is listed as having donated to a clearly non-RSS cause is around £2,000, with a typical amount being £400–£500. The total amount we found listed in *Sangh Sandesh* as donated to such causes over the 3 year period is just over £6,000. If there existed other sizeable or substantial SIUK funding to non-RSS organizations over the three year period analyzed, we were unable to find any further information about this in the newsletter.

Aside from the Gujarat earthquake and Orissa cyclone appeals, SIUK has raised funds for various other natural disasters and conflict situations. This has included the Maharashtra earthquake and drought relief in Gujarat and Rajasthan. It has also made smaller donations to

several UK groups, mainly medical organizations and charities. Donations were also made to the Turkish Embassy Earthquake fund (£401 found in period analyzed), the Ethiopia Refugee Crisis appeal and the war in Kosovo (£501 found in period analyzed). The latter can be construed as donations to 'Muslim' causes. However, we believe the adoption of some non-sectarian activities is strategic and can disguise the fact that the vast bulk of fundraising by SIUK is for RSS affiliates. SIUK's website also mentions an appeal for Afghanistan earthquake relief and the America Disaster Fund.

Other organizations mentioned under 'Charity News' or the work of SIUK are the Sanjeevni Sharda Kendra, an RSS organization which the VHP UK charity correspondent visited during a trip that also included meeting the Jammu and Kashmir VHP; Sanskar Bharati, an RSS 'cultural' organization that has attempted to become the authoritarian judge of what is or is not Indian and Hindu culture<sup>113</sup>; and the Akhil Bharatiya Poorva Sainik Seva Parishad, an ex-soldiers association and a key recipient of funds raised by SIUK under its 'Kargil Martyr's appeal'. Two other supported projects listed on its website include: Bharatiya Nivarak Sangh Ashram, a leprosy colony in Madhya Pradesh formed under the inspiration of the second RSS supreme leader, M. S. Golwalkar, and whose educational activities for 'tribal' children are conducted in association with the RSS's Vidya Bharati; and Aruna Chetna, a project for disabled children in Karnataka, run by an RSS affiliate, the Hindu Seva Pratishthan.

113 N. Vyas, M. Dasgupta and J. P. Shukla, 'The unmasking of an ugly agenda', *The Hindu*, 6 February 2000.



## CONCLUSION

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SIUK and the HSS UK, the latter a registered charity, state repeatedly and unequivocally that they are charities raising funds in the UK for humanitarian projects aimed at needy populations, particularly the most marginalized of India's populations, the 'tribals' and dalits. If a fair comparison was made with actual humanitarian organizations working for equality, social justice, anti-discrimination and genuine need among dalits and adivasis in India, we believe that the projects SIUK funds would clearly demonstrate the political and ideological agenda of the RSS and VHP.

Most striking of all was the behaviour of these organizations in the wake of the Gujarat carnage in 2002 which left 2,000 dead and over 200,000 displaced and languishing in miserable refugee camps. The response of SIUK, the HSS, the VHP, the National Hindu Students Forum and every other UK Hindutva group to appeals for humanitarian relief was silence. This was despite considerable coverage of the carnage in the UK media and desperate major appeals by secular Gujarati NGOs. This is not surprising: the majority of the victims of the carnage were Indian citizens who were Muslim. They were victims of organizations such as the VHP, RSS and VKA whose work the HSS UK, the VHP UK and SIUK promote and glorify.

All funds raised by SIUK for the Gujarat earthquake appeal were for Sewa Bharati, a major RSS affiliate. The overwhelming bulk of funds we found in other HSS UK sources were for RSS affiliated organizations. Virtually all the organizations in India that SIUK supports or sponsors are RSS affiliates. We did not find mention of a single secular non-RSS linked NGO working in India that was funded or sponsored by SIUK. For non-Indian causes supported, we found over a three year period that a small amount was donated by SIUK.

SIUK and the HSS UK could have stated explicitly in their campaigns that they are fundraising from the UK public virtually exclusively for RSS organizations in India. They could have informed the UK public of the aims, ideology, organization, history and nature of the RSS so that potential donors could decide whether or not they wanted to give funds for such activities. They did not undertake either of these two crucial tasks, essential for facilitating informed choice among potential donors. By not stating that it is raising funds almost exclusively for extremist RSS affiliates, SIUK is deceiving the public. We conclude that the *main* purpose of SIUK / HSS UK fundraising is to channel funds to RSS organizations in India, including to organizations repeatedly singled out for involvement and culpability in hatred, intolerance and violence in India.

## SECTION 5: THE HINDU SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH UK AND ITS ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS

### SECTION SUMMARY

- ▶ The Hindutva extremist RSS and key members of its family have branches in the UK which report to the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK (HSS UK), a registered charity.
- ▶ The UK organizations are not simply Hindu bodies promoting Hindu culture and religion, but are UK branches of the Indian RSS family dedicated to promoting the RSS and its ideology.
- ▶ The HSS UK follows RSS structures, ideology, language, rituals, hierarchy, methods of organizing and techniques of physical and ideological training.
- ▶ The VHP UK is a branch of the Indian VHP. The Indian VHP's central office and board of trustees has 'jurisdiction' over the entire organization of the VHP outside India, and considers VHP organizations outside India as its branches.
- ▶ There are regular, close and extensive links between the UK and the Indian RSS family. These are deep connections which work in both directions to and from India. This has involved visits by the most senior Indian RSS figures possible to the UK, as well as regular visits by HSS UK and VHP UK members to major RSS and VHP events in India.

The Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK (HSS UK) was initiated in 1966 and became a charitable trust from 29 April 1974, charity registration number 267309. The UK register of charities states that it is involved in general charitable purposes, education, training, overseas aid, famine relief, sport and recreation. It ostensibly provides care and counselling services, advocacy, advice and information. Its service group is listed as 'elderly/old people'. It is stated to operate in Greater London, Leicestershire and the West Midlands. These claims are very different from the actual activities of the HSS UK, described extensively in its regular publication *Sangh Sandesh* (started in 1977) and other internal documents. These bear the unmistakable stamp of the RSS and show regular, close and extensive links between the HSS UK and the RSS in India.

The HSS is also the core body to which the other UK *sangh parivar* organizations report. The HSS UK has a board of six trustees and ten office bearers for its central executive committee (Kendriya Karyakari Mandal). The HSS UK headquarters is in Leicester. The Leicester office is called 'Keshav Pratishthan' (institute), 'Keshav' being the first name of the Indian RSS founder. The inauguration of the office on 22 April 1995 was presided over by the then supreme leader of the Indian RSS, Rajendra Singh. This Leicester address is also the official address of several Hindutva organizations in the UK, including Sewa International UK (SIUK), the National Hindu Students Forum (NHSF), the Kalyan Ashram Trust (KAT) and the Hindu Sahitya Kendra. The HSS also has offices in Bradford and Birmingham.

The primary aim of HSS UK activities is to create physical and ideological training cells (shakhas) and organize and strengthen Hindus (sangathan) under RSS ideology. HSS guidelines for its expansion and development workers, called vistaraks, states:

1. The work of a vistarak consists of opening new Shakhas, strengthening old Shakhas or carrying out a project for sangh
2. Vistaraks are full time workers for sangh [HSS family] during the set period. Vistaraks should not be engaged in any other activities in this period.
3. During this period, the vistarak should try his best to meet as many Hindu families as possible. Our objective is to make them understand our mission (Sanghathan) and win their hearts.
4. Vistaraks should maintain a diary of their work everyday and log all names, addresses and experiences.
5. Vistaraks should have a sound knowledge of Sangh's objectives and method of work...
10. Vistaraks should carry with them various types of literature e.g. Sangh Sandesh, Sangh Mail, Prarthana, geet book, khel, book, NHSF material, Sewa leaflets etc...

14. Vistaraks should have basic knowledge about the sangh parivaar FISI, BJP, NHSF, SEWA, KAT, VHP and Hinduism.<sup>114</sup>

## MODELLLED ON THE INDIAN RSS

The HSS UK structure is modelled on that of the Indian RSS. This includes the priority given to creating cells (shakhas) and creating organizations that mirror the RSS *sangh parivar*. The HSS UK shares the same ideology as the RSS and uses the same languages as the Indian RSS, including the various officer titles of the latter<sup>115</sup>. In 2002, the HSS reported 72 weekly physical and ideological training cells (shakhas) in 38 UK cities which were attended by about 1500 individuals. The HSS UK shakha structure is organized by zones that cover the UK. HSS UK shakhas are run in almost exactly the same way as RSS shakhas. This includes the same RSS prayers, hymns and slogans, devotion to the RSS saffron flag, adulation of K. B. Hedgewar and M. S. Golwalkar (the first two RSS supreme leaders), physical exercises, sports, martial arts and ideological inculcation sessions. The HSS and RSS shakhas do not allow any images of or prayers to Hindu Gods or Goddesses. Prayer is to the RSS saffron flag of the 'Hindu nation' and devotion is to the RSS founder and leaders. The HSS UK also has a uniform, one different from that used in Indian RSS cells.

The HSS UK and its affiliates celebrate the same six festivals (utsavs) as the Indian RSS. The HSS UK also organizes an important annual training camp (Sangh Shiksha Varg). This is an 8 to 10-day intensive training camp for nominated members who are moving up the HSS hierarchy. It also organizes the national HSS activist camp (National Karyakarta Varg) as well as other camps related to activities in Europe and India.

The HSS shares the same ideology as the RSS. The HSS UK's ideology is given in its publications, *Sangh Darshan* (RSS philosophy), *Patheya* (a publication of the RSS founders' philosophy and quotes), *Sangh Sandesh* (its regular newsletter), in other publications and material used in its shakhas, and in other publications recommend-



Figure 13: HSS UK 9-day annual training camp, Leicester, 2000. *Sangh Sandesh*, July – August 2000, vol. XI, no. 4, page 1.

ed by the Hindu Sahitya Kendra (Hindu Literature Centre). These include writings by and about Golwalkar, Hedgewar, Savarkar, the RSS and writings on Aryanism and Hindutva by David Frawley, Koenraad Elst and other extremist Hindutva ideologues.

## UK AFFILIATES

The HSS UK family (*sangh parivar*) makes up a closely related set of Hindutva organizations operating in the UK. These share the same aims based on RSS ideology. At the annual general meeting of the HSS UK, reports are received from each of the main UK *sangh parivar* organizations, the progress of sangh work discussed and priorities planned for the coming year. In addition to HSS, Sewa International, Kalyan Ashram Trust (discussed previously) and the VHP (discussed below), other Hindutva groups operating in the UK include:

► **National Hindu Students Forum** – the HSS student affiliate, modelled on the RSS's Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad. NHSF has affiliated Hindu societies in some thirty UK universities. It has two regular publications (*Hum* and *Inforum*) and an e-list. The NHSF vice president stated in August 2003 that 'We have no direct link with them [the HSS UK]. There is no religious or political affiliation; we are not funded or bonded to them, but there is a moral affiliation as with every other Hindu organization.'<sup>116</sup> In fact, NHSF was formed by the HSS. The NHSF address is the

114 Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK, 'Guidelines for Vistaraks' (Vistarak Yojna), not dated.

115 Just as the Indian RSS has its leader, full-time propagators (pracharaks), development and expansion officers (vistaraks), joint and section secretaries (sah-and vibhag karyawahas), media and networking head (sampark pramukh), ideological heads (baudhik pramukhs), physical training heads (shareerik pramukhs), expansion head (vistaar pramukh), service head (sewa pramukh) and inculcators (mukhya shikshaks), so does the HSS UK. The HSS UK emulates the Indian RSS hierarchy, including the annual general meeting of its central assembly (Pratinidhi Sabha), the central executive committee (Kendriya Karyakari Mandal) and its regional and departmental division.

116 Aiden Jones, 'Society fundamentalist links', *Warwick Boar*, Summer, 2003, vol. 25, issue 21.

same as the HSS UK address. The NHSF website states 'NHSF enjoys a close working relationship with HSS UK and benefits from the active involvement of the 'karyakartas' (volunteers) within HSS. The spread of this organization throughout towns and cities in the United Kingdom means that branches of HSS form an integral part of the support network for NHSF UK.'<sup>117</sup>

► **Hindu Sevika Samiti** – the HSS women's affiliate formed in 1975. It is modelled on the RSS women's affiliate (Rashtra Sevika Samiti) and has about thirty branches (shakhas) in the UK, attended weekly by around 500 women and girls.

► **Overseas Friends of the BJP (OFBJP)** formed in 1991 to provide support for the Indian BJP and BJP politicians. OFBJP organized the visit of Narendra Modi to Britain in 2003; every single independent report into the Gujarat pogroms in 2002 indicted him personally for his role in encouraging, condoning and supporting the anti-Muslim violence that took place.

► **Hindu Sahitya Kendra** – a bookshop disseminating Hindutva literature in the UK and based at the HSS UK headquarters.

► **Friends of India Society International** – formed in the mid-1970s during Indira Gandhi's emergency period. It promotes Hindutva politicians and views in the UK.

► **Deendayal Research Institute** – a Hindutva ideological seminar group.

Other smaller outfits include **Hindu Human Rights** and small groups of **Bajrang Dal / Hindu Unity**<sup>118</sup> supporters.

Interestingly, the HSS trustees report for 2001, intended for public bodies, mentions the activities of some of these organizations, such as Sewa International, but not others such as the VHP, the NHSF, the KAT, the OFBJP, the Sevika Samiti or FISl. In contrast, an extract from the 1999 HSS UK annual general meeting report shows how HSS UK is the key body to which other *sangh parivar* organizations report:

The annual Pratinidhi Sabha [AGM of central assembly] of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) was held on 28 November 1999 at Wellingborough. Shri Surender Shah, sahkaryawah [general secretary] of UK, chaired the baithak [meeting]. Man. Shri Shankar Rao ji Tatwawadi introduced Vishwa Vibhag's pracharak [RSS international section's full-time worker], Shri Ram Madhav Vaidya, who has come to the UK to replace Dr Sanjiv Oza. Shri Ram ji will be based at the Sangh Karyalah [HSS headquarters] at Leicester. He is 3rd year OTC [RSS officer training camp] trained and has doctorate degree in Sanskrit. He will be carrying forward the prachar [RSS propagation] work in Europe whose sound foundation was laid by Dr Oza... Shri Pravinbhai Ruparelia, Karyawah [secretary] of HSS(UK), presented his annual report. He noted ten major events which were organized in the UK in the last year. He reported that there are now 63 upa shakhas [cells] in the UK with weekly average attendance of 1200. The three Sangh karyalahs (Leicester, Birmingham and Bradford offices) are vibrant with activities and the total Guru Daxina [donations to the RSS saffron flag] has increased. He announced that 114 shiksharthi [educational propagators] received training at the 8-day long SSVE [HSS annual training camp] held at Hounslow. The 16th Hindu Marathon held at Warwick University with participation from local Sikh bandhus was a big success. A number of dignitaries had visited UK particularly those who had come to attend the 6th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan. He praised the work of VHP, FISl, OFBJP, NHSF, Sewa International and KAT in the field of education, political awareness, student welfare and charitable projects. Hindu Sahitya Kendra has now become a leading supplier of books and educational material related to Hindu way of life... Additional emphasis is to be paid in holding vibhag wise shivirs [department-based camps] during Easter holidays to celebrate 75 years of Sangh [RSS] and 25 years of Samiti [RSS

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.nhsf.org.uk/aboutus.htm>.

<sup>118</sup> Hindu Unity is the official website of the VHP's violent Bajrang Dal. It publishes a 'blacklist' of 'enemies of Hindus', accompanied by a logo of dripping blood, that includes personal details of secular, Muslim and Christian individuals. It also runs a hate-filled discussion forum hosted by ezboard. <http://www.hinduunity.org>.

women's affiliate]. Hindu Marathon report was presented by Rajni Parmar. Shanti Mistry reported on Sewa International's work ... Shri Kishore Ruparelia presented the report [on VHP UK]. VHP(UK) is taking active part in the [Millennium] dome project. NHSF [National Hindu Students Forum] report was presented by Anand Vyas. Total number of chapters is 35 with 3000 members... KAT [Kalyan Ashram Trust] report was delivered by Jitu Kotecha... Hindu Sevika Samiti [women's affiliate] report was presented by Shmt Vidula Ambekar. There are 32 shakhas with average sankhya [numbers attending] of 555.<sup>119</sup>

Other HSS annual general meeting reports similarly show how the HSS UK is the key body to which VHP UK, the Sevikas, NHSF, Sewa International and KAT report to. If it appears odd that formally independent organizations in the UK account annual to the HSS UK, this is a key method of *sangh parivar* working, modelled on the RSS's family in India. These UK organizations also work under the direct guidance of the Indian RSS, as will be seen shortly.

## THE HSS, RELIGIOUS SECTARIANISM AND RELIGIOUS HATRED

In a *Channel 4 News* report in 2002, the secretary of the HSS UK stated that

It boils up my blood. Hindus in India have gone through a period of humiliating subjugation for the past seven hundred years. We are prepared to forgive for that. We cannot forget it.<sup>120</sup>

If this is an irresponsible statement from the national secretary of a UK charity to make, it is nevertheless part and parcel of the HSS UK's ideology. *Sangh Sandesh*, the HSS newsletter, regularly carries Hindutva sectarian propaganda, political material from *sangh parivar* organizations in India, regular reports on RSS, VHP and BJP activities in India, or anti-minority articles relating to Muslims and Christians.

This is sufficient to challenge the claim by HSS UK / SIUK that it is not sectarian. Why, for example, would the followers of a UK charity be interested in, and only in, the changes in the hierarchy of the Indian RSS, the activities of the Indian VHP, the electoral fortunes of the BJP, the activities of Sewa Bharati and VKA, and the need to oppose Christianity or 'predator religions' in India? Similarly, what possible charitable purpose is served by the following:

To prove our point, just look at the following statistics about the prisoners in Britain provided by Ven D Fleming of the HM Prison Service: Total prisoners 64,589, Hindus inc. Sikhs 795, Muslims 4195. The above data was taken on 31 March 1998. In among the so called Asian prisoners, over 84% are Muslims. It is known from other surveys that these Muslim prisoners come from Pakistan and Bangladesh. Whilst the Hindus (including Sikhs) are almost entirely from India. It should be noted that the number of Indians in Britain (about a million) is twice the number of Pakistanis. In an editorial in *The Times* newspaper, it was acknowledged that Indians now outperform their white compatriots at school. All Asians face same hardships and prejudices. Without causing any more controversy, we leave it for our readers to judge and conclude why are there more Muslims in prisons.<sup>121</sup>

The Shakha is thus a crucible where Swayamsevaks are moulded and who are in turn spread into the society and all walks of life. A simple analogy to Shakha is a university where one learns and develops skills which are then utilised fruitfully in the progress of the society. The work of moulding Swayamsevaks in Shakha is thus a long lasting process. The difference between a University and Shakha is that a student leaves University at a certain time whereas a Swayamsevak never leaves Sangh.<sup>122</sup>

Does this mean that if one becomes a member of this particular charity, one can never leave?

119 *Sangh Sandesh*, November – December 1999, vol. X, no. 6, pp. 5-6.

120 J. Miller, 'Funding Gujarat Extremists', *Channel 4 News*, 12 December 2002.

121 *Sangh Sandesh*, September – October 1999, vol. X, no. 5, p. 10.

122 Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, *Sangh Darshan*, HSS UK, not dated, p. 12.

The overlapping nature of UK Hindutva organizations is also illustrated in the example of Bipin Patel. He is a regular letter and column writer for the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh newsletter<sup>123</sup>. He also wrote an article for Sewa International UK's website titled 'SEWA International: a noble face of humanity'<sup>124</sup>. He was also the VHP's representative on the London Borough of Brent's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education<sup>125</sup> and is a key figure in the Brent Hindu Council.

A 'hard-core Hindutva activist' from the UK was reported in the Indian national newspaper, *The Hindu*, as stating that Gandhi's murderer, Nathuram Godse's 'outlook and action' had to be advocated, 'every anti-national Mulla-Commie [i.e. Muslim-Communist]' had to be challenged and 'every drop of blood needs to be avenged. And we are ready at any cost.' He also stated that:

We see the merit in Gandhis, but only after all theology-inspired terrorists are reduced to dead meat... And if, in the meantime, a Gandhi comes to create hurdles in the way, then that Gandhi would need to be put out of the way.<sup>126</sup>

## LINKS WITH THE INDIAN RSS

There are extensive links between the HSS UK / VHP UK and their Indian counterparts. These multiplied and strengthened following a decision at the World RSS Camp held at Bangalore in 1990 to divide overseas RSS work into specific zones and expand work in Europe.

The Indian RSS is quite open about its links with the UK organizations. For example, the RSS publication *RSS Spearheading National Renaissance* specifically mentions the HSS UK as part of the sangh's mission abroad, and describes the 1984 Bradford Hindu Sangam, a gathering organized by the HSS<sup>127</sup>. Another RSS publication, *Sanghshakti Vijetreeyam*, published on the occasion of the World RSS Camp held in Gujarat in December 1995, a camp attended by HSS UK

representatives, describes the activities of the HSS UK, the Hindu Sevika Samiti UK, the VHP UK, FIS, NHSF, OFBJP, Kalyan Ashram Trust, Sewa International, Hindu Sahitya Kendra, the Hindu Marathon, Bharat Vikas Parishad International UK and the Hindu International Medical Mission UK all as part of the RSS's Hindutva mission in the UK<sup>128</sup>. This RSS publication also includes articles on the National Hindu Students Forum, the Hindu Sevika Samiti and the Hindu Marathon. One article in this Indian RSS publication is authored by a key Sewa International UK worker and vice chair who discusses Hindus in the UK, the Ayodhya temple campaign in the UK and the like. Another Indian RSS publication, *Sarsanghchhalak goes abroad*, under the heading 'Sangh work abroad' similarly mentions Sewa International and Kalyan Ashram Trust UK. It lists sangh organizations in the UK as the HSS, VHP, KAT, FIS, HSK, NHSF, OFBJP, HS Samiti, Hindu Vigil, Hindu Marathon, Sewa International and the Dr. Hedgewar Institute. It also mentions *Sangh Sandesh* (the HSS UK newsletter) and *Hum* (the National Hindu Students Forum periodical) as among 'notable' sangh (RSS) publications.<sup>129</sup> Various other Indian RSS publications, including *RSS – A vision in action*, *Hindus Abroad – dilemma: dollar or dharma*, *RSS – Widening Horizons* describe similar associations between the RSS and the HSS UK.

These are not paper links but deep connections that work in both directions. The last two supreme leaders of the RSS, (the late) Rajendra Singh and K.S. Sudarshan have been on tours to the UK at which they have addressed HSS UK members and given guidelines for HSS for work in the UK. The visit by Rajendra Singh to Europe from 13 – 25 April 1995 was the first ever visit abroad by an RSS supreme leader (sarsanghchhalak). An RSS publication listed Rajendra Singh's talks to UK *sangh parivar* groups as including:

► **14.5.1995** – Workers Responsibility (Guidance given by Mananeeya Rajju Bhayya (Prof. Rajendra Singh) in the introductory meeting held at Ilford Hindu Centre).

123 *Sangh Sandesh*, May – June 2000, vol. XI, no. 3, p. 7; July – August 2000, vol. XI, no. 4, p. 4; November – December 2000, vol. XI, no. 6, p. 20; May – June 2001, vol. XII, no. 3, p. 5; September–October 2001, vol. XII, no. 5, p. 20.

124 <http://www.sewainternational.com/intro.htm>.

125 London Borough of Brent Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, *Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday, 8th November 2000*, Centre for Staff Development, Brentfield Road, NW10 8HE.

126 Hasan Suroor, 'UK Sangh Parivar swears by Godse', *The Hindu* 16 August 2002.

127 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, *Spearheading National Renaissance*, Prakashan Vibhag, Bangalore, 1985.

128 *Sanghshakti Vijetreeyam*, Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Pratishthan, Ahmedabad, 12 December 1995.

129 *Sanghshakti Vijetreeyam*, Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Pratishthan, Ahmedabad, 12 December 1995, pp. 78–79.

- ▶ **24.4.95** – Code of Guidelines to Workers (Valedictory meeting at Stanmore, North London).
- ▶ **24.4.95** – A vibrant society is adequately creative. Address to swayamsevaks at Madhav Shakha, Edgware.
- ▶ **15.4.95** – Guidance to campers in the Hindu Sevika Samiti Shibir (Phasels Wood scout camp).
- ▶ **15.4.95** – Re-establishment of Hindu Glory. (Address of Respected Sarsanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to the delegates session of the UK branch of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, held at Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, London).
- ▶ **24.5.95** – Guidance to Young Workers (Address in a meeting of young workers in Kenton, London).
- ▶ **22.4.95** – Keshav Pratishthan (Address on the occasion of inaugurating the central office of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh at Leicester).
- ▶ **22.4.95** – Rays of light spreading from Bharat (Address at the function organized by Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK at Leicester).
- ▶ **14.4.95** – Dr Ambedkar. (Address on the occasion of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's 104<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebration organized by the Friends of India Society International, London).<sup>130</sup>



**Figure 14: NHSF UK annual lecture by the then RSS supreme leader Rajendra Singh, SOAS, 1995. The theme of the talk was 'Hindutva – an alternative'.**

The RSS leader addressed several events organized by the HSS UK, VHP UK, the Sevikas, the National Hindu Students Forum and FISL. He also provided guidelines for HSS work in the UK. He referred to the work that Sewa International must undertake in the UK while continuing to do work for Indian projects. He also said: the shakha system and the RSS tradition of donations to its saffron flag (guru dakshina) could be modified to suit the local situation; that sangh activities were perpetual and could not be altered, but some could 'be varied to be in harmony with the prevailing situation'; and that elders and post-university HSS members could devote more time for sangh work after a survey of UK work had determined requirements.<sup>131</sup>

The leader of the Indian RSS was therefore providing a code of guidance to a UK registered charity on its areas of priority. Further, the HSS UK acknowledges that it seeks guidance from the most senior layer possible of the Indian RSS. For example, after Rajendra Singh's replacement as RSS leader by K.S. Sudarshan in 2000, the HSS UK stated:

It remains to be seen how the new Sarsanghchalak [RSS supreme leader], Maneeya [venerable] Sudarshan ji, views Sangh [RSS] work outside Bharat [India]. What new direction is to be given to the karyakartas [activists] who have worked relentlessly to preserve Hindu unity in Western countries?<sup>132</sup>

The HSS UK did not have to wait long. The current RSS supreme leader, K. S. Sudarshan, referred to as 'our supreme leader' by the HSS UK, visited the UK at the end of August 2000, a few months after he became RSS head. During this visit he addressed various HSS UK activities:

Our Sarsanghchalak [*our* supreme leader], Mananaiya [venerable] Sudarshan ji, arrived in London on 26 Aug. On 27th morning, 550 swayamsevaks and sevikas from all over the UK met him in West London. Later that day the Karya Karni Mandal [HSS central executive committee] also met him along with karyakartas [activists] from other Sangh related projects. He addressed a public function held in his

<sup>130</sup> S. Tattwawadi, *Sarsanghchalak goes abroad: a collection of lectures delivered by Prof. Rajendra Singh on foreign land*, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1995.

<sup>131</sup> S. Tattwawadi, *Sarsanghchalak goes abroad: a collection of lectures delivered by Prof. Rajendra Singh on foreign land*, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1995, p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, March – April 2000, vol. XI, no. 2, p. 2.

honour at the famous Swaminarayana Mandir at Neasden, North London.<sup>133</sup>

In addition to Rajendra Singh, K.S. Sudarshan and RSS joint general secretary H.V. Seshadri, several other prominent figures from the Indian RSS have been visitors to the UK HSS or intimately involved in UK HSS activities:

- ▶ Satyamitranand Giri (patron of the VHP UK and VHP International, and a key figure in both VHP and RSS activities in India) and the hate-filled Ashok Singhal, working president of the VHP, attended the HSS UK's annual training camp (Sangh Shiksha Varg) in 1995.
- ▶ Shankar Rao Tatwawadi, in charge of the RSS's international section (Vishwa Vibhag Samyojak) was very closely associated with the HSS UK. He stayed with the HSS and attended numerous HSS UK events.
- ▶ The late Laxmanrao Bhide maintained close ties with, and was another important visitor and advisor to the HSS UK. Bhide was one of the first full-time workers of the Indian RSS (he became a worker during the Golwalkar period) and a key figure in expanding RSS international activities<sup>134</sup>. In India, he was president of the Deendayal Research Institute, an RSS intellectual outfit.
- ▶ Shripati Shastri, all-India joint media and publicity head (sahasampark pramukh) and senior functionary of the RSS, visited the UK in the summer of 2000 where he attended an HSS training camp (European Sangh Shiksha Varg) held in Leicester from 28 July to 6 August<sup>135</sup>, among other events. At a public gathering in India in which RSS head K.S. Sudarshan and the VHP general secretary Ashok Singhal were present, Shastri declared that 'no minority can be safe in any country by constantly irritating the majority community.' He also accused 'foreign missionaries and their supporters of being part of a great international conspiracy to defame Indian and Hindu society and brand them as intolerant lot before the international community'<sup>136</sup>.
- ▶ Ranga Hari, an RSS full-time worker since 1951, all-India RSS head of ideological inculcation and patron of the RSS education affiliate Vidya Bharati, visited the HSS UK in 2001 and was a keynote speaker at the HSS annual training camp held in August of that year.
- ▶ Charanjeev Singh president of the RSS's Rashtriya Sikh Sangat met with various HSS UK activists in 1999.<sup>137</sup>
- ▶ Balaram Das Tandon, a full-time RSS worker visited a shakha in West Bromwich in 1999.<sup>138</sup>
- ▶ Various junior and senior BJP politicians, including L.K. Advani and Narendra Modi have also visited *sangh parivar* organizations in the UK.

Similarly, the HSS UK Hindu Marathon has been attended by senior RSS worker and now RSS joint secretary H.V. Seshadri (Bradford 1984), the late Laxmanrao Bhide (Bradford 1984, Birmingham 1985), the now Indian RSS head K. S. Sudarshan (Milton Keynes 1989), the patron of the VHP International and a figure long involved in Indian RSS activities, Satyamitranand Giri (Milton Keynes 1989), the BJP's Murli Manohar Joshi (Birmingham 1991), and the RSS labour affiliate head and RSS ideologue, Dattopant Thengadi (London 1992).

It is important to also consider the role of former HSS UK full-time worker, Ram Vaidya. He is one of the two sons of M.G. (Baburao) Vaidya, a senior RSS figure and RSS media spokesperson. Ram Vaidya, himself a senior RSS propagator, was seemingly sent in 1999 from the RSS in India to become a full-time worker for the HSS UK, to evaluate the operations and structure of the HSS UK, and to expand HSS work in Europe, including coordination of European annual training camps (Sangh Shiksha Vargs). After a year of full-time work, he presented his views to the HSS annual general meeting held in Walsall in November 2000.

133 *Sangh Sandesh*, September – October 2000, vol. XI, no. 5, p. 10. See also Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh *Trustee Reports and Annual Accounts*, Year ended 31 March 2001, p. 3.

134 <http://www.organiser.org/21jan2001/news2.htm>.

135 *Sangh Sandesh*, July – August 2000, vol. XI, no. 4, p. 10.

136 'Foreign Missionaries, Quit India: RSS', *Organiser*, 31 December 2000.

137 *Sangh Sandesh*, September – October 1999, vol. X, no. 5, p. 12.

138 *Sangh Sandesh*, July – August 1999, vol. X, no. 4, p. 24.



I have met a lots of youngsters. I find that they have 'imagination' but not much 'knowledge'. This is due to lack of reading. We need to introduce new books and literature to the youngsters which is relevant to them. I am pleased to see that 'Inspiration' an English translation of 'Patheya' [RSS founder Hedgewar's quotes] is due to be published in the UK. We need to remember that ours is a cadre based organization. We need to create karyakartas [workers] through Shiksha vargs [camps], shakhas [cells] and utsavs [RSS festivals]. But here I notice that except the Sangh Shiksha Varg [annual training camp] there is no intense training. We need to start 'Abhyaas Varg' [ideological study groups] and we need to use bauddhic [ideological] material to explain the significance of all our activities.<sup>139</sup>

The RSS strategy could not be more clearly put. Similarly, in a report to a HSS UK central executive committee meeting held on 13 May 2001 in Coventry, he gave recommendations regarding HSS / Sewa International work in the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake:

Following the unfortunate earthquake in Gujarat, Sewa's action was rapid and admiring. But, now that the dust has settled, we should review our work and see how we should go into action. During my time in Britain, I have seen that all the British people are charitable. In the UK, I have seen that people donate to charities on the street. In any charitable or social work, we must appreciate the difference between those who provide the 'support' and the cause which is 'supported'. Any social or a charity work is like a pyramid, the base ('support') should be bigger than the work being supported. We need to be aware that for stability the base must be wider just like that of a pyramid. Otherwise, in the long term, the whole project will be overturned. The base must stay broad based. Our Sangh's method of work is quite straightforward. We have the Shakhas [cells] to create trained, organized and disciplined

karyakartas [workers] to work in the society. Other organizations are created to work in the society but remember that the base [shakha] is the key. The karyakarta [worker] must perform the work with 'detached involvement' i.e. once the job is done he should go back to the Shakha [cell] work. I recommend that the split should be 80 – 20. 80% of the work should be base building [creating shakhas] and 20% should be for other organizations which are supported by the shakhas. We need to pay attention to the root not the leaves or the fruits. Our organizational management of the Shakha [cell] work should be such that more emphasis is put on the 'support' rather than the 'supported'.<sup>140</sup>

Again, the RSS organization and consolidation (sangathan) strategy is clear and has priority over any other activities. Charity work for Gujarat earthquake victims had the potential to destabilise the shakha regime of the HSS by leading to neglect of its shakha work. Instead, the overwhelming work of the HSS UK, eighty percent of its labour, must be directed towards shakha building, recruitment and sangathan, whereas only twenty percent should be placed on other work. HSS members should undertake charitable work not out of an intrinsic, neutral commitment to a charitable cause, but as 'detached involvement', a temporary phase in the primary work of sangathan and shakha building.

## ATTENDANCE AT MAJOR RSS / VHP EVENTS IN INDIA

HSS UK, VHP UK and National Hindu Students Forum activists have also attended various RSS and VHP meetings in India. Each RSS World Camp (Vishwa Sangh Shibir) held in India is attended by a delegation of HSS UK activists. Reports on RSS decisions are also presented to HSS UK meetings. Younger activists from the National Hindu Students Forum have attended RSS training camps in India. For example, an NHSF joint general secretary and HSS activist attended a three week RSS training camp in Bangalore in 2001<sup>141</sup> and a former chairperson of the NHSF attended an RSS–VHP international camp in Baroda in December 1995, in addition to various

139 *Sangh Sandesh*, November – December 2000, vol. XI, no. 6, p. 8.

140 *Sangh Sandesh*, May – June 2001, vol. XII, no. 3, p. 20.

141 *Sangh Sandesh*, July – August 2001, vol. XII, no. 4, p. 22.



**Figure 15: European HSS and VHP members attending the World RSS Camp, Bombay, December 2000, and dressed in RSS uniform. *Sangh Sandesh*, Nov-Dec 2000, vol. XI, no. 6, p. 24.**

other activities abroad related to the *sangh parivar*<sup>142</sup>. Several HSS and VHP UK delegates attended the RSS World Camp (Vishwa Sangh Shibir) held in Bombay from 26 December 2000 to 2 January 2001. This included the head of the VHP Wembley branch<sup>143</sup> and the ideological head of the HSS UK and (until 2003) editor of its newsletter, who also led one of the sessions at this camp<sup>144</sup>. The national chairperson of the VHP UK also attended the VHP International Coordination meeting of the Indian VHP in Ahmedabad from 23–24 December 2000, just prior to the RSS camp<sup>145</sup>. Various other visits to RSS and VHP events in India are regularly reported in HSS or VHP UK periodicals.

One such report mentions the visit of the charity correspondent of the VHP UK to RSS projects and shakhas in Jammu and Kashmir

I met Shri Chaman Lal ji who looks after all the sweyamsevakas [RSS members] from foreign countries. We discussed various issues. He was mainly concerned that the students and sweyamsevakas between the ages of 18 to 25 do not come to shakha [RSS cells] because it is held every morning and they are too busy in their studies and they cannot attend the shakha. I told him that they should have a shakha once or twice a week in the evening or at the weekend so that

shakha is in touch with the students and they can come when they are not studying in the evenings. He liked the idea. During my short stay in India I tried to have meetings and exchange views with Sangh Karyakartas [RSS workers].<sup>146</sup>

This also illustrates the overlapping associations between the HSS UK and the VHP UK, and between these and the *sangh parivar* in India. Other reports describe supporters going from the UK to work with the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram<sup>147</sup> and younger members attending RSS training camps in India.

## THE VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD UK

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK (VHP UK) was formed in 1971 and acquired charitable status in 1972. Its charity registration number is 262684 and its registered office is in Manchester. It describes its aims as: advancement of Hindu Dharma (Religion); promoting education of Hindu Dharma; promoting studies of, and researches in the field of Hindu religion, history, sociology, ethics, and to make known the results of such studies and research; relief of poverty, sickness, and distress; and promotion of harmonious inter-race and inter-community relations.<sup>148</sup>

The VHP UK has around 12 branches in the UK, including in London, Bolton, Bradford, Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham, Northampton and Nottingham. The first VHP temple was established in Bolton in the mid-1970s, followed by two other temples, including the VHP Ilford Hindu Centre in north-east London. The VHP UK is involved in the Interfaith Network (UK), various Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs), and various local Hindu Councils. It worked with ISKCON ('the Hare Krishnas') around the campaign from the mid-1980s by ISKCON against Hertsmere Council, which had attempted to prevent public worship at Bhaktivedanta Manor. It has also been involved in several campaigns against what it believes to be insulting representations of Hindu deities.

<sup>142</sup> Manjari Katju, *Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Indian Politics*, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2003, pp. 154–155.

<sup>143</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, January – February 2001, vol. XII, no. 1, p. 9.

<sup>144</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, November – December 2000, vol. XI, no. 6, p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> VHP UK Manchester Branch, *Newsletter*, April 2001, p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, May – June 1999, vol. X, no. 3, pp. 4–5.

<sup>147</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, September – October 1999, vol. X, no. 5, p. 9.

<sup>148</sup> <http://www.vhp-uk.com/aboutus.php>.

## LINKS BETWEEN VHP UK & HSS UK

The VHP UK is strongly associated with the HSS UK and reports annually to the HSS UK general meeting. The trustees and office bearers of the VHP UK are associated with the HSS UK. For example, the permanent trustee of the VHP UK is also the head (sanghchalak) of the HSS UK, and the religious education spokesperson of the VHP UK is also the ideological head (bauddhik pramukh) of the HSS UK and former editor of the HSS's newsletter, *Sangh Sandesh*. There is a number of other such associations between the VHP UK and other UK *sangh parivar* organizations. Similarly, the editorial board for the VHP UK book, *Explaining Hindu Dharma: a guide for teachers* (Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK, 1996), included the HSS UK leader (sanghchalak), the HSS UK ideological head, and an RSS full-time worker based in the UK and working to expand RSS activities abroad. Several others involved in the production of this book are strongly associated with Indian VHP or Indian RSS activities.

The VHP UK has also received support from government bodies. The VHP UK has had some of its key figures recognised in 'citizenship awards' and 'man of the year' awards by local councils. Similarly, the VHP (and the Overseas Friends of the BJP, Sewa International and the National Hindu Students Forum) have received support from politicians such as Labour MP Barry Gardiner, formerly chairperson of the parliamentary Labour Friends of India group. The director of the Labour Friends of India is also involved in the HSS's Sewa International and FISI activities. He is the brother of the Overseas Friends of the BJP (UK) general secretary and HSS UK officer who organized the visit of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to the UK in 2003.



**Figure 16: Barry Gardiner, Brent North Labour MP at VHP Wembley event. *Sangh Sandesh*, November-December 2001, vol. XII, no. 6, p. 24.**

## LINKS WITH VHP INDIA

The VHP UK explains that:

VHP is a worldwide body. There are five main aspects covered at international level:

- [1] Dharma Jagaran Sent Mandal – A body of religious leaders constituted of all schools of religion indigenous to Bharat (India).
- [2] Hindu Heritage Pratishthan (HHP).
- [3] Sewa (Public Service), cultural and constructive endeavours.
- [4] Establishing and strengthening links with culturally similar/indigenous groups, e.g. (i) Buddhist – World Buddhist Cultural Foundation (WBCF). (ii) Pagans, Gypsies, people of Maya and Inca origin, etc. – Institute of Spiritual Culture (ISC).
- [5] Organization of VHP national committees and co-ordination with other like-minded organizations...

*The ICC [International Coordinating Committee] in Bharat (India) coordinates VHP activities in different countries. At present the international work is divided into five zones around the world. Committees at national level work in harmony with the VHP aspirations and according to the rules of the respective countries.*<sup>149</sup>

In 1984, it was decided that the VHP central office in Delhi would be the main body having 'jurisdiction over the entire organization of the world'. The key decision was as follows:

The question of relationship of VHP in India (Bharat) vis-à-vis VHP units in foreign countries was examined in March 1984 by a sub-committee with Shri Hans Raj Gupta as Chairman and it recommended that the VHP central office New Delhi is the Head Office and its Board of Trustees is the Supreme Body having jurisdiction over the entire organization of the world. Wherever there are VHP units abroad, these should either become branches or affiliated to the Central VHP, New Delhi. A fee of Affiliation or an amount as central fund should be decided in consultation with

the foreign units. This recommendation was accepted by the Board of Trustees at its meeting held in March 1984.<sup>150</sup>

This means that the VHP in India has control over the direction and policy of the VHP branches in all other countries. No VHP branch outside India can claim it is unrelated to the VHP India.

Latterly, the VHP's international activities have been organized through the VHP Overseas (VHPO), a body set up in November 2002 to more firmly coordinate VHP activities outside India through a governing council and across five geographical zones

(America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Pacific). The VHPO's chairperson is B.K. Modi, who is also the working president (external) of the VHP India. The VHP UK's masthead reproduces the Indian VHP's claim to represent '1 billion Hindus' – all the Hindus in the world. Its logo and motto (*dharmo rakshati rakshitah*) is the same as that of the Indian VHP.



**Figure 17: VHP rifle training camp in Patan, northern Gujarat. Source: Dionne Bunsha, 'At a Hindutva factory: an account of a visit to a training camp run by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad', *Frontline*, vol. 20, issue 12, 7–20 June 2003.**

Further, the patron of the VHP UK is Swami Satyamitranand Giri. He has been involved in the Indian VHP since its formation in the mid-1960s. He has also been involved in supporting numerous Indian RSS activities. He is the head of the Bharat Mata mandir in Hardwar, Uttar Pradesh state. Satyamitranand was also stated to be the inspiration behind the VHP's Virat Hindu Sammelan (great Hindu gathering) organized in Milton Keynes in 1989. Similarly, VHP UK representatives have been directly involved in RSS and other *sangh parivar* activities abroad. This

has included VHP UK activists attending Indian VHP and Indian RSS events and camps.

It has also included actively supporting the work of other *sangh parivar* organizations, such as that of the Hindu Heritage Pratishthan (Foundation) which has taken to promoting Hindutva among Roma and 'pagan' groups that it claims are originally Hindu. For example, the national organizing secretary and VHP UK trustee attended, together with Ranga Hari (ideological director of the Indian RSS), a conference on ethnic religions in Lithuania in 2001.<sup>151</sup> The VHP UK led the coordination in the UK of the Indian VHP's Vishwa Dharam Prasar Yatra (a global 'journey' to promote Hindutva) in 2001, following a meeting held in Manchester in March 2001 between B.K. Modi of the Indian VHP and the VHP UK.<sup>152</sup> Regular reports of Indian VHP activities are also presented to VHP UK and HSS UK events.<sup>153</sup>

In December 1999, a meeting at the VHP Ilford Hindu Centre was attended by a leading member of the Marg Darshak Mandal.<sup>154</sup> Further, in October 1999, the VHP Newham branch held a meeting with a preacher, Sharadbhai Vyas. This meeting was also attended by the HSS UK leader and the VHP UK general secretary. Sharadbhai Vyas is described in the RSS newspaper, *Organiser*, thus:

Shri Sharadbhai Vyas is associated with the VHP activities in India and has an ashram in Dharampur, Gujarat, in the vicinity of the Dangs where Christian missionaries are allegedly active in converting innocent tribal Hindus.<sup>155</sup>

In 1989, the VHP UK, together with HSS volunteers, organized the Virat Hindu Sammelan (Great Hindu Assembly) in Milton Keynes. While the Sammelan was formally organized by a separate committee (representing VHP UK and HSS UK individuals), VHP UK accounts show entries for the 'Virat Hindu Sammelan' over the relevant period. The Sammelan was attended by an estimated 55,000 Hindus. The event was solidly RSS-based, and included the RSS saffron flag ceremony and RSS songs. Key forums at this event were named after the Indian RSS founder,

<sup>150</sup> [http://www.vhp.org/englishsite/a-origin\\_growth/evolution.htm](http://www.vhp.org/englishsite/a-origin_growth/evolution.htm).

<sup>151</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, July – August 2001, vol. XII, no. 4, pp. 10–11.

<sup>152</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, March – April 2001, vol. XII, no. 2, p. 12.

<sup>153</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, September – October 2000, vol. XI, no. 5, pp. 9–10.

<sup>154</sup> *Sangh Sandesh*, November – December 1999, vol. X, no. 6, pp. 11–12.

<sup>155</sup> Nagin Merai, 'VHP celebrates Shrimad Bhagwat Saptah', *Organiser*, 21 November 1999.

Hedgewar, and second supreme leader, Golwalkar. A key reason for this event was to organize UK support for the Indian VHP's campaign to replace the sixteenth-century Babri mosque at Ayodhya with a Ram temple. Several VHP-supporting preachers from India led demands for the building of a Ram temple at Ayodhya.

Indeed, VHP UK accounts also show a small fund of about £3,800 from 1993 to 2002 which is headed 'Ayodhya Temple Fund'. While the sum of money is very small, it is difficult to know what this could mean except that the VHP UK was



**Figure 18: VHP UK National Chairperson seated second from left, next to Pravin Togadia, VHP India general secretary, at Indian VHP International Coordination meeting, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, 23-24 December 2000. Source: VHP Newsletter (Manchester Branch), April 2001, p. 2.**

raising funds in connection with the Ayodhya temple campaign during a period when the building of a Ram temple at the site of the Babri Masjid was illegal under Indian law. In an investigation by the Indian *Outlook* magazine, the VHP UK claimed that it has 'not sent a penny' for the temple. It also stated that there were 'political hassles' and funds could not be sent officially, and said it would provide the reporter (who was posing as a donor) with details of VHP affiliates in India that could receive funds. It also stated that funds in Rupees could be sent directly to the Ayodhya Trust in India.<sup>156</sup>

The VHP UK website, under 'Gujarat Earthquake Fund' activities describes the raising of funds for ekal vidyalayas (VHP / RSS one-

teacher schools) for the purposes of 'village defence' in border areas (those adjacent to Pakistan) and for 'national defence'<sup>157</sup>. This is certainly the reason given by the VHP India for establishing such schools. Why would a UK charity be asking for donations made payable to a 'Gujarat Earthquake Fund' for the purposes of national or border defence and the building of new temple complexes?

The VHP UK claims to be 'utterly opposed to intolerance based on race and religious belief, of violence and terrorist practices'. However, its sectarianism was clearly illustrated in its response to the Gujarat carnage in 2002. Its press release of 27 February 2002 claimed that the killing of almost 60 Hindus on the Sabarmati express outside Godhra was 'a pre-meditated massacre by frenzied armed Muslim mob'<sup>158</sup>. It went on to state that the attack on the train was 'an unprovoked, outrageous and pre-meditated massacre of Hindu Pilgrims... an unacceptable act of barbarism by extreme elements of the Muslim community who have been influenced by Islamic terrorist cells operating within India'. The press release also said the Babri mosque at Ayodhya was 'a symbol of tyranny and enslavement on the scale of Stalin's atrocities and Hitler's genocide' and went on to defend the illegal destruction of the mosque. However, the VHP UK's response<sup>159</sup> to the carnage that followed the Godhra attack simply referred to this as 'the Gujarat riots' in which 'the reaction to the murder of Hindus was natural and spontaneous' – the 'spontaneous' and 'outraged' reaction of Hindus to the train killings. It went on to claim that it had made 'extensive enquiries which found no evidence that any organization was responsible' for the 'riots'. In the VHP UK's view, the killing of 58 Hindus was 'an unacceptable act of barbarism' but the killing of 2,000 Muslims was a 'spontaneous' and 'natural' reaction. This statement reproduces the Indian VHP response to the 2002 events. It is an inhumane justification for the systematic pogroms and murders unleashed in Gujarat by VHP, Bajrang Dal, BJP and RSS supporters against Indian citizens who were Muslim. We are unaware of any currently registered UK charity that has attempted to justify violence and support pogroms.

156 'Can't Send It Officially: A first-hand encounter with the VHP's international conduit', *Outlookindia.com*, 22 March 1999, <http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?id=2&fodname=19990322&fname=affairs5>.

157 <http://www.vhp-uk.com/html/appeal.html>.

158 Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK, *Press Release*, 27 February 2002.

159 [http://www.vhp-uk.com/gujarat\\_riots.php](http://www.vhp-uk.com/gujarat_riots.php).

# APPENDIX 1: THE FINANCES OF HSS UK AND SEWA INTERNATIONAL

The disbursement of funds by SIUK to organizations abroad is not listed clearly in annual reports or in annual accounts of the HSS UK. Because of the controversy surrounding these organizations and for reasons of transparency, the HSS UK, the VHP UK and the Kalyan Ashram Trust UK, all of which are registered charities, should make publicly available the exact disbursement of funds to Indian organizations. SIUK's website does provide information on individual donations and updates on the various projects it has funded, but this is not an annual summary of funds disbursed. Similarly the HSS UK newsletter *Sangh Sandesh* gives information in its 'Charity News' section on SIUK's work, but this newsletter is intended for HSS UK members and not for the general public.

Summary figures from HSS UK accounts for the years 1995–2002 are given below. The Gujarat earthquake funds were the largest amount that HSS UK / SIUK has ever raised. A reasonable estimate of the assets of HSS UK would be around £1.5 million. With the exception of Gujarat earthquake funds from 2001, the bulk of funds raised are from donations, seemingly individual donations raised by HSS branches

(shakhas). However, accounts for years ending 31 March 2000 and 2001 show that donations from 'sangh activity' – which presumably refers to the RSS tradition of annually donating money 'to' the RSS saffron flag – were around £21,500 in each of these two years. Accounts for year end 31 March 2002 show £500,000 earmarked for new premises in London. Total donations for the year end 31 March 2002 shows £97,504 of unrestricted funds, and £811,608 of restricted funds for Sewa International (presumably mostly Gujarat earthquake related) and £15,574 unrestricted and £162,395 restricted funds for Sewa Education Aid. This might suggest that about £100,000 was raised by SIUK in that financial year for purposes other than the Gujarat earthquake and Sewa Education Aid.

Public sector grants to the HSS UK are modest, amounting to about £20,000 a year after 1999 (but reaching around £40,000 in previous years.) The HSS UK (including SIUK and the Hindu Marathon) have previously received public sector grant aid or funds from the London boroughs of Brent and Newham, the city councils of Bradford, Coventry and Leeds, as well as support from Nottingham and Derby councils.

**HINDU SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH UK SUMMARY OF FUNDS 1995–2002** **TABLE 4**

YEAR END 31 MARCH	TOTAL INCOME (£)	OF WHICH: a) VOLUNTARY INCOME / DONATIONS; b) GRANTS RECEIVED	TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES (£)	SEWA INTERNA- TIONAL TOTAL FUNDS (£)	SEWA EDUCATION AID TOTAL FUNDS (£)
1995	172,149	a) 88,952 b) 33,391	666,384	130,609 (c)	
1996	189,519	a) 110,494 b) 46,645	706,459		
1997	310,151	a) 219,954 b) 38,609	776,301		
1998	308,537	a) 196,173 b) 47,333	874,512		
1999	508,253	a) 381,526 b) 22,638	1,022,254		
2000	748,355	a) 647,205 b) 20,466	1,355,793	226,869	85,426
2001	2,175,971	a) 2,067,016 b) 18,943	1,382,140	1,955,623 outgoing	78,509 outgoing
2002	1,267,570	Donations: 1,189,068 Sundry grants: 20,424	1,639,558	909,112	177,969

Notes: a) – is sum of donations and covenants; b) – is sum listed under 'grants received', which would be grants from public sector or other bodies; c) a 'Norway – India' fund collection of £130,609. A different earthquake fund collection of £368,651 is shown in 1994. Figures for 1999 are based on 2000 accounts. Sources: Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh *Annual Report of Trustees and Accounts* for the years 1995 – 2002, excluding accounts for financial year 1999.

## NOTE ON VHP UK FINANCES

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In the years 2002 and 2001 VHP UK assets were listed as £1,113,761 and £1,046,963 respectively, of which almost £900,000 were capital and reserves under unrestricted funds. Income through donations was £44,223 in 2002 and £74,705 for 2001, excluding donations for its building fund. For the year 2002, the accounts showed restricted funds for a building of £168,937. The VHP UK has previously received public sector funds from the London boroughs of Croydon, Newham and Waltham Forest. VHP branches in Newham, Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan were also listed as beneficiaries of funds from the Awards for All scheme linked to the National Lottery.

## APPENDIX 2: SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK ONE YEAR PROGRESS REPORT (GUJARAT EARTHQUAKE)

SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK'S REPORT ON PROGRESS IN VILLAGE RECONSTRUCTION ONE YEAR AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE (TEN VILLAGES)

TABLE 5

ACTIVITY	VILLAGE	NUMBER OF HOUSES	VALUE RUPEES LAKHS (i.e. 100,000)	VALUE US\$	EXCAVATION	PROGRESS OF HOUSES					
						RCC footing	Plinth level	Sill level	Lintel level	Slab level	Slab casting
WORK STARTED	1 Mithapasvaria	153	283.10	603,000	153	120	110	100	80	67	31
	2 Devgad	211	361.45	770,000	162	143	115	88	58	53	32
	3 Mayapur	81	237.50	505,000	77	63	53	48	39	33	16
	4 Jivapar	208	372.10	790,000	173	170	155	108	77	61	61
	5 Hamiramora	23	36.60	78,000	23	23	20	18	15	12	4
	6 Jakhotra	267	628.45	1,340,000	74	33	33	22	19	6	6
	7 Chapredi	295	504.00	107,200	155	78	74	41	28	-	-
SURVEYING AND PLOTTING BEING DONE											
SITE INAUGUR-ATED	1 Vallabhpur	140	210.45	448,000		WORK IS NOT STARTED					
	2 Vachharajpur	57	100.62	215,000							
	3 Visnagar	204	330.23	702,600	18	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Sewa International, *Gujarat Earthquake – 26 January 2001 Anniversary Issue. One Year After*, undated.

SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK'S REPORT ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES IN VILLAGE RECONSTRUCTION ONE YEAR LATER (TEN VILLAGES)

TABLE 6

DISTRICT	GRAM MANDIR (VILLAGE HALL)	PANCHAYAT GHAR (COMMUNITY CENTRE)	HEALTH CENTRE	SCHOOL
Mithapasvaria	Completed	At Lintel Level	-	Lintel Complete
Devgadh	Slab Level	Slab Level	-	Plinth Complete
Mayapur	Plinth Complete	Slab Level	-	-
Jivapar	-	Plinth Complete	-	Slab Level
Hamiramora	Plinth Level	Plinth Level	-	Excavation In Progress
Jakhotra	Slab Level	Slab Level	-	
Chapredi				
Visnagar				
Vachharajpur				
Vallabhpur				

Source: Sewa International, *Gujarat Earthquake – 26 January 2001 Anniversary Issue. One Year After*, undated.

SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK'S REPORT ON SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRESS ONE YEAR AFTER THE GUJARAT EARTHQUAKE

TABLE 7

DISTRICT	NO. OF SCHOOLS	PROGRESS						EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED	VALUE RUPEES (LAKHS)	VALUE US\$
		Work started	Excavation	Plinth level	Lintel level	Slab level	Completed			
Banaskantha	4	4	-	2	1	-	1	15 Nov	57.60	122,575
Surendranagar	9	9	2	2	2	3	-	15 Nov	82.60	166,196
Jamnagar	14	13	1	3	1	8	-	15 Nov	118.60	226,150
Rajkot	4	4	-	1	1	2	-	15 Nov	80.40	171,085
Kutch	21	21	2	5	1	11	2	15 Nov	248.50	514,285
Patan	8	8	2	4	-	1	1	15 Nov	69.80	148,770
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15 Nov</b>	<b>657.50</b>	<b>1,349,060</b>

Source: Sewa International, *Gujarat Earthquake – 26 January 2001 Anniversary Issue. One Year After*, undated.



# APPENDIX 3: NON-EARTHQUAKE RELATED ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED BY HSS UK MARCH 1999-JUNE 2002

ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS MENTIONED UNDER CHARITY ACTIVITIES AND THE WORK OF SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK TABLE 8

YEAR	PROJECT DESCRIPTION OR BENEFICIARY	AMOUNT DONATED (£) WHERE MENTIONED	ISSUE OF SANGH SANDESH	NOTES
1999	Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram / Kalyan Ashram Trust	500	Mar–April	2 shakhas raise funds for KAT
1999	India Relief Fund		May–June	Joint SIUK / Friends of India Society International (FISI) appeal
1999	Akhil Bharatiya Poorva Sainik Seva Parishad (ABPSSP)			
1999	Sanjeevni Sharda Kendra (Jammu & Kashmir)		May–June	States SSK get funds from SIUK
1999	Kosovo Refugee Appeal	501	May–June	
1999	Mentions previous donations to: Cancer Research, Northwick Park Hospital Children Fund, Scotland and Wales floods, Gulf War Fund, Maharashtra Earthquake, Gujarat Cyclone and Ethiopia Refugee Crisis. States that in 1999 it is supporting Leprosy & Physical Deformity Hospital Project and The School for Spastic, Mentally Retarded and Disabled Children (India), Cancer Research campaign, Baby Lifeline, Sport Aiding Medical Research for Kids		May–June	Amounts not stated
1999	Northwick Park Hospital	2,051	May–June	
1999	Kargil Martyrs Families Appeal		July–Aug	Joint SIUK / Friends of India Society International appeal
1999	Sandfield Primary School donates £210 to Kalyan Ashram Trust		July–Aug	
1999	Sewa Education Aid	53,000 raised	July–Aug	45 one-teacher schools 2,780 children assisted
1999	Turkish Embassy Earthquake Fund	401	Sept–Oct	
1999	Orissa Cyclone Appeal Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (UBSS)		Nov–Dec	States £100,000 raised which will be channelled through RSS volunteers in India. Mentions 70 Saraswati Shishu Mandirs (RSS schools) to be built. UBSS is RSS affiliate.
2000	Kargil Martyrs Families Appeal Akhil Bharatiya Poorva Sainik Seva Parishad (ABPSSP)	58,000	Jan–Feb	Joint SIUK / Friends of India Society International (FISI) appeal. Funds donated by FISI.
2000	Sanskar Bharati	Target of Rupees 7,500,000	Jan–Feb	Sanskar Bharati is RSS affiliate
2000	Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh and one-teacher schools		Jan–Feb	Report on various Sewa Bharati projects
2000	Vanvasi Olympics		Jan–Feb	Report
2000	Orissa Cyclone Appeal	Over 200,000	Jan–Feb	
2000	Orissa Cyclone Appeal Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (UBSS)	200,000	Mar–April	UBSS is the RSS organization working in Orissa
2000	Ahalyabai Holkar Mahila Sahayata Samiti		Mar–April	RSS affiliate, said to be sponsored by SIUK
2000	Bharatiya Kushta Niwarak Sangh		Mar–April	RSS affiliate sponsored by SIUK and working among people with leprosy
2000	Bone Marrow donor appeal		Mar–April	
2000	Dr K. B. Hedgewar Janma Shatabdi Sewa Samiti		Mar–April	RSS affiliate

continued overleaf

**ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS MENTIONED UNDER CHARITY ACTIVITIES AND THE  
WORK OF SEWA INTERNATIONAL UK...CONTD**
**TABLE 8**

YEAR	PROJECT DESCRIPTION OR BENEFICIARY	AMOUNT DONATED (£) WHERE MEN- TIONED	ISSUE OF SANGH SANDESH	NOTES
2000	Orissa Cyclone Appeal	260,000	Mar–April	Appeal closed having raised £260,000
2000	Mobile dispensary for Gujarat	Target of £10,000	May–June	Mayor's Appeal
2000	Rajasthan Drought Appeal Semajan Kalyan Samiti Vipanna Sahayata Evam Punarvas		May–June	'Two organisations through which swayamsevaks are serving areas'
2000	Sewa Education Aid	Raised 157,000	May–June	49 one-teacher schools sponsored in Rajasthan
2000	Akhil Bharatiya Poorva Sainik Seva Parishad		July–Aug	
2000	Anthony Nolan Trust		July–Aug	Blood / bone marrow donation appeal
2000	Gujarat & Rajasthan Drought Appeal		July–Aug	
2000	St Lukes Hospice, Kenton	800	July–Aug	
2000	Akhil Bharatiya Poorva Sainik Seva Parishad		Sept–Oct	
2000	Gujarat & Rajasthan Drought Appeal	677	Sept–Oct	
2000	Health Promotion and Awareness Campaign		Sept–Oct	
2000	Brent Mayor's Charity Fund	501	Nov–Dec	
2000	British Heart Foundation	501	Nov–Dec	
2000	Metropolitan Police Widows and Orphans Fund	501	Nov–Dec	
2000	Northwick Park Hospital	501	Nov–Dec	
2000	Orissa Cyclone Vidya Bharati Shiksha Vikas Samiti		Nov–Dec	Saraswati Shishu mandir (RSS school) built from SIUK donations and inaugurated by RSS leader K. S. Sudarshan
2001	Ahalyabai Girls Hostel	250	May–June	RSS / VKA affiliate working among adivasi girls
2001	Madhya Pradesh Leprosy Colony	250	May–June	Bharatiya Nivarak Sangh Ashram is the RSS organization working among people with leprosy in Madhya Pradesh
2001	Northwick Park Hospital	100	May–June	
2001	Northwick Park Hospital	250	July–Aug	
2001	Northwick Park Hospital		Nov–Dec	Diwali gifts to hospital patients
2002	Bharatiya Shiksha Samiti School, Kashmir (2001)	455,177 Rupees	May–June	Bharatiya Shiksha Samiti is RSS affiliate. Funds for RSS school.

Source: *Sangh Sandesh* March–April 1999 – May–June 2002, excluding March–April 2002 issue and excluding Gujarat earthquake related donations.

## APPENDIX 4: HINDUTVA AND THE RSS

### WHAT IS HINDUTVA?

Hindutva is an ideology mainly invented by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and written about in an English pamphlet published in 1923, *Hindutva – who is a Hindu?* Savarkar was involved in the terrorist wing of the anti-colonial movement and was imprisoned by the British. After 1937, Savarkar became president of an organization called the Hindu Mahasabha (Great Hindu Assembly). He was a serious political opponent of Mohandas K. Gandhi.

There were six attempts on Gandhi's life by Hindu nationalists. Gandhi's murderer, Nathuram Godse, was Savarkar's 'lieutenant', and close associate. He was a full-time worker (pracharak) for the RSS, and a prominent member of Savarkar's Hindu Mahasabha. Savarkar stood trial for Gandhi's murder but was acquitted. However, a commission in 1964 headed by Justice Kapur was presented new evidence of Savarkar's involvement in the conspiracy to murder Gandhi. Nathuram Godse's brother, Gopal Godse, also stated in an interview that Nathuram was involved in the RSS and only claimed not to be to protect RSS leaders following Gandhi's murder.<sup>160</sup> The current BJP-led government insisted in 2003 that a portrait of Savarkar be placed in the Central Assembly Hall of the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha), opposite that of Gandhi.

Savarkar's Hindutva is based on the political view that India must be an exclusively Hindu nation-state (Hindurashtra) in which all citizens must demonstrate obedience and allegiance to Hindutva. Hindutva, for him, was an identity based on 'race' and 'blood' (which he called 'the most important ingredient' of Hindutva), a sanskrit-based, upper-caste idea of culture, and a sacred territory. A Hindu, according to him, was someone who shared the blood of 'Vedic-Aryan' ancestors, embraced only 'sanskritik' culture and who viewed India as their fatherland and holyland. Savarkar was influenced by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and made many statements in their support. He compared Muslims in India to Jews in Germany, supported Hitler's military invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia and other sovereign states, and attacked Nehru for

criticising Nazism and Fascism. Even as late as 1961, he said that India would be better off with a dictator like Hitler instead of being a democracy.

### WHAT IS THE RSS?

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers' Corps) was formed in the period 1925-1926 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in Nagpur, Maharashtra state, north-west India. Its formation was influenced by the ideas of Hindutva created by Savarkar. It is an exclusively male organization devoted to the political ideology of Hindutva and represents an Indian version of fascism. Hedgewar formed the RSS as an organization of young boys and men that was based on military drills, physical exercise, weapons training, propagation of the ideology of Hindutva and anti-minority hatred. Hedgewar, together with another key founder of the RSS, Balkrishna Shivram Moonje, was also influenced by Fascism and Nazism. In 1934, Hedgewar presided over a meeting in Nagpur aimed at propagating Mussolini's fascist thought in India. Moonje not only met Mussolini but was a strong admirer of Nazism and Fascism. He is today called Dharamveer – hero in the religious struggle – by the RSS. He said that India not only needed a dictator like Hitler but that a scheme to bring such a dictator had to be urgently carried out.

The RSS's second leader, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, supported Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In his key book *We, or our nationhood defined*, published in 1939, he openly supported the anti-semitic policies of Nazi Germany towards German-Jews, openly supported Hitler's violent invasion of other sovereign territories, lauded Fascist Italy and said these were models which India could learn and profit by. In this book, which the RSS re-published after the end of the Second World War (after the horrors of the Holocaust were fully known), and which the RSS in the 1950s called an 'unassailable doctrine of nationhood', Golwalkar stated that in India, minorities deserved no rights whatsoever, not even any citizen's rights. Minorities were to either give up their beliefs or live at 'the sweet will of

160 A. Rajagopal, 'He did not leave the RSS', *Frontline*, 28 January 1994.

the majority'. In 2002, the RSS stated that the safety of Muslims in India lies in 'the goodwill of the majority'.

The RSS is not a democratic organization but based on the idea of one 'Supreme Leader' (sarsanghchalak), obedience to the one Supreme Leader (ek chalak anuvartitva) and of the Supreme Leader as 'the principle one who is to be venerated' (parampoojaniya). RSS members are called 'swayamsevaks' – volunteers working in the service of the Hindu Nation. The Indian RSS claims not to keep membership records but it has an estimated 2.5–4 million members and 40,000 regular cells (shakhas). It claims not to keep any bank accounts and it does not have to pay income tax<sup>161</sup>. It is notified under Indian law as an organization of a political nature and so cannot legally receive foreign funds.

The RSS's primary goal is to completely hierarchically organize and strengthen Hindus and create an entirely new society based on its ideology of militarism, masculinity and hatred of others. The RSS believes only it is the genuine society, and the whole of India must be recreated in its image as a powerful and exclusive Hindurashtra. The RSS is organized through cells (shakhas) in which members undertake physical exercise and military drill, ideological discussions and a range of rituals, of which the most important are devotion to its saffron flag and its first two Supreme Leaders, Hedgewar and Golwalkar. Shakhas, whether held in India or the UK will include devotion to the RSS's saffron flag, pictures of Hedgewar and Golwalkar and the RSS's Hindu nationalist hymns and songs. Shakhas are organized by age groups, from very young children to youths, adults, and the elderly. The shakha is the core recruitment strategy of the RSS (and the HSS) and is based on catching children at a very young age to inculcate them in RSS ideology, bring them closer to the RSS and its organizations and eventually lead them to more activist and senior positions. In the UK, however, shakhas may be presented to parents, teachers and others as simply educational activities for young children, including classes on Hinduism and Gujarati language.

## UNDERSTANDING HOW THE RSS WORKS

### The Indian RSS

- ▶ is an *extremely tightly structured and secretive organization* with a very strong hierarchy, rigid rules for its members and officers, its own decision making bodies and structures, its own festivals, hymns, songs, rituals, uniform and daily shakhas (cells or branches).
- ▶ is both an *independent entity* and works *in and through* a very wide range of political, religious, women's, cultural, welfare, educational, students, labour, tribal, peasants, youth and other organizations using different national, regional and local names and working across a range of fields in Indian civil and political society. These national and local organizations are 'like-minded' and share the RSS's ideology. The RSS presence is not immediately visible in its front organizations, but all of them are started, coordinated or run by RSS full-time propagators or volunteers, usually on loan from the RSS for such work.
- ▶ is the base or foundational organization for the whole *sangh parivar*. *The key to understanding the activities of sangh parivar organizations, whether in India or elsewhere, is the RSS, its aims and goals, and its ideology.*
- ▶ has always had the overriding aim to totally organize, order and strengthen 'Hindu society' in order to turn India into a Hindu nation-state. The various RSS statements about pseudo-secularism, minority appeasement, 'Hindu rights' are secondary to this *one principal aim* to create a 'Hindu nation'.
- ▶ works strategically, patiently, on a long-term basis and at a very deep, personal, individual and familial level in the sectors of *civil society* that it has identified as important
- ▶ uses methods for organizing, 'strengthening' and consolidating Hindus called *sangathan*. This is also central to how RSS organizations outside India carry out their work. The aim of *sangathan* is to bring other Hindus closer to the RSS and recruit them.

- uses a very carefully created language that *substitutes its narrow ideology* for Hinduism, Indian nationalism, patriotism, social service, welfare, charity and religion. This includes the deception that the RSS is a cultural and not a political organization.

## THE SANGH PARIVAR

The RSS has created a range of affiliated organizations in India called the 'sangh parivar' or the RSS 'family'. The most important of these organizations are:

► **Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP – World Hindu Council)**, formed in 1964 by RSS activists and Madhav Golwalkar (the second RSS supreme leader). The VHP has grown tremendously since the 1980s and has both a national (Indian) and an international structure (Vishwa Hindu Parishad International / VHP Overseas). It also has a youth wing, the extremely violent Bajrang Dal, a women's wing (the Durga Vahini), associated organizations such as the Hindu Jagran Manch (Forum for Hindu Awakening), and a variety of other service, religious and social sections. The RSS Supreme Leader is also a member of the VHP's 'Council of the Learned' and executive body. The VHP has been at the absolute forefront of mass violent Hindutva movements, such as the 'Ramjanmabhoomi' movement to destroy the sixteenth-century Babri mosque at Ayodhya and build a Ram temple in its place, the campaign for 'the liberation of Krishnajanmasthan' at Mathura in which the VHP wishes to destroy mosques near a Krishna temple, the Kashi Vishwanath campaign, Varanasi, in which the VHP wants mosque buildings near a Shiva shrine to be removed, the Saraswati Bhojshala campaign, Dhar, in which the VHP wants shrines and mosques used for a joint Hindu-Muslim tradition of worship at a Saraswati shrine to be destroyed. Of the Gujarat carnage, the VHP said that it was an experiment that had to be repeated across India. The VHP and its associated organization the Hindu Jagran Manch, and the extremely violent VHP youth wing, the Bajrang Dal took the lead in the systematic attack on Christian communities in Gujarat from 1997, which reached a peak of brutality in 1998–1999.

► **Bajrang Dal (Hanuman's Army)** is the extremely violent and fanatical youth wing of the VHP. The Bajrang Dal works through terror and intimidation of minorities and secular opponents. It has been consistently involved and

implicated in acts of violence, terror and murder, including many of the killings during the Gujarat violence in 2002. The Bajrang Dal are the shock-troops of Hindutva.

► **The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**, the Hindu nationalist political party which currently heads a coalition government in India as part of the National Democratic Alliance. The BJP shortly after coming to power detonated nuclear devices in the Pokharan desert close to the Pakistani border, resulting in a similar response from Pakistan. The BJP is committed to the ideology of Hindutva, cultural nationalism (sanskritik rashtriyavad) and Integral Humanism (an ideology of Hindutva developed by an RSS full-time organizer called Deendayal Upadhyaya in the mid-1960s). Its slogan is 'One Nation, One People, One Culture' in which all citizens must consider the Hindu nation as sacred. The BJP presents a 'moderate' face in the figure of Atal Behari Vajpayee, the current prime minister of India and a long-term member of the RSS, as well as a militant one in the figure of L.K. Advani, deputy prime minister of India and also a long-term RSS member. The RSS decided that only its trained propagators (pracharaks) should be senior officers in BJP controlled states and in the BJP senior party hierarchy.

► **Rashtra Sevika Samiti**, a women's organization created in 1936 as the first RSS affiliate. It is committed to the same Hindutva ideology as the RSS, and strongly opposes feminism and secular women's emancipation projects. It adopts the patriarchal RSS ideology of *matruvat paradareshu*, which essentially means that women have two roles only, mother or wife. The Hindutva women's movement has also been violent, and encouraged violence against minority communities, especially through the hate-filled activities of Sadhvi Rithambara (VHP) and Uma Bharati (BJP, VHP). The Sevikas also have their own cell (shakha) structure, organizational hierarchy, songs, festivals and uniforms, paralleling those of the RSS.

Other major organizations affiliated to the RSS include:

► **Sewa Bharati** – the RSS service affiliate formed in 1989

► **Sewa International** – the international fundraising wing for RSS service projects

► **Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA)** – the RSS affiliate working among adivasi ('tribal') populations

► **Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan** – the RSS educational affiliate formed in 1976

► **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)** – the RSS student affiliate formed in 1948 to combat left-wing influences among students and academics in the university and college sector

► **Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh** – the RSS labour affiliate formed in 1955 to defeat 'communist influences' in industry

► **Bharatiya Kisan Sabha** – the RSS farmers affiliate formed in 1979

► **Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal** – the RSS teachers / education affiliate formed in 1969

► **Deendayal Research Institute (DRI)** – an outfit formed in 1991 and promoting the RSS intellectual agenda, and the ideology of the Jan Sangh / RSS worker, Deendayal Upadhyaya

► **Bharat Vikas Parishad** – an RSS affiliate formed in 1963 and working in a variety of health areas and among poor communities

## APPENDIX 5: WOMEN, DALITS, ADIVASIS THE THE RSS

### THE RSS AND WOMEN

While the RSS has always remained a male organization, the first ever affiliate of the RSS was the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, a women's organization modelled on the RSS shakha structure and hierarchy. Its ideology, and that of the RSS, is based on a deeply patriarchal and conservative view of the role of Hindu women. This is the idea of *matruvat paradareshu* – all women, except one's wife, are to be treated as one's mother. Women are present only as wife or mother. The Samiti's daily shakha prayer also states the four stages of the life of a woman as 'daughter, sister, wife and mother'. It is also the home where a woman's character is to be moulded. Home is where the woman becomes happy, not in her own happiness, which the Samiti considers 'selfish', but by getting 'trained to seek happiness in the happiness of others.' The Samiti's ideas focus heavily on the need for Hindu women to make personal sacrifices and tend to the needs of others in the home. The reason for the formation of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti is described by it in the following way:

Due to western impact women were struggling for equal rights and economic freedom. This was leading to individual progress only, inviting self-centredness. There was every risk of women being non-committed to love, sacrifice, service and other inborn qualities glorifying Hindu women... Many women were attracted to the new easy going and showy way of western life. Forgetting their own self, they were fascinated by the idea of equal rights and economic freedom. This unnatural change in the attitude of women might have led to disintegration of family, the primary and most important unit for imparting good Sanskaras [Hindutva ideas].<sup>162</sup>

This is a stark dismissal of equal rights and economic independence for women as an unnatural and 'western' idea. The RSS (and the *sangh parivar* more generally) has been strongly opposed to women's emancipation movements and feminism, instead wanting to promote different ideas of Hindu womanhood. Some of these ideas,

because they use Hindu goddesses such as Durga who are traditionally seen as symbolising strength and power, have been taken by a few people to mean that the RSS or BJP is supportive of women's liberation. Similarly, the promotion of a small number of particularly hate-driven Hindutva politicians, such as Uma Bharati, Sadhvi Rithambara and Sushma Swaraj, has been seen as strengthening women's roles. This is seriously misleading. The *sangh parivar* uses various goddesses as role models for women: the obedient, subservient and endlessly sacrificing Sita; the powerful, and yet motherly and always sacrificing Bharatmata, and the idea of Durga as instilling religious duty rather than any kind of independence for women. As in Nazi and Fascist ideas, the overriding idea for the RSS is that a woman's duty is to her immediate family, the family of the RSS and the greater family – that of the Hindu nation.

The *sangh parivar* makes a strong distinction between Hindu women, who are to be glorified as mothers, wives and sisters, and Muslim women, who are seen as adding to an unwanted and 'polluting' minority population. A key part of Hindutva ideology is that Muslim women's allegedly high fertility and Muslim men's allegedly high potency will result in Hindus becoming a minority in their own 'holyland and fatherland' – hence a very dangerous Hindutva obsession with minority fertility and reproduction. The systematic use of mass rape, sexual torture and mutilation by Hindutva mobs against Muslim women and young girls during the Gujarat carnage in 2002, a key characteristic of the violence, illustrates the brutal way these ideas were deployed. Similarly, violence against Christians has included the raping and abuse of Christian women.

This distinction between Hindu women and others can mean that a militant Hindutva womanhood is also encouraged through bringing Hindu women into activism. However, there are important limits to this in the RSS and VHP's patriarchal ideology: Hindu women are allowed to become militant if their targets are non-Hindu men, but rarely do Hindutva women activists openly criticise Hindu men. Hindutva ideology claims that in ancient, 'Aryan-Vedic' India women

162 <http://www.hindubooks.org/rssw/ch2.htm>

were somehow equal to men and deeply honoured. Similarly, a few historical or mythological Hindu women personalities are idealised. Hindutva ideologues then claim that the current downgraded status and degradation of women only occurred after the medieval period and directly as a result of the so-called 'Muslim invasion of India'. In this way, an unreal idealisation of Hindu male perfection towards women is claimed, while every injustice towards women in India, from female infanticide, seclusion, sub-caste discrimination, violence and women's lowly status, can be blamed on Muslims. This absolves Hindu men of any responsibility whatsoever for the continuing injustices faced by women and girls.

## DALITS, ADIVASIS AND THE RSS

During the 1920s, the rise of dalit movements was seen as a major threat by upper-caste groups, and the RSS was explicitly created to oppose non-brahmin movements that were demanding equality and social justice. Any kind of independent movement or force is seen within Hindutva as a threat to the integrity, order and 'harmony' of the 'Hindu nation' (though it is Hindutva movements themselves that have created so much violent conflict and severe disorder in India in recent decades, despite their claims about social harmony.) A second factor was the very strongly held view among Hindu nationalists that Hindus were 'a dying race' because of the supposed increase of the Christian population during the colonial period. Therefore dalits and adivasis, who constitute a significantly large Indian population, had to be brought under 'Hinduism' in order to increase 'Hindu' numbers and oppose any Christian and Islamic influences among them. The Hindutva belief is that dalits and adivasis belong by right to 'Hinduism', are degenerate and errant wanderers from an original 'Aryan-Hindu' civilisation, and have to be 'brought back' into and under the caste system. Hindutva groups do not like the traditional term 'adivasi', which means the original inhabitants of India prior to the arrival of 'Aryans-Hindus', but instead 'vanavasi', meaning the 'forest dwellers'.

Dalit and adivasi groups have a very wide variety of indigenous religious beliefs, practices, traditions and world views. These are not part of caste Hinduism and dalit and adivasi deities can-

not be seen simply as Hindu gods and goddesses (nor as an 'animism' that is essentially 'Hindu'). The attempt to merge dalits and adivasis into caste Hinduism was also strongly opposed by upper caste groups and by the Hindu religious hierarchy. This is because in caste Hinduism, dalits and adivasis, who are not born as Hindus, are considered 'impure' and 'polluting'. However, because of their large population, dalits and adivasis were useful for the Hindutva project. They could be converted to 'Hinduism', 'integrated' into the caste system, and prevented from following other religions and worldviews, such as Christianity, Islam or traditional dalit or adivasi beliefs.

This is how the RSS describes its work among dalits:

The neglected brethren of our society have been made the special targets for proselytization by the Christians and Muslims and for inciting caste wars by all the three anti-Hindu elements – the Muslim, Christian and the Communists... Our dharmacharyas [priests] had been refusing to take the Hindus converted to Islam and Christianity back to the Hindu fold... But now under the leadership of the [VHP, they] are making suitable amends. They have declared that our Dharma [religion] does sanction such a taking back and are even taking a prominent role in many such reconversion ceremonies. They have thus given birth to the new Smriti – Na Hindu patito bhavet – No Hindu is fallen for ever.<sup>163</sup>

So much for the RSS view of dalits as 'fallen'. Similarly, for adivasis:

[In the colonial period the] Vanavasi regions were sealed off as 'Protected Areas' to all except the Christian missionaries to carry on their nefarious designs of conversion and subversion of their cultural and national loyalties.<sup>164</sup>

Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh highlighted in 2000 the strategic importance of converting adivasis to Hindutva:

This adventure of Sewa Bharati for tribal girls' hostel and their education will pave

163 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, *Spearheading National Renaissance*, Prakashan Vibhag, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bangalore, 1985, pp. 46-47.

164 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, *Spearheading National Renaissance*, Prakashan Vibhag, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bangalore, 1985, p.48.



way for increasing ladies education amongst tribals and further spread amongst ladies in general. This is the first adventure of Sewa Bharati ensuring far-reaching impact during the years to come. I hope you will kindly agree that, even one girl taken over today by us and brought up in environment prevailing in our institutions will not only bring herself above, but also surcharge the atmosphere in her tribe besides her own family. It may appear unbelievable, but it is even numerically true that one single such girl, will grow in to 500 or more such males and/or females, having the precious ancient culture of this divine land i.e. BHARAT, endeared at their hearts. Moral values such as character honesty, sacrifice, nationalism will in this process, be imbibed in each every one amongst such 500 to make them real asset of this great country.<sup>165</sup>

'Conversion' of adivasis and dalits to Hinduism used to be done through a ceremony called *shuddhi* – tellingly, *purification*. Today, the VHP and other groups also use ceremonies called *paravartan* and *ghar vapasi*. These mean 'reclamation' into Hinduism, 'homecoming' and 'turning back' from being led astray in which those converted are told to reject 'wrong beliefs', 'come back into the Hindu fold', and the 'Hindu nation'. There is a caste and 'race' superiority here. Hindutva groups have never told brahmins that they must reject *their* beliefs and adopt the religions of dalits or adivasis.

The work of Sewa Bharati, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Vidya Bharati, Ekal Vidyalaya, Samajik Samarastha Manch and numerous other RSS projects among dalit, adivasi and other poor groups is related to this one key aim – to convert these groups to the Hindutva world view, to inculcate them in Hindutva ideology, to 'integrate' them into a caste-based and hierarchical order, and to prevent them from aligning with other religions, regional movements or movements for social justice and caste emancipation.

Central to this process is to emphasise particular Hindu gods who are not traditional to or worshipped by most adivasi groups, to integrate particular mythological figures into upper-caste Hindu world-views (such as Shabrimata, a poor woman with whom Ram shared food in some versions of the Rama mythology), and emphasise powerful fighting deities (such as Hanuman, who is made to represent the strength and courage of forest dwelling groups). The RSS's Seva Disha 1997 report lists 2062 'general service' units, but 5317 units working among adivasis, 3603 working in rural areas, and 3782 working in slums, indicating the priority placed on adivasi, dalit and rural work.<sup>166</sup> These are not projects aimed at creating tolerant values of Indian citizenship but are a rejection of the latter in favour of moulding volunteers for the Hindu nation. The result of these concerted efforts by Sewa Bharati, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, the VHP, the Bajrang Dal and various other organizations has been that sections of both rural adivasi groups and urban dalit groups have been involved in some Hindutva atrocities against Christian and Muslim communities, whereas previously no such conflicts of this nature existed.

<sup>165</sup> Vishnu Kumar, 'Sewa Bharati Madhya Pradesh', 25 July 2000, <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0700/68.html>.

<sup>166</sup> K. Suryanarayana Rao (All-India RSS Service Head), *Seva Disha – Building an Integrated and Self-Reliant Society*, Chennai, 1997, <http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha>.

## APPENDIX 6: RSS SERVICE AND EDUCATION NETWORKS

Since 1989, the RSS founder K.B. Hedgewar's birth centenary, the RSS has massively expanded its service and education networks across India. Over the same period, parallel organizations have been started abroad that have a key aim of raising funds for RSS and VHP projects in India – especially for Sewa Bharati, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Vidya Bharati and the one-teacher schools (ekal vidyalayas). Two important international projects are: the US-based India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF), which has been extensively researched by groups in the US<sup>167</sup>; and Sewa International UK.

Indian RSS service organizations include:

- ▶ Sewa Bharati (a key RSS service network in India, of which Gram Bharati is an important rural section)
- ▶ Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (RSS affiliate working among 'tribal' groups)
- ▶ Bharat Vikas Parishad (RSS affiliate working in cultural, health, slum, dalit and 'tribal' areas)
- ▶ Vanabandhu Parishad (RSS 'friends of tribals' society)
- ▶ Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (a local RSS affiliate working in Orissa)
- ▶ National Medicos Organization (RSS medical / doctors affiliate)
- ▶ Samajik Samarashta Manch (Forum for Social Integration)
- ▶ Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (RSS development organization)

Also of importance are the service and education networks of the VHP, including the one-teacher schools (ekal vidyalayas) and the Bharat Kalyan Pratishthan, a trust created by the VHP in order for the VHP to be able to receive funds from abroad (since the VHP itself cannot legally receive foreign funds under Indian law).

The key reasons for the RSS establishing a range of affiliates working in diverse fields of social life are provided by its ideology:

Right from its inception the Sangh has clearly marked out as its goal the moulding of the whole of society, and not merely any one part of it, into an organized entity.<sup>168</sup>

A people who had been sunk into gross selfishness, mutual jealousy and internecine dissensions had to be lifted out of that morass and made intensely conscious of their obligations towards the nation. Further, centuries of foreign rule had bred abject mental slavery... In short the battle for national reconstruction had to be pursued on many more fronts until our nation became invincible and glorious in all its aspects. It is to this supreme task that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has decided to address itself. The ever-expanding dimensions in various fields of national life have been directed to exactly this purpose... The 'power' of the Sangh... is no other than the band of disciplined and dedicated Swayamsevak fired with the vision of true and total national renaissance and equipped with virtues necessary to translate that vision into actuality in every single field of national life.<sup>169</sup>

The ideological purpose behind these organizations is made clear in the RSS's own service department report of 1997, *Seva Disha*:

... A senior, experienced pracharak [full-time propagator] was spared in the year 1989 to organize and co-ordinate seva work through the RSS shakhas and a Seva Vibhag [service department] was established as a part of R.S.S. work. 'One upa-shakha [RSS cell], at least one seva karya [service unit]' is the proposal of the RSS. A regular short course on seva is now included in the annual training

167 *The Foreign Exchange of Hate: IDRF and the American funding of Hindutva*, Sabrang Communications / South Asia Citizens Web, November 2002.

168 M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, Vikrama Prakashan, Bangalore, 1966, p.341.

169 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, *Spearheading National Renaissance*, Prakashan Vibhag, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bangalore, 1985, p.44.

camps of Sangh so as to expose the trainees to various dimensions of seva karya [service work]. Pracharaks [propagators] and other workers are appointed at all the Kshetra (regional) levels, prant levels, vibhag levels, and at almost all district levels to look after the conduct and development of seva karya [service activities] in their respective jurisdictions. On the eve of the birth centenary of late Param Poojaneeya Dr. Hedgewar in the year 1989, late Poojaneeya Balasaheb Deoras, the then Sarasanghachalak [supreme leader] of the RSS, declared that the RSS would start 5,000 seva karyas in the country as a tribute to its founder. However, on account of the wide-spread network of RSS branches (SHAKHAS) all over the country the Seva Vibhag could surpass this number within just three years of its announcement... Yet another development is the establishment of an international organization titled SEWA INTERNATIONAL which now has branches in many countries. Sewa International will look after the interests of seva related issues not only in the respective countries where they have chapters but also take up GLOBAL level care of sewa work carried out under the Sangh ideology.<sup>170</sup>

The all-India head of the RSS service wing explained how the nature of service work is directly linked to the aim to build a Hindu nation (Hindurashtra). He said deprived groups needed to be awakened and welded together to form the backbone of a nascent Hindu nation.<sup>171</sup> The service work of RSS fronts is also directly linked to the need to expand RSS cells (shakhas), recruit volunteers and activists for the RSS, and promote a militant Hindutva.<sup>172</sup>

When the [Sewa Bharati] coaching centre was started in Meerut, there were many hurdles. Many tried to have it closed. But the karyakartas [workers] persisted with determination... Many students attending the coaching centre at Harinagar participate in the Sangh Shiksha Varg [RSS annual training camp] training

every year... After return, they started Sangh Shakhas [RSS cells] in their Bastis [slums]. These Shakhas have an average attendance of 30–35. During the last four years, 20 students have received initial Sangh Training; 8 have completed Sangh Shiksha Varg [RSS annual training camp] and have now taken responsibility for Shakha work in their areas.<sup>173</sup>

Even medical help is associated with recruitment for the RSS:

In Gujarat, Sewa activities in fact began with a mobile dispensary, which paved the way for other lines of service... As a result, during the last couple of years, many local youths have expressed desire to participate in Sewakarya [RSS service activity]. Through the initiative of such youths, Samskar Kendras have already been established in eighteen villages. Likewise, a mobile dispensary started in a 'chawl' in front of Ashok Mills on Narora Road in Karnawati (Ahmedabad) paved the way for Bal Samskar Kendra [young children's inculcation centre] and even a Sangh Shakha [RSS physical and ideological training cell].<sup>174</sup>

## UNDERSTANDING RSS SERVICE NETWORKS

RSS service networks in India are complex, but the following points are important for understanding them:

- ▶ The RSS is both a tightly controlled and hierarchical organization and claims not to keep bank accounts nor does it pay income tax. At the same time, it works in and through a very wide range of front organizations. In important ways, especially in recent years, the local RSS itself *exists* as these front organizations.
- ▶ All RSS national service organizations, including the RSS's health, education and medical affiliates, are committed to Hindutva ideology and are members of the *sangh parivar*.
- ▶ Funding locally or from abroad goes to front

170 K. Suryanarayana Rao (All-India RSS Service Head), *Seva Disha – Building an Integrated and Self-Reliant Society*, Chennai, 1997, <http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha>.

171 K. Suryanarayan Rao, 'Concept of service – sewa and worship', *Sanghshakti Vijetreeyam*, Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Pratishthan, 21 December 1995, p.30.

172 <http://www.sewainternational.org/social.html>.

173 <http://www.sewainternational.org/economic.html>.

174 <http://www.sewainternational.org/economic.html>.

organizations created by the RSS and which are members of its *sangh parivar*. The RSS cannot directly receive funds from abroad without contravening the law (since it is notified as an organization of a political nature under the Foreign Contributions (Regulations) Act 1976 and later additions). However, many of its front organizations can receive foreign funds.

- ▶ RSS service and education networks cover a range of activities and groups, but the main focus is *adivasi* ('tribal') and *dalit* groups, *chil-dren* from these groups, and *educational* activities among these groups. Key areas of activity include *border territories*, areas (such as north-east India) that have a history of *independent, autonomous, regional or secessionist* movements, and areas that have significant *Christian* communities, Christian-run schools or Christian missionary influence.
- ▶ Even where RSS service organizations are seemingly undertaking humanitarian relief operations, such as during the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 or the Orissa cyclone of 1999, one consistent outcome is the creation of RSS schools and RSS cells (*shakhas*) among *adivasi*, *dalit* or poor populations.
- ▶ RSS fronts exist under an extremely wide variety of local names that often have independent corporate existence. They can co-exist with and work jointly on projects undertaken by the VHP, the Hindu Jagran Manch, the Bajrang Dal, the local BJP and various other outfits.
- ▶ Locally, the activities of RSS service organizations overlap with each other. All major RSS affiliates undertake work among 'tribal' groups, often in the same regions and districts. Similarly, one affiliate may organize events and activities which are participated in and attended by members and supporters of the other affiliates. For example, RSS one-teacher schools in 'tribal' areas (*ekal vidyalayas*) can be organized under the umbrella of the VHP, Sewa Bharati, Vidya Bharati, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram or all of these organizations.
- ▶ The VHP also runs a service network that is focused on similar kinds of activities as the RSS service network, including an obsession with *adivasi* groups. One way of conceptualising the VHP and RSS nexus among *adivasi* groups is that the VHP is often focused on conversion activities among adults, and the RSS often focused on ideological inculcation and training of children. The RSS is explicit that its service activities have the aim of 'catching them young'.<sup>175</sup>
- ▶ The RSS service department (*sewa vibhag*) considers *all* the various projects of Sewa Bharati, Vidya Bharati, Rashtra Sevika Samiti, the VHP, the VHP's Mahila Mandal, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, the Bharat Vikas Parishad, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and the one-teacher schools as part of its single vision and activities.<sup>176</sup>
- ▶ The clearest expressions of the interrelation of the activities of all the affiliates and their relation to the RSS's aims are in: the annual report by the all-Indian national general secretary of the RSS to the highest decision making corporate body of the RSS, its Central Assembly (Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha); reports to the RSS's three-monthly Central Executive Committee (Kendriya Karyakari Mandal); official publications of the RSS produced by its publisher, Suruchi Prakashan (Delhi); and speeches and statements of the Supreme Leader of the RSS and other senior office holders.

175 [http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha/sevadisha1/samajik\\_sanskara.html](http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha/sevadisha1/samajik_sanskara.html).

176 <http://www.hssworld.org/seva/sevadisha/sevadisha1/sevitas.html>.

## RSS EDUCATION NETWORKS

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The RSS massively expanded its sectarian educational and schools network across India from about the mid-1990s. Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan, usually known as Vidya Bharati, was founded in 1977 and is the main, but not only, RSS educational network. It runs an estimated 14,000–19,000 RSS schools. The cluster of RSS educational activities include the one-teacher schools (ekal vidyalayas) run by the VHP, Vidya Bharati, Sewa Bharati and the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. There is also a nationwide network of RSS pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, as well as college level, technical education and Hindutva teachers' bodies. Each of these organizations is linked to RSS strategic aims. RSS schools are typically called:

- ▶ Saraswati Vidya Mandirs (RSS schools, which can also include residential schools)
- ▶ Saraswati Shishu Mandirs (RSS primary schools)

- ▶ Shishu vaticas (pre-primary indoctrination)
- ▶ Sanskar kendras (ideological indoctrination centres and activities, often one-teacher schools operating in rural, 'tribal' or slum areas)
- ▶ Ekal vidyalayas (one-teacher schools) or ekalavyas
- ▶ Vivekananda Kendras / Vidyalayas

RSS schools go under a host of other local names, such as Bharatiya Vidya Niketan, Gyan Vidyalaya, Saraswati Bal Vidyalaya and Sewa Dham Vidya Mandirs. There is a range of RSS gurukulas run by the Karnataka-based Hindu Seva Pratishthan and the Jana Seva Vidya Kendra, and funded by bodies such as the Vikasan Foundation and the (US-based) Maharashtra Foundation. Of considerable significance in very recent years has been the importance attached by the RSS to the non-formal one-teacher schools (ekal vidyalayas) in 'tribal' and border areas.

## APPENDIX 7: HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH NAZI AND FASCIST IDEOLOGIES

### V. D. SAVARKAR, FOUNDER OF HINDUTVA IDEOLOGY

*If they grow stronger they can play the part of Sudeten Germans alright. But if we Hindus in India grow stronger in time these Muslim friends of the league type will have to play the part of German-Jews instead. We Hindus have taught the Shakas and the Huns already to play that part pretty well. So it is no use bandying words till the test comes. The taste of the pudding is in its eating.*

V. D. Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, G. Khare, Bombay, 1949, page 65

*Hitler knows better than Pandit Nehru does what suits Germany best. The very fact that Germany or Italy has so wonderfully recovered and grown as powerful as never before at the touch of the Nazi or Fascist magical wand is enough to prove that those political 'isms' were the most congenial tonics their health demanded... Pandit Nehru went out of his way when he took sides in the name of all Indians against Germany and Italy. Pandit Nehru might claim to express the Congress section in India at the most. But it should be made clear to the German, Italian or Japanese public that crores of Hindu Sangathanists in India who neither Pandit Nehru nor Congress represents cherish no ill-will towards Germany or Italy or Japan or any other country in the world simply because they had chosen a form of Government or constitutional policy which they thought suited best and contributed most to their national solidarity and strength.*

'Speech on India's Foreign Policy', Poona, 3.11.1938 in V. D. Savarkar, *Veer Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda*, A. S. Bhide, Bombay, 1941, pages 51–52.

*Germany was perfectly justified in uniting the Austrian and Sudeten Germans under the German Flag... The fact is that when Germany was weak, they [the British] partitioned [her] piecemeal. Now that Germany is strong, why should she not strike to unite all Germans and consolidate them into a pan-German State and realise the political dream which generations of German people cherished.*

'Speech on India's Foreign Policy', Poona, 3.11.1938 in V. D. Savarkar, *Veer Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda*, A. S. Bhide, Bombay, 1941, page 53.

In 1939, Savarkar's Hindu Mahasabha celebrated Germany's 'solemn revival of Aryan culture, the glorification of the Swastika, her patronage of Vedic learning, and the ardent championship of the tradition of Indo-Germanic civilisation' (M. Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 22 January 2000, page 224).

The Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* reported on Savarkar's speeches in exchange for the promotion of Germany's anti-semitic policies in India. (C. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in Indian Politics*, Hurst, London, 1996, pages 51–52).

This resulted in Savarkar receiving a copy of *Mein Kampf* from Germany. (M. Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 22 January 2000, page 224).

## B. S. MOONJE, K. B. HEDGEWAR, RSS FOUNDERS

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British reports had highlighted that from 1927, B. S. Moonje, an RSS co-founder was inspired to model the RSS on Fascist and Nazi movements. (M. Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 22 January 2000).

In 1931, Moonje visited Fascist Italy and met with Mussolini, by whom he was extremely impressed. Of the Fascist Balilla movement, which organized military training and fascist indoctrination of young boys, Moonje said: *The Balilla institutions and the conception of the whole organization have appealed to me the most... The whole organization is conceived by Mussolini for the military regeneration of Italy, Italians, by nature, appear ease-loving and non-martial, like the Indians generally. They have cultivated, like Indians, the work of peace and neglected the cultivation of the art of war. Mussolini saw the essential weakness of his country and conceived the idea of the Balilla organization... India and particularly Hindu India need some such institution for the military regeneration of the Hindus... Our institution, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh of Nagpur under Dr Hedgewar is of this kind, though quite independently conceived. I shall spend the rest of my life developing and extending this institution of Dr Hedgewar all throughout Maharashtra and other provinces.* (Moonje quoted in M. Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 22 January 2000, page 220).

The Italy visit inspired Moonje to promote these ideas among Hindus in Maharashtra and begin the organization of Hindu youth movements based on this fascist model. This included a conference on Fascism and Mussolini's political thought in 1934, presided by RSS founder K. B. Hedgewar and at which Moonje spoke. (M. Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 22 January 2000.)

*... unless we have our own swaraj with a Hindu as a dictator like Shivaji of old or Mussolini or Hitler of present day Italy and Germany... But this does not mean that we have to sit with folded hands until some such dictator arises in India. We should formulate a scientific scheme and carry on propaganda for it.*

Moonje quoted in M. Casolari, 'Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: archival evidence', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 22 January 2000, page 221.

## M. S. GOLWALKAR, RSS SECOND SUPREME LEADER

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*It is superfluous to emphasise the importance of Racial Unity in the Nation state. A Race is a hereditary Society having common customs, common language, common memories of glory and disaster; in short it is a population with a common origin under one culture. Such a race is by far the most important ingredient of a Nation... We will not seek to prove this axiomatic truth, that the Race is the body of the Nation, and that with its fall, the Nation ceases to exist.*

Madhav Golwalkar, second RSS supreme leader, in *We, or our nationhood defined*, Bharat Publications, Nagpur, [1939] 1944, page 21.

*... in Hindusthan exists and must needs exist the ancient Hindu nation and nought else but the Hindu Nation. All those not belonging to the national i.e. Hindu Race, Religion, Culture and Language, naturally fall out of the pale of real 'National' life... All others posing to be patriots and wilfully indulging in a course of action detrimental to the Hindu Nation are traitors and enemies to the National Cause... all those who fall outside the five-fold limits of that idea can have no place in the national life, unless they abandon their differences, and completely merge themselves in the National Race. So long, however, as they maintain their racial, religious and cultural differences, they cannot but be only foreigners, who may either be friendly or inimical to the Nation.*

Madhav Golwalkar, second RSS supreme leader, in *We, or our nationhood defined*, Bharat Publications, Nagpur, [1939] 1944, pages 45–6.

For Golwalkar, no minority was deserving of any 'right what-so-ever' or 'any obligations from the National race'. Minorities could: *live only as outsiders, bound by all the codes and conventions of the Nation, at the sufferance of the Nation and deserving of no special protection, far less any privilege or rights. There are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at the sweet will of the national race. That is the only logical and correct solution. That alone keeps the national life healthy and undisturbed. That alone keeps the Nation safe from the danger of a cancer developing into its body politic of the creation of a state within a state. From this standpoint, sanctioned [by] the experiences of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu peoples of Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long traditions but must also cultivate a positive attitude of love and devotion instead – in a word they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen's rights. We are an old nation; and let us deal as old nations ought to and do deal with the foreign races who have chosen to live in our country.*

**Madhav Golwalkar, second RSS supreme leader, in *We, or our nationhood defined*, Bharat Publications, Nagpur, [1939] 1944, pages 48–9.**

*German race pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the semitic Races – the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has shown how well nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.*

**Madhav Golwalkar, second RSS supreme leader, in *We, or our nationhood defined*, Bharat Publications, Nagpur, [1939] 1944, page 37.**



## APPENDIX 8: RSS LANGUAGES OF DECEPTION

**Pseudo-secular(ism)** – Hindutva organizations claim that the protection of minorities, including recognition of cultural distinctiveness or representation, affirmative action and related policies in a democratic society is illegitimate. This is also considered to be a 'pseudo-secular' effort by non-Hindutva parties to win 'vote banks' from minorities. However, Hindutva itself is not about creating a more genuine or expansive democratic secularism – its overriding aim is to create a Hindu nation-state. In Hindutva ideology, simply the presence of minority groups in a democracy is seen as a grievous insult to the 'Hindu nation'.

Hindutva guarantees 'genuine secularism' or **positive secularism** – the falsehood here is based on two claims: first, that Hinduism has always been tolerant, liberal and accommodating of other (*Hindu*) sects and traditions within it; and second, that Hindutva guarantees secularism. Neither claim is empirically or historically valid.

**Integrate into the national mainstream** – make groups, especially dalits and adivasis into supporters of Hindutva and the *Hindu* nation. 'Mainstream' is the RSS word for a vision of Hindu society organized by it.

**Social harmony** (samajik samarashta) or **social integration** – make dalits and adivasis give up their independent movements for emancipation and their autonomous aspirations. 'Social harmony' or 'integration' is about evading embedded caste barriers, accepting the legitimacy of the brahminical caste order and reducing dalit oppression to a question of personal understanding and contact. The RSS frequently calls for the banning of the word 'untouchability', but it has never called for the banning of the caste (*varna*) system. The overriding aim is to 'purify' dalits, integrate them into caste Hinduism and make them adopt the Hindutva world-view.

**Social integration, not social conflict** – the RSS views any independent movements for social justice as threats to its vision of an organic Hindu nation. 'Social integration' is an attempt to subvert or displace dalit and other movements for social justice.

**Social upliftment** – into a hierarchical caste order

**Anti-social** or **anti-national** forces or ideas – autonomous movements for social justice, independent identities, regionalist, secessionist or autonomous movements, Islam, Christianity, secularism, Hindus who oppose Hindutva

Inculcate **patriotism** or **nationalism** – allegiance to *Hindu nationhood* not to the secular, liberal and democratic ideas of nationalism that grew from the Indian independence movement, or in post-Independence India. When Hindutva groups speak of 'patriotism' or 'nationalism', they do not mean loyalty to the democratic, federal, secular union of India, but to the 'Hindu nation' and to Akhand Bharat ('Undivided India'). The 'Hindu nation' of the RSS includes not just the borders of India but Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Tibet, Sri Lanka, all of Myanmar, much of Afghanistan, and chunks of other south-east Asian countries.

Culture, **cultural values** – this is not 'Indian culture', but represents the Hindutva idea of 'sanskriti', brahminical, upper-caste, northern Indian religions as modified by the RSS

**All round development** – physical, mental and spiritual training of individuals into the RSS vision of Hindutva

Inculcation of **time honoured values and traditions**, the values of **Bharatiya Sanskriti, Dharma and patriotism** – education into Hindutva

**Imparting the correct sanskars, moral development** – ideological inculcation of Hindutva

**Moulding personalities** – turning individuals into RSS volunteers (swayamsevak) working in the service of the Hindu nation

**Character building** – a key RSS phrase, related to physical and ideological discipline inculcated in RSS shakhas

**The noble task of nation-building** – creating the Hindu nation

**Noble causes** – those related to the aims of Hindu sangathan

**Selfless service** – the idea of the ideal RSS member who is prepared to forego other personal

desires in favour of service for the key purpose of sangathan and Hindu nation

**Like-minded** organizations, people or thinking – a euphemism for RSS affiliates, organizations or individuals supporting RSS ideology

The RSS and its supporters also use a set of slogans to make the RSS and its activities appear to be harmless and committed to humanity. These

include: 'Service to humanity is service to God' (Narseva is Narayanseva); 'Let us ennoble the world' (krinvantu vishwaryam – 'let us Aryanize the world'); 'seva, sanskar, suraksha' – service, ideology and self-reliance are key slogans of a wide range of Hindutva groups, from the RSS to the Bajrang Dal and the BJP; 'A vision in action'; 'The whole world is one family'; 'Truth is one, sages call it by many names'; 'We achieve by our own efforts'; 'Let all mankind be happy...'

## APPENDIX 9: GLOSSARY

<b>Adivasi</b>	Literally 'first dwellers'. Refers to the 'aborigine' or 'tribal' populations that comprise 8-10 percent of India's population. Adivasis are often referred to by Hindutva supporters as people who have 'fallen' from Hinduism and must be converted to the Hindutva world-view. The RSS rejects the term 'adivasi' since it implies that 'tribal' people inhabited India before 'Hindu-Aryans'.
<b>Adivasi ('tribal') secessionist or autonomous movements</b>	In several Indian states and regions, including Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Assam, Darjeeling and Jharkhand, some adivasi groups are demanding either secession from or greater autonomy within the Indian union.
<b>Akhand Bharat</b>	'Undivided India', meaning both pre-partition India and a much larger RSS idea of 'Hindu territory' covering India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Tibet, much of Afghanistan, Kashmir, all of Burma, and large parts of other south-east Asian countries.
<b>Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)</b>	RSS student affiliate.
<b>Aryan, Aryanism</b>	Aryanism is central to Hindutva ideology, but it does not necessarily have the same connotations as the term 'Aryan' does in the west. The main Hindutva belief is that India was the original homeland of the Aryans, that Aryans bestowed civilization on the world, that Aryans had migrated from India and colonized the world, that Hindu religion is Aryan, the pre-Vedic Harappan civilization was Aryan, and that ancient Aryan-Vedic civilization was perfect and ideal.
<b>Ayodhya</b>	Town in Uttar Pradesh state and focus of intensive Hindutva activities. In 1992 the medieval Babri mosque in the town was destroyed by Hindutva groups and the VHP is currently working to build a Ram temple in its place.
<b>Babri mosque (masjid)</b>	Sixteenth century mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh state. Hindutva groups claim it was built over a temple that was the birthplace of the mythic God Ram. Destroyed by Hindutva mobs in 1992.
<b>Bajrang Dal (BD, Hanuman's Army)</b>	Extremely violent youth wing of the VHP, involved in considerable anti-Muslim and anti-Christian violence in India.
<b>Bajrangbali</b>	The Marathi version of the monkey god Hanuman, representing both fighting strength and subsidiary 'tribal' groups. Hanuman has been promoted among adivasi groups as a deity, clearly indicating the Hindutva desire to portray adivasis as children of a lesser god.
<b>Basti</b>	Urban tenement or slum, usually comprised of makeshift shelters.
<b>Bauddhik</b>	RSS ideological education.
<b>Bauddhik pramukh</b>	RSS / HSS head of ideological education.
<b>Bhagwa Dhwaj</b>	The RSS saffron flag of the 'Hindu nation, seen as the RSS's only 'guru' or 'true preceptor'. RSS devotion and ritual donation of money is to its flag.
<b>Bharat</b>	'India', but in its use by Hindutva groups, refers to an entirely Hinduized and sacred conception of the territory of India.
<b>Bharat Kalyan Pratishthan (BKP)</b>	Front set up by the VHP in India to enable it to receive funds from abroad.
<b>Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, 'Indian Peoples Party')</b>	Hindu nationalist political party formed by RSS workers, led by RSS members and currently heading the coalition that forms the Indian government. Its key ideologies are Hindutva cultural nationalism and 'integral humanism', another Hindutva ideology developed by an important RSS worker in the 1960s. The BJP slogan is 'One nation, one people, one culture'. BJP controlled states, such as Gujarat, have seen considerable Hindutva violence and massive expansion of RSS / VHP fronts. The Gujarat BJP and the Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi have been seriously implicated in the Hindutva carnage against Muslims in 2002.
<b>Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh</b>	RSS workers affiliate.
<b>Bharatmata</b>	Deity that is now made to represent the RSS's view of the 'holy motherland'. While Bharatmata has been an important Hindu goddess, there has been no major devotional tradition (sampraday) that is based on her exclusive worship. The RSS and VHP have used her to represent the 'Hindu nation' because there is not a single deity in

	the vast Hindu tradition that represents the RSS vision of Hindurashtra.
<b>Bhuj</b>	Town in Kutch district, Gujarat state.
<b>Communal, communalism</b>	In India, 'communal' and 'communalism' refer to ideology and practices of discrimination, hatred and violence against another group based on factors that include religion, caste, language, ethnic background or region.
<b>Crore</b>	Ten million.
<b>Dalit</b>	Literally 'downtrodden'. Those outside the Hindu caste system and referred to as 'untouchables' in the pre-Independence period. Subject to systematic institutional discrimination, hatred, prejudice and violence.
<b>Dargah</b>	A shrine or centre of pilgrimage and devotion in Muslim, most often sufi-influenced, traditions. A grave of a Muslim preacher considered locally to have been a saint.
<b>Dharma Sansad</b>	VHP religious 'council of the learned'.
<b>Ekal Vidyalaya</b>	Important 'one-teacher schools' – RSS / VHP schools typically run in remote tribal and border areas or urban slums. Aimed at propagating RSS ideology among the next generation of disadvantaged children and recruiting them to RSS causes. Usually run by Vidya Bharati, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Sewa Bharati and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram.
<b>FCRA</b>	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 1976. Primarily designed to prevent external financial resources from going to Indian political parties or affecting the Indian political and democratic process. Organizations notified to be of a political nature are also prohibited from receiving funds from outside India.
<b>FISI</b>	Friends of Indian Society International, a UK and US based affiliate of the HSS.
<b>Ganvesh</b>	Uniform, RSS / HSS uniform worn at shakhas and other events.
<b>Ghar vapasi</b>	Hindutva 'homecoming' ceremony – converting adivasis, dalits, Muslims and Christians to the Hindutva world view.
<b>Godhra</b>	A town in Gujarat. In February 2002, a train carrying supporters of the Ram temple campaign who were returning from Ayodhya was attacked just outside the town reportedly by a large Muslim mob, and almost 60 Hindus were killed. This became the trigger for the Hindutva pogrom in Gujarat state against Muslim communities.
<b>Golwalkar, Madhav Sadashiv</b>	The second RSS 'Supreme Leader' after Hedgewar's death. Very strong supporter of Nazi and Fascist ideas. His writings on the Hindu nation in the 1930s forbid any citizens rights for minorities and celebrated Nazi Germany's policies. The most important RSS personality after Hedgewar, and deeply revered in the RSS and its shakhas. Golwalkar's birth centenary in 2006 will be the focus for considerable sangh parivar activity in India and abroad.
<b>Guru dakshina</b>	A ritual of annual donation of money to the RSS / HSS saffron flag – the main way of collecting funds from members.
<b>Gurukula</b>	Traditionally, an institution of religious discipleship in which an initiate lives with and follows the teachings of a guru. Sometimes also means school. Used by RSS education affiliates to name some of its schools.
<b>Harijan</b>	A term used by Gandhi, meaning 'children of Vishnu (Hari)', to refer to dalits.
<b>Hedgewar, Keshav Baliram</b>	One of the main founders of the RSS and its first 'Supreme Leader'. He is deeply revered in the RSS and its shakhas. Together with B. S. Moonje, promoted Mussolini's political thought in India.
<b>Hindu (Half-) Marathon</b>	An annual run organized by the HSS.
<b>Hindu dharma</b>	Usually means Hindu religion or religious duty, but turned by RSS / VHP ideologues to mean the natural law and natural order whose key purpose is to uphold and strengthen the Hindu nation.
<b>Hindu Jagran Manch (HJM, 'Forum for Hindu Awakening')</b>	Violent VHP / RSS affiliate that works to convert Christians and adivasi populations to the Hindutva world-view. In Gujarat, it works closely with the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and the Bajrang Dal.
<b>Hindu nation</b>	The RSS family view is that India must become an exclusive 'Hindu nation' that would replace the current democratic, secular, federal republic. 'Hindu nation' is based on a two tier idea of citizenship – legitimate citizenship that Hindus possess by virtue of their religion, and a secondary or curtailed citizenship for minorities who follow what the RSS and VHP consider to be foreign, alien, invader reli-

	gions, such as Christianity and Islam.
<b>Hindu Sahitya Kendra</b>	HSS Hindutva literature dissemination centre and bookshop.
<b>Hindu Sevika Samiti</b>	The HSS UK's women's affiliate. Organizes about 30 weekly women's shakhas attended by around 500 women and girls. Dedicated to Hindutva ideology and aims.
<b>Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK (HSS UK)</b>	The RSS branch in the UK having strong and extensive links to Indian RSS. Organizes around 70 weekly physical and ideological training cells (shakhas) in UK and propagates RSS ideology among UK Hindus. Has about 1,500 regular attendees. At the core of the UK Hindutva organizations.
<b>Hindurashtra</b>	An exclusive Hindu nation-state, the primary goal of followers of Hindutva ideology.
<b>Hindutva</b>	Extremist ideology of Hindu supremacy and exclusive Hindu nationhood. Created by V. D. Savarkar in the 1920s. Key idea is that Hindus are those who share the blood of 'Vedic-Aryans', who adhere to upper-caste culture (sanskriti), and who consider India as their fatherland or holyland. India belongs only to Hindus. Minorities do not belong to India, since 'their fatherland and holyland' is elsewhere. Hindutva is the key political ideology of the RSS and its family of organizations.
<b>India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF)</b>	US-based fundraising wing for RSS projects in India.
<b>Jankalyan Samiti (People's Welfare Society)</b>	An RSS service affiliate working in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Orissa and various other states.
<b>Kalyan Ashram</b>	See Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram.
<b>Kalyan Ashram Trust (KAT)</b>	UK charity, part of the sangh parivar, that aims to raise funds for RSS 'tribal' projects in India.
<b>Karyakarta</b>	RSS / HSS worker or activist.
<b>Karyakarta Varg</b>	RSS / HSS workers camp.
<b>Karyalaya</b>	RSS / HSS office.
<b>Karyawaha</b>	Secretary.
<b>Kendriya Karyakari Mandal</b>	RSS / HSS central executive committee.
<b>Keshav Pratishthan</b>	Keshav Institute, the headquarters of the HSS UK in Leicester, named after Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, the RSS founder.
<b>Kutch</b>	District of Gujarat state in western India.
<b>Lakh</b>	One hundred thousand.
<b>Lok Kalyan Samiti (People's Welfare Society)</b>	An RSS service affiliate.
<b>Mananiya</b>	Venerable or honourable.
<b>Marg Darshak Mandal</b>	VHP religious advisory council.
<b>MLA</b>	Member of the Legislative Assembly, an elected state politician.
<b>Moonje, Balkrishna Shivram</b>	An early RSS founder, active promoter of militarism and Nazi / Fascist ideas in India, and revered by the RSS today as 'dharamveer' – hero in the religious struggle.
<b>National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT)</b>	Statutory body of the Indian central government that issues textbooks for the central government-controlled school system. State governments have their own state CERTs for their state school systems.
<b>National Hindu Students Forum (NHSF)</b>	UK student body set up by the HSS UK and modelled on the Indian RSS student affiliate. Promotes a range of RSS and VHP projects among UK students. Part of the HSS family. Shares HSS UK address.
<b>National Human Rights Commission</b>	Statutorily and legally empowered agency that monitors and aims to safeguard human rights in India.
<b>National Medicos Organization</b>	RSS health and medical affiliate.
<b>One-teacher schools</b>	See ekal vidyalaya.
<b>Organiser</b>	The Indian RSS's main English language weekly paper.
<b>Overseas Friends of the BJP (OFBJP)</b>	UK and US based sangh parivar organization that lobbies for and promotes BJP activities, policies and politicians abroad.
<b>Parampoojaniya (P.P.)</b>	The principle one to be venerated, applied to the RSS supreme leader.
<b>Paravartan</b>	Hindutva 'turning back' or 'reclamation' ceremony to convert adivasis, dalits, Muslims and Christians to the Hindutva world-view.
<b>Parivar</b>	'Family', but in the Hindutva context refers to the RSS family of allied organizations.
<b>Patidar</b>	'Landholder', a sub-caste group from Gujarat, of which Patels are a major section.
<b>Pir</b>	A Muslim preacher or religious leader in the sufi-influenced or mystical traditions.
<b>Prachar</b>	Propagation of RSS ideology.

<b>Pracharak</b>	Full-time RSS worker or propagator.
<b>Prant sanghchalak</b>	RSS regional head.
<b>Prarthana</b>	Prayers. The RSS has its own hymns, prayers, festivals and rituals, the meanings of which have hardly any relation to traditional Hindu devotion. The same RSS prayers, hymns and festivals are followed exactly, whether in India or abroad.
<b>Pratinidhi Sabha</b>	Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha is the annual central general assembly meeting of the Indian RSS. Akhil UK Pratinidhi Sabha is the HSS UK annual general meeting.
<b>Pratishthan</b>	Institute or foundation.
<b>Rashtra Sevika Samiti</b>	The RSS women's affiliate, formed in 1936. Organized like the RSS, runs women's shakhas and has a nation-wide structure. Follows a patriarchal ideology strongly opposed to feminism and genuine women's equality and emancipation. Dedicated to Hindutva.
<b>Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers Corps)</b>	A paramilitary, cultish organization formed in 1925-1926. Inspired by Fascist and Nazi ideas and modelled on Italian Fascist youth militia. Organized undemocratically, an all-male organization based on the idea of obedience to the Supreme Leader and of the Supreme Leader as the principle one to be venerated. Core ideology is Hindutva. Dedicated to turning India into an exclusive Hindu nation. Involved and implicated in serious anti-minority violence and hatred. Currently has several million members in India. Branches outside India usually called 'Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh'.
<b>Rugnalay</b>	Health project or 'hospital'.
<b>Saffron flag</b>	See Bhagwa Dhvaj.
<b>Sampark pramukh</b>	RSS head of contacts, networking, publicity and the media.
<b>Saffronization</b>	Takeover or domination by Hindutva organizations of previously non-Hindutva institutions or fields.
<b>Sangathan</b>	A key RSS method that means to organize, consolidate, discipline and strengthen all Hindus under its ideology.
<b>Sangh</b>	'Society'. The RSS; also used to refer to the RSS family.
<b>Sangh darshan</b>	RSS ideology.
<b>Sangh parivar</b>	A large family of organizations run and organized by, and annually reporting to the RSS. The RSS makes a strong distinction between its family and organizations outside it, including other Hindu organizations. The most accurate translation would be 'the close family of RSS allied organizations working under RSS ideology in order to further RSS aims'.
<b>Sangh Sandesh</b>	HSS UK newsletter available to HSS UK members.
<b>Sangh Shiksha Varg</b>	Annual HSS 8-10 day intensive physical and ideological training camp for its educational propagators.
<b>Sanghchalak</b>	HSS head (president).
<b>Sankhya</b>	Count, numbers attending an RSS / HSS shakha.
<b>Sanskar Kendra, bal sanskar kendra</b>	RSS young children's inculcation centres.
<b>Sanskriti, sanskruti</b>	The RSS / VHP view of Hindu culture, based on upper-caste, hierarchical, brahminic and Hindutva ideas. Linked inextricably to 'sanskritik rashtriyavad', an extreme cultural nationalism.
<b>Saraswati Shishu Mandir / Saraswati Vidya Mandir</b>	Usual name for RSS schools promoting RSS ideology among schoolchildren and mostly run by Vidya Bharati, the RSS education affiliate.
<b>Sarsanghchalak</b>	The Supreme Leader of the RSS in India and abroad.
<b>Sevikas</b>	Members of RSS / HSS women's affiliate.
<b>Sewa</b>	'Sewa' is a term that can mean giving help or assistance unconditionally to others who need it. It also has religious connotations – in helping others, one increases the likelihood of one's own 'salvation'. The RSS use of the term means undertaking service for the purpose of Hindutva consolidation and organization, typically extending the RSS's reach and influence and recruiting for the RSS.
<b>Sewa Bharati (SB)</b>	The RSS service affiliate. Works in conjunction with various RSS and VHP outfits to provide service activities and recruit for the RSS, especially among dalit and 'tribal' groups. Dedicated to the idea of 'Hindu nation'.
<b>Sewa Education Aid</b>	Sewa International UK project raising funds for RSS education affiliates in India.
<b>Sewa International India</b>	The RSS international fundraising wing, raises funds for and promotes RSS service projects among Indians outside India.
<b>Sewa International UK (SIUK)</b>	The RSS fundraising wing in the UK. Primarily raises funds for RSS service and education projects in India.

<b>Sewakarya</b>	RSS service activity.
<b>Shakha</b>	A central RSS method of organization. It means RSS cell or branch that meets daily (in India) or weekly (elsewhere). In a shakha, uni-formed RSS members undergo both physical training ranging (ranging from military drills and weapons training to playing games) and ideological training. RSS prayers to itself, its first two supreme leaders and to the Hindu nation are undertaken.
<b>Shibir, shivir</b>	Training camp.
<b>Shiksharthi, shikshaks</b>	RSS / HSS 'teachers' or ideological propagators.
<b>Shishu vaticas</b>	RSS pre-primary education projects, usually run by Vidya Bharati.
<b>Shivaji</b>	Seventeenth century general who founded the Mahratta kingdom / confederacy. A key symbolic figure for Hindutva organizations who claim that the Mahratta confederacy was a proto-Hindu nation based on war against Mughal (Muslim) domination. However, the detailed history of Shivaji and the Mahratta kingdom presents little support for this view, not least because Shivaji's major generals included Muslims, his release from capture was aided by Muslims, a key military adversary of his was the Hindu general of the Mughal emperor's army, the Mahratta confederacy fought Rajput (Hindu) armies, and Shivaji built mosques and churches in his kingdom to ensure religious toleration.
<b>Singh, Rajendra (the late)</b>	Former Indian RSS 'supreme leader'.
<b>SSVE</b>	See Sangh Shiksha Varg.
<b>Sudarshan, K. S.</b>	Current Indian RSS 'supreme leader'.
<b>Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM)</b>	RSS Hindu nationalist development affiliate that stresses economic nationalism and self-reliance according to Hindutva precepts. Appropriates the term 'swadeshi' which was used in the secular Indian freedom movement to refer to the policy of boycotting British goods.
<b>Swayamsevak</b>	RSS volunteer / HSS member.
<b>Taluka</b>	An administrative unit of rural districts in a state. Comprises a group of villages and normally has its headquarters in a town.
<b>Tribal</b>	An inaccurate shorthand term that refers to the adivasi populations in India, those officially recognised under the designation 'scheduled tribes'.
<b>Upadhyaya, Deendayal (the late)</b>	An RSS full-time worker and one of the founders of the Hindu nationalist Jan Sangh political party in the 1950s, the precursor to the current BJP.
<b>Utkal Bipanna Sahayata Samiti (UBSS),</b>	Major RSS affiliate in Orissa state.
<b>Utsav</b>	Festival. The RSS celebrates six distinctive festivals annually.
<b>Vanvasi</b>	The Hindutva term for adivasi, or the 'first dwellers' of India, the 'tribal' groups. The Hindutva term means 'forest dwellers' rather than original people, since Hindutva groups believe 'Aryan Hindus' were the original inhabitants of India.
<b>Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA, 'Tribal welfare centre')</b>	Violent RSS affiliate working to convert adivasi ('tribal') groups to the Hindutva world view and recruit them to the RSS. Involved in serious anti-Christian and anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat, including during the 2002 carnage.
<b>Varg</b>	Camp.
<b>Vedic</b>	Related to, or claiming to derive authority from one of the four Vedas, texts considered sacred in many caste Hindu traditions. The period during which the Vedas were composed.
<b>Vibhag</b>	Department, section or zone.
<b>Vidya Bharati (VB, Akhil Bharatiya Vidya Bharati Sansthan)</b>	RSS educational affiliate, runs a large network of RSS schools and educational projects in India. Dedicated to inculcating RSS ideology among schoolchildren.
<b>Vigyan Bharati</b>	RSS affiliate that describes itself as a 'science council'.
<b>Vijaya Dashmi</b>	Seen as an auspicious day in several Hindu religious traditions, and a focus for festivals.
<b>Vishwa Dharam Prasar Yatra</b>	VHP organized global journey to promote Hindutva and VHP campaigns.
<b>Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, World Hindu Council)</b>	Organization formed by the RSS in 1964 to 'unite Hindus' and to act as a 'church' of Hinduism. At the forefront of anti-minority violence and hatred in India. Launched various campaigns against Muslim monuments (including the 'Ramjanmabhoomi' movement to destroy the Babri mosque at Ayodhya), and against Christian minorities. Makes the claim that it represents all the Hindus in the world.

<b>Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK (VHPUK)</b>	UK branch of the Indian VHP, also closely associated with HSS UK. Works to promote VHP aims and goals in the UK. Closely linked to the Indian VHP's international section.
<b>Vishwa Sangh Shibir</b>	World RSS Camp.
<b>Vistarak</b>	RSS / HSS expansion and development workers, usually those working full-time to expand the RSS / HSS network in a new area.
<b>Waqf board</b>	Statutory agencies having constitutional status that oversee the welfare activities of Muslim communities, including maintaining mosques, graveyards and other religious sites.