

## Research Paper



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## IMPACT OF DR. HEDGEWAR'S IDEOLOGY ON INDIAN EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

**D**r Keshav Baliram Hedgewar founded the Rashtriya Swaymsevaka Sangh (RSS) in Nagpur on 28th September, 1925. His life was very eventful. He was a great patriot. He never came under the subjugation of British imperialism. In his school days he denounced the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Queen Victoria and the coronation of Edward VII. After completing the education of medical, he joined the Congress and became provincial secretary. Being fed up with the policies of congress he left it and started a voluntary organization RSS for the sake of welfare of the nation. He worked silently and never seeking publicity. His mission was development of common man by making them self-dependent which can be possible through both formal and informal education. He was constructive, practical and comprehensive in view of his philosophy on education. He inculcated the feeling of patriotism among common folk. Throughout the life, he tried for physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual development of people for welfare and upliftment of humanity, irrespective of caste. By the way of his plan of education, we can get to build the strong nation with peace and harmony. For him education is an instrument for harnessing human drives, and as consequences, it becomes to some extent a method of behavior modification. There are not many individuals like Dr. Hedgewar who devoted his life for the sake of the nation and established an organization which is the largest self-financed voluntary organisation in the world, and his ideology is immortal as today, a large section of the society has adopted it. Dr. Hedgewar was such a personality who let his creation speak rather than pushing himself to the front. Today, thousands of educational institutions and millions of Shakhas are running, following his ideology in world. Each and every member of Rashtriya Swayamsevaka Sangh, popularly known as RSS, is dedicated for the service of the nation and development of humanity.

**KEYWORDS:** Rashtriya Swaymsevaka Sangh, Swayamsevaks, Shakha, Vidya Bharati.



## INTRODUCTION

Everybody has heard about Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) but very few people in India are familiar with the name Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar who founded the RSS, in Nagpur on 28th September, 1925. Dr. Keshav Baliram Dr. Hedgewar was born on 1 April 1889 in a Brahmin family in Nagpur. Baliram Pant was his father and Revati was his mother. His parents were died in an epidemic of plague when he was thirteen year old. Mahadev Pant, and Sitaram Pant were his elder brothers who did every possible efforts for his education. He got admission in Neel City High School, Nagpur for school education but he was restricted from there so he completed his school education from Rashtriya Vidyalaya in Yavatmal and later in Pune. He passed the L.M.&S. Examination from the National Medical College Kolkata in June 1914.

Dr. Hedgewar actively participated in Indian National Congress in the 1920s. But he was fed up with their policies and politics. The riot of 1923 made him explore some new way for nation-building in India. Dr. Hedgewar founded the voluntary organisation Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Nagpur on 28th September, 1925, with the intention of promoting the concept of a united India based on indigenous ideology. His aim was to organise indigenous Indian community for its cultural and spiritual regeneration and make it a tool in getting the country free from foreign domination. He also created the female wing of RSS in the year 1936. He worked throughout day and night in order to strengthen the organisation. He inspired people to join his mission and thus went to many provinces of India to get their support.

The Sangh grew in Nagpur and very soon it began to spread in other provinces too. Dr. Hedgewar went to a number of places and inspired the youths for taking up the Sangh work. Gradually all his associates went to far-off cities for their further education and started 'Shakhas' there. A structural and functional unit of Sangh is Shakha which comprises of a small group of people gathered at a place for a small time period (usually one hour daily, weekly or monthly) for their extrinsic and intrinsic development by doing physical and mental exercises as yoga, pranayama, asan (posture) and playing games. He felt that shakha on a common platform that would instill the people to be a national character.

His technique was simple, inexpensive and unique. He called young boys in Shakha every morning or evening for one hour. During that time, besides,

playing games, he began to inculcate in them a sense of patriotism, unity, fraternity, discipline and selflessness, by singing of patriotic songs and narration of stories of patriots. He appealed to the youth to spare one hour a day for the Nation by attending the Shakha. He visualized that the one hour participation in the Shakha would ultimately transform the youth to devote greater time and energy in the service of the nation. Dr. Hedgewar was a good organizer and traveled extensively throughout the country for the expansion of Sangh work.

He devoted himself for the cause of social welfare. Continuous and strenuous spate of activities deteriorated his health. Often he suffered from chronic back pain. He started delegating his responsibilities to M.S. Golwalkar, who later succeeded him as Sarsanghachalak of RSS. In Sangh Shiksha Varg of 1940, he gave his last message to Swayamsevak and said, "Today, I am seeing a mini-Bharat before me. Let there be no occasion in the lives of any of you to say that you were once a Sangh Swayamsevak some years ago." His soul departed from his body on the morning of June 21, 1940 in Nagpur. His last rites were performed in the locality of Resham Bagh in Nagpur. It is his foresight and capability to establish facts that the RSS today is one of the world's largest self-financed social and cultural volunteer organisations.

## MEANING AND AIMS OF EDUCATION IN PERSPECTIVE OF DR. HEDGEWAR

Education is the manifestation of perfection already in men. To him, education is not only collection of information, but something more meaningful. He felt education should be man-making, life giving and character-building. It is the assimilation of noble ideas which should be given to young minds to gain confidence and make them as a national character. Education not only shapes the behaviour and overall personality of an individual but also helps in transformation of rich cultural heritage from one generation to other. Society has created a number of specialized institutions to carry out these functions of education which are known as "Agencies of Education". Agencies of Education can broadly be divided into three categories, viz. Formal, Informal and Non formal Agencies.

Formal institutions are purposely set up by the society for various functions of education. They are special organizations to impart education such as

schools, libraries, religious and cultural organizations.

Informal agencies include organizations that come into being without any systematic planning to hand over the social traditions, customs, knowledge and cultural practices. The family, play-group and the community organization are set up for child rearing, recreational activities and professional growth. The formal agencies have direct educational objectives in view, whereas informal agencies contribute towards educational development through other activities. Both these formal and informal agencies are inter-connected.

Non-formal education is imparted through organizations and institutions outside the formal system. According to UNESCO it is out-of-school education. The difference between informal and non-formal education is that the former takes place all the time informally or incidentally, whereas the latter is intentionally given outside the formal system. Non-formal education can be provided through correspondence courses, radio and television programmes, language laboratory, seminars, workshops, discussion groups, study circles, popular literature and public libraries.

In order to impart the education for all round development RSS set up The Vidya Bharati and Shiksha Bharti schools. Srimad Bhagavad Gita Vidyalaya, was set up at Kurukshetra under the initiative of Lala Nathu Ram which was inaugurated by the RSS chief M.S. Golwalkar in 1946. A Saraswati Shishu Mandir was

set up in 1950-51 in Gorakhpur, UP by Nanaji Deshmukh, then RSS Pracharak at Gorakhpur. The brochures now claim that the Vidya Bharati has been 'in the service of the nation since 1952' though this apex organization of RSS education was formally set up and given a name only in 1977-78. With the creation of the Vidya Bharati, regional committees such as the Shishu Shiksha Prabandh Samiti (Uttar Pradesh), the Hindu Shiksha Samiti (Haryana), the Samarth Shiksha Samiti (Delhi), etc., though conserved, were brought under its authority. The Vidya Bharati network now claims to be the 'largest educational NGO', not only in India, but in the world. RSS started gurukuls and schools to promote the Indian way of thinking. Vidya Bharati Sansthan operates about 40,000 schools in India with more than 40 lakh students but it aims to have at least one school in every block of every village in the country by 2017. Saraswati Shishu Mandir are a group of schools run by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. As of 2010, about 17,000 schools exist across India. All state-level committees are affiliated to the Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan educational system, headquartered in Delhi. Some of the schools follow NCERT books and CBSE syllabus. According to brochure of the Vidya Bharti the statistics of schools, Colleges teachers and the students under the organisation is given in table -1.

**Table -1: Formal Education All India overview 2012-13**

Sr. No.	Formal Schools	Schools					No. Of Students		Total	No. Of Teachers		Total	
		Co-Ed.	Males	Females	Resident	Semi Res.	Total	Males		Females	Teachers (Male)		Teachers (Female)
1	Pre-Primary	625	1	-	5	2	633	62,835	28,474	91,309	518	2,834	3,352
2	Primary	5,241	38	15	2	16	5,312	866,009	579,818	1,445,827	27,443	25,875	53,318
3	Middle	4,164	17	4	3	16	4,244	397,735	64,662	662,397	20,519	16,569	37,088
4	High School	1,980	163	119	17	74	2,353	311,047	180,473	491,520	13,754	10,036	23,790
5	Higher Secondary	655	129	66	10	63	923	316,901	124,900	441,801	9,178	3,637	12,815
6	Colleges & Training Schools	44	-	1	2	2	49	2,335	2,741	5,076	5,739	129	5,868
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12,709</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>13,514</b>	<b>1,956,862</b>	<b>1,181,068</b>	<b>3,137,930</b>	<b>77,151</b>	<b>59,080</b>	<b>136,231</b>

Statistics Taken from Vidya Bharti Brochure 2013

The Vidya Bharti brochure also gives statistics of informal education under the organisation as given in table-2.

**Table-2: Informal Education Sanskar Kendras & Single Teacher Schools**

Sr. Nos.	Informal Units	Units	Students (Males & Females)	Teachers (M)	Teachers (F)	Total	N.-S.- Teachers
1.	Sanskar Kendras	3,679	88,024	1,862	1,040	2,901	1,366
2.	Single Teacher Schools	6,127	149,667	3,136	2,945	6,081	1,054
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,806</b>	<b>237,691</b>	<b>4,998</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>8,983</b>	<b>2,420</b>

Statistics Taken from Vidya Bharti Brochure 2013

These schools put lot of emphasis on physical, intellectual, cultural, moral, and emotional development of students. Here education means overall development of a child, not an accumulation of words. It is well known fact that National development rests upon the goodness and greatness of its citizen which is determined largely by education. Thus, attention is paid for individual development and social development for nations' integrity. Thus RSS founded by Dr. Hedgewar is committed for personal and social development of an individual by providing education. According to him the education should be as given for all round development of an individual as given below;

### **1. Physical and Mental Development**

Education is a man-making process. It means arousing an individual to an awareness of their own worth, dignity and responsibility. It can only be possible if a person is physically healthy and mentally alert. After getting true education an individual must be physically well-developed and mentally alert citizen. So, even today, in schools run by RSS, physical exercise is mandatory and various games sports are organised for physical development of an individual. RSS teach following activities in daily Shakhnas for physical development:

- Warm-up exercises
- Yogasanas
- SuryaNamaskar
- Pranayam

Intellectual discussion such as tales, inspirational stories, reviews, long narrative stories, critical analysis of articles published in the news and abstracts, hymn of etiquette and quotations of great personalities are practiced in Shakhnas for mental development of an individual. Self-defense techniques are also developed and taught there in the Shakhna. Each and every one is taught how to be in discipline and inculcate the feeling to be a true patriot.

### **2. Moral and Spiritual Development**

The study of the teaching of Gita, Upanishads, the Vedas and biography of great patriots are a vital part of education for moral and spiritual development of an individual. Spiritual development means attainment of self-realization which is essential for transformation of total man. Moral and spiritual education required for world consciousness which increases power, courage and energy of a person. In schools prayers, pledges, national anthem, national songs motivational stories etc. are the activities organised on regular basis for moral and spiritual development of children. Yoga and pranayama are an integral part of curriculum.

### **3. Character and Personality Development**

Character development is a very important aim of any education. Practice of celibacy fosters mental, moral and spiritual development leading to purity of thoughts, words and deeds. In schools students are taught to inculcate a spirit of self-surrender, sacrifice help of others. The schools run by RSS foster education, by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded. In Shakhnas the karyakartas are taught to give up jealousy, conceit and learn to work unitedly for welfare of others. Purity, patience and perseverance overcome all obstacles. So each and every one is motivated to be courageous and keep continuity and consistency in work.

Despite, many hurdles the cheerful personality of RSS volunteers can be seen vividly. The practical aspects of life are emphasized in formal, informal and nonformal education. The acquired knowledge is applied in real life situation and turned into constant practice. The strong will is the sign of great personality of the man. Hence, training of feelings and emotions is essential so that the whole life is purified and sublimated. Many educational, cultural and social activities are organized in formal and informal ways throughout the year for character building and personality development.

### **4. Development of Weaker Section of Society**

Dr. Hedgewar dreamt for the universal education so that the backward people may fall in line with others. Therefore, several educational institutions were opened in far and remote areas of the nation to educate poor and banvasias. Jan kalyan Samiti was organized to take care of education of such nomads. If the children do not come to the school the teacher should reach them. Educated men went to the remote village to impart education to the children.

### **5. Education for Universal Brotherhood**

Although embracing and propagating universalism, he regarded Indian philosophy the best. Hinduism, the best culture as it manifests in different forms as it offers patience, tolerate and acceptance of all creed, caste and religion. His love for mankind knew no geographical boundaries. He always pleaded for the harmony and good relationship among people of different creed, caste and religion. Universal brotherhood can be reached by flinging down the walls of separation and inequality. Gandhiji was much impressed by the social harmony and eradication of caste in the Sangh when he visited the Wardha camp on

December 24, 1934. Thus, Dr. Hedgewar favoured education for every section of society, rich and poor, young and old, male and female, people living in cities and villages.

### **6. Education for Searching Unity in Diversity**

The true aim of education is to develop insight into the individuals so that they are able to search out and realize unity in diversity. Education should develop this sense which finds unity in diversity. No barriers of language or region stood in his way of service to the people. The volunteers of RSS generate the desire to serve the people in calamities, extend help to all needy. They work for elimination of divisions like caste, religion and creed. It is to such an extent that no information is gathered on the basis of caste.

### **7. Education of Masses and Dignity of Labour**

Dr. Hedgewar emphasized on the improvement of the conditions of the masses and for this, he advocated mass education. He looks upon mass education as an instrument to improve the individual as well as society. He wished that people work for their nation and there is no alternate of work. It is his teaching that RSS workers can turn unfavourable conditions favourable by doing hard toil. Unfailingly, Dr. Hedgewar used to go Shakha daily for usually of 1 hour. Besides physical exercises such as yoga, asan, warm-up, games he used to take part in the activities for moral and spiritual development. Today, this practice is followed in RSS schools and daily Shakhhas.

### **8. Patriotism and Man Making Education**

One need to love one's motherland just as one loves one's biological mother. A mother gives us birth a young one and nourishes for initial years, but our motherland does it for our life time. Country is not just a piece of land; it is a living being with its flora and fauna, with its culture running deep into its veins. The aim of RSS Shakhhas is to instill everyone with Nationalism and love for cultural identity. We can see Dr. Hedgewar's Nationalistic sentiments by visiting RSS affiliated schools. Vidya Bharti schools not only aim to train the students academically but also make them approach Nationalistic ways in life. Stories of great patriots and patriotic songs are in regular practice in order to arouse the feeling of patriotism. In order to arise the feeling of patriotism and to clear the concept of Nationalism, lectures from prominent members of society are delivered time to time in various festivities.

According to him, the ideal of all education and all trainings should be man – making. The educational philosophy of Dr. Hedgewar is a harmonious synthesis of the ancient Indian ideals. He not only stressed upon the physical, mental, moral, spiritual and vocational development of an individual but also advocated women education as well as education of the masses. There is pragmatic approach for getting knowledge. In the form of idealist view point, he insists that the aim of education is to develop the child with moral and spiritual qualities. In the pragmatists view point, he emphasized the great stress on the education technology, commerce, industry and science to achieve material prosperity.

### **9. Self-Education and Women Education**

Self-education is the self-knowledge which is the best guide in the struggle of our life. Man has an immortal soul which is the treasure –house of infinite power so he should have full confidence in him and strive to reach the highest goal of his life. Dr. Hedgewar has rightly pointed out that Indian women should secure a respectable place in this country. So, he created the female wing of RSS in the year 1936 in order to make women strong, fearless and conscious of their dignity. He insists that men and women are equally competent not only in the academic matters, but also in other spheres of life. Now in RSS schools thousands of women are working as a teacher and enjoying a respectful life. Today, RSS is running several social entrepreneurs for welfare of women in India.

### **10. Curriculum and Methods of Teaching**

According to Dr. Hedgewar, the prime aim of education should be all round development of an individual for the service of one's nation. He advocated the inclusion of all those subjects and activities, in the curriculum, which foster physical, mental, social emotional, moral and spiritual development of an individual. So, besides, science and technology the curriculum should include environmental studies, geography, music, art and physical education. Inclusion of Yoga is essential for controlling fleeting mental faculties by developing concentration and deep meditation.

Like Vivekanand, and Froebel Dr. Hedgewar emphasized the education to be child centered. According to him the child is the store and repository of all learning material. A teacher is a friend and guide of the learner. A teacher should teach according to the

needs, abilities and interests of students in order to make their all-round development. Learning by doing, learning by playing, excursion, demonstration and lecture methods of teachings are emphasized.

Dr. Hedgewar was a nation builder, a visionary, a thinker and a moulder of human minds. He remained a bachelor and worked tirelessly to spread the organization he founded. Late RSS leader H V Seshadri in 1988 wrote in his book "A Vision in Action" that the RSS work as keeping the spirit of freedom, facing internal threats to national unity, strengthening national morale and meeting the threat of conversion by inducement, striving for social harmony, social justice, helping people facing natural calamities and espousing nationalist, value based education and character building. RSS sees politics and power as means to achieve this goal.

## CONCLUSION

Viewed in the light of contemporary thought, Dr. Hedgewar was actually a legendary figure who worked for the nation. Devotion to the service of motherland and bringing social harmony were unique character in his personality. He studied deeply the social and political decline of India and attempted to prescribe a workable formula to eradicate all social inequalities. In his view, the realization of universal love and brotherhood can be the tools for awakening and liberation of modern India. He wished to remove social evils by giving re-orientation to politics, sociology, economics and education. As a sociologist he believed in absolute values which have to be realized by a good system of education. As an educationist he tried to develop a feeling of nationalism and international understanding.

There are not many individuals like Dr. Hedgewar who established an organization which is the largest and most enduring in the world and today, a large section of the society have adopted it. Dr. Hedgewar was such a personality who let his creation speak rather than pushing himself to the front. His educational thoughts are of much significant in connection with patriotism and the values of human life.

He is no more but he will be remembered for ever on this earth. His teaching will continue inspiring the coming generations. He devised a novel and unique methodology to make people conscious. He proved to be a master strategist and a motivator that millions of people now forget their personal gains and comfort for the national cause. This is the secret of his successful

mission. Future generations will judge him as the greatest ever patriot and unifier that India has ever seen.

I say to people, who are enthusiastic to know about RSS activities, come to the Shakha and learn about the RSS culture. RSS is undoubtedly the best NGO to practice Nationalism.

## MAJOR IMPLICATIONS OF DR. HEDGEWAR'S IDEAS

The major educational implications from Dr. Hedgewar's vision and mission can broadly be drawn as following.

- Dr. Hedgewar's philosophy of education 'the learning to do,' 'learning to be' and 'learning to live together' is universally adopted worldwide. His philosophy of education is based on universal principles of morality and ethics. He wanted to teach the common masses of India the ideals of tolerance, universal harmony and power of unity.
- He gave much emphasis on learning by doing. He focused on learning objectives. He convinced people the facts and consequences of doing hard toil day and night. His work has given credit to modern society that there are thousands of educational institutions and thousands of Shakhass in India where education for all round development of an individual is imparted formally, informally and nonformally.
- According to him activity should be the guiding principle of any scheme of education. He wanted every activity in schools and colleges in order to make each and every child a civilized patriotic citizen. So, today Inter-school and inter-collegiate competitions are organised in order to enable the students learn how to sacrifice personal and selfish interests for the sake of the larger interests of society and development of mass.
- He stressed the need for effective participation in the teaching-learning process. Teacher should motivate the students to acquire knowledge and develop in them scientific temper and civic responsibility.
- He made a strong appeal for raising the status of women along with that of man. He against the medieval ideal of India that women were not given enough opportunities for self-development. Today, both boys and girls are studying in RSS schools and both male and

female teachers are giving education in these schools. He also created the female wing of RSS in the year 1936. Today millions of women are associated with this wing who are ready to render their services for the national cause.

- According to him education preserves the culture rather than changes of social values. Today we can see preservice and applications of thoughts of great Indian patriots in its literature.
- Moral and spiritual development is essential for common brotherhood; therefore World Yoga day is celebrated globally on 21 June every year.
- Environmental education is viewed as an integral part of the education process. It should aim at building up a sense of values, contribute to public well-being and concern itself with survival of the human species. Environmental education enables them to manage the environment in which they live through a judicious use of resources. So, Environmental studies have been made a compulsory part in school and college education.
- The study of political science targets to mould the future citizens into the frame of a civic society where citizens are aware of their rights, respect democratic ideals and work for a welfare society with shared responsibility. Education for democratic citizenship is a set of practices and activities aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society.

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