



RSS

Interviews

साक्षात्कार

RSS

INTERVIEWS

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प्रस्तावना

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ की चर्चा माध्यमों में खूब चल रही है। अनेक प्रकार के विरोधों के बावजूद संघ कार्य का विस्तार एवं प्रभाव समाज जीवन में लगातार बढ़ रहा है। संघ के विरोधक भी नए-नए मनगढ़ंत, आधारहीन, असत्य आरोप संघ पर लगा रहे हैं। भिन्न-भिन्न सामाजिक विषयों पर संघ के विचार एवं दृष्टिकोण स्पष्ट करने वाले साक्षात्कार **नवभारत टाइम्स**, **द इकनोमिक टाइम्स**, **हिंदुस्तान टाइम्स**, **टाइम्स ऑफ इंडिया**, **लाईव मिंट** और **पंजाब केसरी** जैसे प्रथितयश दैनिकों में प्रकाशित हुए हैं। उन्हें एकत्र प्रकाशित करने से विभिन्न विषयों पर संघ की अधिकृत भूमिका सबके संज्ञान में आएगी ऐसी आशा है। ये साक्षात्कार अलग-अलग समय पर प्रकाशित होने के कारण कुछ स्थानों पर पुनरुक्ति का दोष स्वीकारते हुए भी, उन्हें जैसे प्रकाशित हुआ, वैसा ही देने का प्रयास किया है।

- प्रकाशक

Why This Book?

The RSS, nowadays, is often in news. Despite being opposed by many, the RSS's work is consistently growing in expansion and influence in the society. The detractors are relentlessly putting new, false, baseless, fabricated allegations on RSS. Interviews explaining RSS's views on different contemporary issues were published in renowned dailies like *Navabharat Times*, *The Economic Times*, *Hindustan Times*, *Times of India*, *Live Mint* and *Punjab Kesari* during the period January to October 2016. A compilation of these in a booklet form may help the reader to know exact opinions and stand of RSS on different contemporary issues. However, as these interviews were published in different publications at different times, there are chances of repetition in questions or answers. Nevertheless we are publishing them as they had appeared.

- Publisher

जातिगत आधार पर आरक्षण सही

संघ का मानना है कि सैकड़ों वर्षों से भारत में कुछ जातियों के साथ भेदभाव का व्यवहार हुआ और उन्हें शिक्षा, सुविधाओं, सामाजिक सम्मान से वंचित रखा गया जिस वजह से वे पिछड़े रहे हैं। उन्हें सब के साथ लाने के लिए आरक्षण का प्रावधान संविधान में है। जब तक यह भेदभाव का व्यवहार रहेगा तब तक आरक्षण भी रहेगा। क्योंकि सामाजिक भेदभाव का व्यवहार जाति के कारण था, इसलिए आरक्षण का आधार भी जाति ही रहना चाहिए, आर्थिक नहीं। आर्थिक तौर से पिछड़े वर्ग को सरकार अन्य सुविधाएं और सहायता जरूर दे सकती है। आरक्षण सहित दूसरे मसलों पर संघ के प्रचार प्रमुख मनमोहन वैद्य से बात की पूनम पाण्डे ने :-

क्या युवा वर्ग भी संघ के साथ जुड़ रहा है?

बड़ी संख्या में युवा संघ के साथ जुड़ रहे हैं। हमने 2012 में संघ की वेबसाइट पर ऑनलाइन 'जॉइन आरएसएस' प्रावधान 'कुरु किया था। इसके जरिए 2012 में इस माध्यम से प्रति माह 1000 युवक जुड़ने के लिए अपनी उत्सुकता बताते थे। इस संख्या में 2013 में 2500 प्रतिमाह, 2014 और 2015 में 7000 प्रतिमाह और 2016 में 10,000 प्रतिमाह, ऐसी लगातार वृद्धि हो रही है। संघ के साथ परिचय होने के बाद संघ की प्राथमिक शिक्षा प्राप्त करने हेतु 7 दिन के निवासी वर्ग लगते हैं। इन वर्गों में 14 से 40 इस आयु के 1 लाख 12 हजार युवक गत वर्ष सहभागी हुए थे। इसका अर्थ है कि इस संख्या से छः गुना याने 6 लाख 72 हजार युवक गत वर्ष प्रत्यक्ष संघ के संपर्क में आए हैं। इन शिविरों में अपना शुल्क देकर 7 दिन वहीं रहना पड़ता है। फिर भी इसमें सहभागी होने वालों की

संख्या लगातार बढ़ रही है।

क्या संघ बीजेपी की गाइडिंग फोर्स है?

नहीं। बीजेपी की अपनी विचारधारा है। उसकी प्रेरणा संघ विचार ही है, लेकिन वह स्वतन्त्र संगठन है।

तो संघ की समन्वय मीटिंग में पीएम से लेकर मंत्री तक आते हैं, इस पर सवाल भी उठते हैं?

विविध क्षेत्र में संघ के स्वयंसेवक काम कर रहे हैं वह साल में दो बार मिलते हैं। अपने-अपने अनुभव 'शेयर' करते हैं। यह निर्णय करने वाली मीटिंग नहीं होती। मोदी जी स्वयंसेवक के नाते पहले भी ऐसी मीटिंग में आते थे। इससे पहले के स्वयंसेवक प्रधानमन्त्री भी ऐसी समन्वय बैठक में आए हैं। जो भी आते हैं वे स्वयंसेवक के नाते आते हैं। सरकार के द्वारा क्या काम चल रहा है, वह बताना चाहते हैं। यह तो वे पब्लिक को भी बताते हैं, वही यहां मीटिंग में भी बताते हैं। संघ का मानना है कि साथ मिलकर चर्चा करने से ज्ञान वृद्धि होती है, अनुभव बढ़ता है। उसमें क्या दिक्कत है।

आरक्षण को लेकर क्या राय है, कब तक चलेगा ऐसे?

सैकड़ों वर्षों से भारत में कुछ जातियों के साथ भेदभाव हुआ। जब तक यह भेदभाव रहेगा तब तक आरक्षण भी रहेगा। लेकिन भेदभाव खत्म हो उसके लिए प्रयास होना चाहिए। अभी आरक्षण का फायदा कमजोर वर्ग में जो अधिक मजबूत है उसे मिल रहा है, जो कमजोर में भी कमजोर है उसे फायदा नहीं मिल रहा। इसका राजनीतिकरण ज्यादा हुआ है। इसलिए नॉन पॉलिटिकल लोगों को मिलाकर एक कमिटी बनानी चाहिए जो यह रिव्यू करे कि जिन लोगों के लिए आरक्षण की व्यवस्था की गई थी उन्हें आजादी के 67 साल बाद भी इसका फायदा क्यों नहीं मिला और इसके लिए योजना बने कि वह उन तक जल्द से जल्द पहुंचे। आरक्षण एक बैसाखी है लेकिन अभी जरूरी है। लेकिन जब ठीक समाज खड़ा हो जाएगा एक समान समरस होगा, तब शायद इसकी जरूरत नहीं होगी।

एजुकेशन सिस्टम में संघ क्या बदलाव चाहता है?

अब तक की केंद्र सरकार ने शिक्षा के संबंध में जितने आयोग गठित किए हैं उन आयोगों ने जो सुझाव दिए हैं वह लागू करें तो भी काफी है। सभी ने नैतिक शिक्षा का आग्रह रखा है, हम भी यही चाहते हैं। भारत की शिक्षा आधुनिकता के साथ भारतीय भी हो, अलग से कुछ नहीं कह रहे हैं। शिक्षा के उद्देश्य और कंटेंट पर विचार होना चाहिए, सिर्फ धन कमाने वाली शिक्षा नहीं बल्कि जीवन जीने की दिशा देने वाली शिक्षा होनी चाहिए, यह मुख्य बात है।

संघ परिवार से जुड़े कुछ लोगों ने बयान दिए कि हिंदुओं को ज्यादा बच्चे पैदा करने चाहिए, संघ का क्या मानना है?

संघ ने ऐसा कभी कुछ नहीं कहा। संघ प्रमुख ने अपने बयान में कहा है कि एक नैशनल पॉपुलेशन पॉलिसी बननी चाहिए। 50 साल के बाद जो लोग रहेंगे उनके लिए जरूरी नैचुरल रिसोर्स भी हमारे पास रहने चाहिए। आगे जाकर जवान लोग भी काम करने के लिए देश में होने चाहिए। इसको ध्यान में रखकर एक नैशनल पॉपुलेशन पॉलिसी बननी चाहिए जो सब पर लागू हो। बच्चे कितने पैदा करने चाहिए यह परिवार का निजी विषय होता है।

जिस देश में गरीबी है, बेरोजगारी है वहां क्या पॉपुलेशन असन्तुलन इतना बड़ा इश्यू है?

विभाजन क्यों हुआ भारत का.....पॉपुलेशन इंबैलेस था इसीलिए ना? इतनी बड़ी घटना, विभाजन की विभीषिका हमने देखी है। क्या उस पर विचार नहीं करना चाहिए? सभी देश इस विषय में जाग्रत और सतर्क हैं। विभाजन कोई नहीं चाहता था। कांग्रेस भी नहीं चाहती थी। फिर भी विभाजन क्यों हुआ? उसका क्या आधार था? विभाजन से फायदा तो किसी को भी नहीं हुआ, फिर भी विभाजन हुआ। अगर हम इतिहास से सीखेंगे नहीं तो क्या होगा..... सीखना चाहिए।

Nothing anti-India should be tolerated

Opposition parties are increasingly targeting the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which is the ideological mothership of the Sangh Parivar. Inside and outside Parliament, the Congress and the Left have squarely blamed the RSS for many of the controversies - including the suicide of Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula and the standoff in the Jawaharlal Nehru University - that have enveloped the Narendra Modi government. Dr. Manmohan Vaidya, All India Prachar Pramukh of the RSS, defends his organisation and dismisses accusations against it as "frivolous and false". Edited excerpts from an exclusive interview with Praveen S Thampi :-

Ever since the BJP came to power in New Delhi, the RSS is being dragged into every controversy ranging from the JNU issue to a student's suicide in the university of Hyderabad. Political leaders such as Rahul Gandhi and student leaders of JNU all accuse the RSS of having a hidden agenda that they say is being carried out by the ABVP and the Central government. How do you respond to these allegations?

The Congress, the Left parties and their leaders, even when they were in power, were consistently opposing and defaming the RSS over frivolous and false premise. Whenever they were in trouble they would blame the RSS

now and then. But the people of Bharat began to see through their lies and stopped believing them. There is nothing new about it. All these allegations are unfounded and false.

When the ministry of human resource development instructed all central university campuses to fly the national flag, the political stand adopted by its critics was to ask if the RSS flew the Tricolour in its office. What do you have to say to this?

To fly the national flag compulsory in government funded institutions is purely the government's decision. Where does the RSS come into the picture? The national flag by the way, has been hoisted on Independence Day and Republic Day at the RSS headquarters by its senior functionaries.

Does the RSS feel it is better to reach out to people directly through its new outreach programs, like the IT Milans aimed at the new generation, than by replying to political allegations?

The people of Bharat are aware of the lie behind such political allegations. They know RSS through the discipline and service of the Swayamsevaks. As a result, people's admiration, support and trust in the RSS is consistently growing. The RSS has been working to organize the entire society on the basis of a national character and discipline. Reaching out to all sections of society is a natural process of this mission. This has been going on since 1925. IT Milans began due to the emergence and specificities of the IT field. What has it got to do with political allegations?

You have clarified that the Sangh wants to bring change through social work and not through government. But ever since this government has

come to power, critics have been accusing the RSS of implementing its ideological agenda through the ministries of HRD and culture. How would you like to respond to these critics?

In your question itself you have answered it all. When you describe them as critics of the RSS, they are bound to criticize the RSS even on false, baseless premise. The BJP is a party with an ideology that reflects in its manifesto that they had made public before the 2014 elections, saying what they will do if voted to power. Now that the people have voted them to power, they are implementing their manifesto. Let them fulfill the promises they made to the people.

The khaki shorts & white shirt Ganavesh (uniform) has been the identity of the Sangh for a long time. Reports hint that a new uniform that is more contemporary is under consideration. Could you please elaborate on this?

Actually, selfless service and discipline is the identity of the Sangh Swayamsevak and they have been exhibiting it whether they are in uniform or not in uniform. And they will continue to exhibit the same (its core identity) even in the new uniform, if it gets changed.

Regarding the JNU issue, do you think there should be zero-tolerance towards anti-India sloganeering or should we bring such fringe groups into the national mainstream by reaching out to them proactively? How do you view the whole controversy and the government's response to it?

Nothing anti- India should be tolerated. One should differentiate between anti-India and anti-government. There should be a process of dialogue, addressing the grievances and attempting to change the mind. But talking

about this particular case/instance, it is not just sloganeering. It is the mindset that is consistently nurtured that leads to committing violence, or condoning violence, or supporting violence and anti-national activities.

What are the main topics that would come up at the Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) in Nagaur in March?

The ABPS is our largest policy-making body that meets annually, every March. This time, the ABPS will meet on March 11 to 13 at Nagaur in Rajasthan. An annual report of the organizational activities and achievements will be presented by Sar Karyavah (General Secretary). Participants will share some of their new experiments, experiences, initiatives and observations. Annual planning for the coming year will also be discussed. From mid-April to June-end, there will be annual summer training camps (around 70 camps) of 20 days' duration throughout the country. Detailed discussions about the planning of these camps will be held there. Along with discussing the present national scenario, some resolutions also will be taken up for discussion at the ABPS.

(The Economic Times, Feb. 28, 2016)

We never thought of RSS as a custodian of religion

*Manmohan Vaidya, all India prachar pramukh of the RSS,
in conversation with Smriti Kak Ramachandran.*

Does the Sangh Parivaar see itself as the custodian/torchbearers of the Hindu society and religion and why?

No. We never thought of the RSS as a custodian of religion or anything. We only create awareness about our ancient cultural values among people. It is a false allegation against the RSS, by those very people who pose themselves as a custodian or savior of the entire society. They see the RSS through the prism of religion.

What according to Sangh is its role in the present Indian society?

The RSS basically is engaged in the work of character building and organizing the entire society of the country. Society needs people with integrity, character, discipline, work culture, awareness and pride about our ancient spirituality - based view of life. It needs people with a feeling of love and a bond for all irrespective of caste, language, way of worship et al. Only then can the country march ahead, progress and prosper. Creating such people is the role of Sangh and we are seeing more and more people coming forward to do some social work, just out of this

bond of love. Swayamsevaks are running more than 1,50,000 service projects throughout the country in the fields of education, health, economic self reliance, self protection and imparting cultural values (Shiksha, Swasthya, Swavalamban, Suraksha and Sanskaar).

How far do you think the RSS' social and religious views matter to the common Indian.

The RSS does not work in religious arena. But the cultural, social views and conduct of swayamsevaks in society has resulted in growing credibility and confidence about the RSS. This is the source of widespread and consistent growth of the organisation. All sections of the society welcome, accept, support and trust RSS across Bharat.

Hinduism allows pursuing different disciplines and beliefs within it. The importance given by the RSS to the worship of Lord Rama or devotion to cows is seen as an attempt to narrow down an essentially diverse faith.

In RSS we have swayamsevaks who follow different religious disciplines and beliefs (including Christianity and Islam). Some may worship Lord Rama as a deity but for many Lord Rama is an embodiment of our cultural values and is adored by all irrespective of one's gender, caste, religion, language or province. The cow has been the backbone of our prominently agrarian society because of the medicinal importance of its milk, urine and dung. It is becoming more relevant seeing the menace created by excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, resulting in the growing importance of organic farming.

Even other countries are studying and accepting the importance of Bharatiya breed of cows. It has nothing to

do with faith. In Rajasthan there is a Muslim working for cow protection and having a Gaushala.

Often the RSS and its affiliates like the VHP underscore that Hinduism is under attack from other religions? This, when the RSS says Hinduism is a way of life.....

The RSS has never blamed others and thinks that we ourselves are responsible for the present condition of Hindu society. Hence we are working amongst Hindus for social transformation. But Hindus are attacked and discriminated by people from a particular religion who think that Hindus do not subscribe to the faith they believe in. What happened to pandits in Kashmir, Riangs and Chakmas in Mizoram? Their only fault was they were Hindus and refused to convert. What has happened recently in Malda , West Bengal? Somebody from UP said something (allegedly blasphemous) some months ago. The person is arrested and in police custody. Why were the Hindus in Malda attacked, their shops burnt and property looted? It happened only because Hindus are in minority and the administration is biased.

The RSS was supposed to pass a resolution on population imbalance. You had sought a wider debate on the Upamanyu Hazarika Commission's report that illegal migration from Bangladesh is threatening to reduce the indigenous population of Assam.

Sarsanghachalak Mohan ji Bhagwat in his Vijayadashami speech has already addressed this issue stressing the need to have a national population policy that looks at the total resources available and young hands needed for our country after 50 years. We have discussed this issue in our last national council meeting (ABKM) at Ranchi in October 2015.

BJP President Amit Shah recently said there is no question of compromising the core ideology of Sangh Parivar in any action of the central government or the BJP. How much weight does the RSS pull in shaping BJP's policies?

I cannot speak on behalf of Amit Shah or BJP but I think BJP as a party has its own ideology which is reflected in its manifesto that BJP made public before the 2014 Parliamentary elections.

Bhaiyyaji Joshi said at the Pratinidhi Sabha that the prosperous should not demand reservation and it has to be seen if benefits of caste-based quotas have reached the intended beneficiaries. This was followed by the RSS saying it backs quotas for SC/ST/OBCs in its current form. Is there pressure from the BJP to not articulate the Sangh's stand on reservation?

Unfortunately, social discrimination has been practiced in Hindu society for centuries and it is based on birth in a particular caste. Such sections were deprived of the facilities and self-honor others were enjoying. Reservations were provided for such class to bring them at par with others. As long as there is social discrimination practiced in our society, reservations should continue. We all should work together to end caste-based social discriminatory practices and create a 'Samarasa Samaj'. If the benefit of reservation has not reached the most deserving section of the society even after more than 65 years of independence, we need to look into it and come with some corrective measures to realize the vision of the Constitution makers, at the earliest.

The RSS has passed resolutions for accessible, affordable and quality healthcare and education, you have flagged budget cuts for these welfare sectors;

which are the other areas where you think the government needs to focus more?

It is essential that quality education and healthcare facilities be accessible and affordable to all. Not only the government but social institutions, educational trusts and social leaders also should take initiative for this. That was the focus of the resolutions passed at the Pratinidhi Sabha – 2016 in Nagaur (Rajasthan).

The RSS has been complaining that there has been a surge in the attacks against RSS members. Your comment.

It is really a matter of serious concern that RSS members are attacked and killed mercilessly. In Kerala one Sujith was assaulted and killed in front of his old parents and family members by CPM goons. Recently a peaceful protest march of BJP supporters was attacked with stones and iron rods by CPM workers injuring 26 including ex. BJP state president of Kerala V. Muralidharan. What is shocking is no political party and so-called ‘torch bearers of humanity’, votaries of freedom of expression or democracy have come forward to condemn this murderous vendetta. No media has covered this dastardly incident in prime time or written editorials or held discussions on TV channels. But such violence will not deter the confidence, commitment and resolve of RSS workers to serve Bharat Mata.

There has been a demand, especially by the youth to push for decriminalisation of homosexuality. Dattatreya ji also indicated at the India Today conclave that it is not a crime. Do we see the RSS agreeing to the opinion that homosexuality should be decriminalised?

Dattareyji himself has clarified in his tweets that “homosexuality is not a crime, but socially immoral act in

our society". He has not advocated punishment, but they have to be treated as a 'psychological case'. Gay marriage is institutionalization of homosexuality. Hence it should be prohibited. Approach to homosexuality should be 'no criminalization, no glorification either'.

Changing the uniform is one indicator of the RSS moving with the times, what are the others areas where we will see changes in future? Has there been any decision yet, on allowing marriage for full-time pracharaks?

Changing with time has been a characteristic of Hindu way of life. Accordingly, changes also occur in RSS functioning from time to time and this tradition will continue. There is a misconception about Pracharak. There may be at least 3,00,000 active workers of the RSS holding some charge. Not all of them are Pracharaks. Most of the Sangh work is carried out by earning members with families or by students. In many districts, there is not even a single Pracharak and still growth is visible in these areas. There are a few who are not paid, but decide to devote all their time to doing the work of the RSS as their 'first priority'. These are called 'Pracharaks'. They are hardly one percent of the total number. When a Pracharak wants to marry he may opt for it and continue to work as a RSS Karyakarta. He then ceases to be a Pracharak as his priority naturally will be family matters.

(Hindustan Times, March 20, 2016)

‘RSS’s reverence for Babasaheb not new’

The RSS has been trying to prove its affinity with Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution. Its all-India prachar pramukh Manmohan Vaidya spoke to Akhilesh Kumar Singh about Sangh’s views on the dalit icon :-

How does the RSS view Ambedkar?

Ambedkar was a great patriot, who strived for a transformation in Hindu society based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. He effectively led a movement to fight against unjust and inhumane caste discrimination prevailing in Hindu society. His struggle was aimed at empowering the deprived sections to enable them to lead a dignified life. Besides, he was a visionary, an excellent scholar, eminent economist, foreign policy expert, labour reformer, educationist and, of course, constitutionalist. We want to bring these aspects of Babasaheb’s personality to the forefront.

Why is the RSS suddenly so interested in Ambedkar?

Neither reverence for Ambedkar nor respect for his efforts to end caste-based discrimination is new for the RSS. Right from its inception, the RSS did not believe in caste discrimination and untouchability. When Mahatma Gandhi visited the RSS camp in Wardha (near Nagpur) in 1934, he lauded the absence of untouchability in the RSS,

which is on record. After Ambedkar's demise in 1956, Shri Guruji Golwalkar (the then Sarsanghachalak) paid tribute to him as a Leader who possessed the sharp intellect of Adi Shankaracharya and the compassionate heart of Bhagwan Buddha.

It was because of the initiative of Shri Golwalkar that all Shankaracharyas and Dharmcharyas passed a resolution that untouchability has no place in Hindutva or Hindu Dharma in a Dharma Sammelan (religious conclave) at Udupi (Karnataka) in 1969. In the RSS, we remind ourselves of the contributions made by great sons and daughters of Bharat (which includes Sages, Kings and Queens, Thinkers, Philosophers, Social reformers, Freedom Fighters, Scientists etc.) through Ekatmata Stotra (Verses of Unity), on a daily basis. This Stotra includes the names of great social reformers like Narayan Guru, Ambedkar, Mahatma Phule and Thakkar Bapa which is sung with reverence all over India in RSS programs. So, this is not a sudden decision or a reaction.

During centenary celebrations of Dr. Ambedkar in 1991 a mammoth gathering was addressed by the then Sarsanghachalak Shri Rajjubhaiyya (Prof. Rajendra Singh), Shri A.B. Vajpayee and Bhante Gyanjagat ji and paid their tributes to this luminary.

Is it because he was against Islamic expansion?

No, not really. (Although you admit that he was against Islamic expansion). Babasaheb was surely for Bharat. He was well aware of the soul of Bharat and never took any step that went against it even while protesting against the ills prevailing in Hindu society. In 1983, a pleasant coincidence took place. Birth anniversary of Dr. Hedgewar (the founder of the RSS), Chaitra Shukla Pratipada, the beginning of the Hindu calendar and Ambedkar's birthday,

April 14, fell on the same day. That day, RSS swayamsevaks under the leadership of Dattopant Thengadi initiated a social movement called '*Samajik Samarasata Manch*' to end caste-based social discrimination and create a harmonious society. A decade later an agitation started in Aurangabad to rename Marathwada University as Dr. Ambedkar University. The RSS not only openly and whole-heartedly supported this demand but also worked tirelessly to calm down the inimical atmosphere created by some political leaders and parties.

Was he not a strong anti-Brahmanical social structure lobbyist?

'Brahmanism' is a politically motivated publicity jargons fabricated by forces with vested interests. If it means caste-based discrimination and inhuman practices like untouchability, then the RSS also stands against it. Babasaheb was never anti-Brahmin. His mentor was a Brahmin. He was against all forms of casteism and caste-based discrimination. There are many social reformers who were from Brahmin community who fought against such social evils. It was possible for Dr. Ambedkar to accommodate all because he wanted a united and progressive Bharat with integral approach instead of divisive one.

Is it that the saffron fold is trying to woo Dalits and also restrain the community from conversions?

We are not a political outfit. So no question of wooing any community. We are working to undo the injustice done to a section of our own society by our own people, bridge the gap and create a harmonious society at the earliest. As the 125th birth anniversary of Ambedkar (1891-2016) follows the 125th birth anniversary of Hedgewar (1889-

2014), the RSS took special efforts to take the true message of social harmony and national awakening that was dear to both these great sons of Bharat Mata.

(Times of India, April 3, 2016)

Hindu Rashtra Stands for the way of life in Bharat

There are several theories about what the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) believes in, and they are variously employed to interpret the actions and intentions of the Sangh and its affiliate bodies across the country. A proper assessment of its ideas is important not only because it is a massive organization that arguably holds sway over right-wing thought in India but also because of its increasing prominence in social and public life.

In an interview with Pragya Tiwari, Manmohan Vaidya talks about the Sangh's vision for the country and its views on secularism, minorities and some of the fissures in society it is accused of widening.

Vaidya is from Nagpur, where the Sangh is headquartered. His father, M.G. Vaidya, has been one of RSS's foremost ideologues. Manmohan Vaidya became an RSS pracharak in 1983 and has since looked after HSS (Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh) work in the US and the West Indies, worked as prant pracharak of Gujarat, been inducted into the all-India team of the RSS, where he currently serves as all-India prachar pramukh. Edited excerpts from the interview :-

The RSS has been sceptical about the use of the word secularism in the context of India - why is that?

Secularism is the most misused word in Bharat and is

invoked mostly to pamper communal forces. Secondly, the way it was introduced in the preamble of our Constitution creates doubts. During constitutional debates, inclusion of the word secularism was discussed, debated and it was decided against. Dr. Ambedkar also thought it was not necessary.

Our Constitution already has all the provisions giving equal rights to all religious groups, including all minorities, to practice, preach and propagate their faith. Still secularism was included in our Constitution, in 1976, during the Emergency, without any need, demand or debate - when many opposition leaders had been put behind bars by the Indira Gandhi government.

Secularism is irrelevant in Bharat. It originated in Europe as a response to theocratic states. In Bharat, we never had a theocratic state. Here, all religions have been treated equally for centuries. Look at the Parsis, the Jews, the Syrian Christians, all came from outside and settled in various parts, making Bharat their home and practicing their religion freely, without any persecution and discrimination.

Like **Swami Vivekananda** said in the Parliament of World Religions in 1893, *“we go beyond tolerance and we accept all ways of worship to be true”*. The essence of *Hindutva* is spiritual democracy.

But what is the harm in the word being included in the Constitution?

We haven't got anything against the grammatical meaning of the term but due to bad intent and usage it has become synonymous with anti-Hindutva /anti-national ethos. In practice, secularism is being used to further a communal agenda-to favour one particular community over others.

Saying that Muslims have the first right on national

resources, as Manmohan Singh did, is that a secular statement? Why should our state provide funds for Haj or any religious pilgrimage? Even Muslim countries don't give grants for Haj. I am told that Haj is fulfilled only if you do it with your own means.

Temples are subjected to government scrutiny and intervention, but minority places of worship are not. Is this secularism? The likes of (Asaduddin) Owaisi are not communal but very secular!

This minority-ism is fostering separatism and harming the unity of this ancient, great country. The idea of secularism has been misused by these so-called secular political parties to further their own interests. Moreover, any discussion about misuse of secularism is dubbed as opposition to secularism and favouring theocratic state. This is a blatant lie and falsification of facts.

The RSS seems unconvinced about the idea of minority rights. Why is that?

In Bharat, traditionally, we believe that all religions lead to the same destination and hence are equal. Ninety-nine per cent of Muslims and Christians in India are converted, having origin in Bharat. Then how can a mere change of faith make them qualify as minorities?

In Bharat, Parsis and Jews are the actual minorities, because they have come from outside with their own religion. But they have refused to be tagged as "minority" and never asked for any special privilege. The talk of minority interests is nothing but vote bank politics.

If everybody is equal before the law why should we have a minority commission? A single human rights commission can address any injustice done to anyone.

But in light of communal violence such as the 2002 riots and the Sachar Committee report it can be

argued that minority rights need protection.

The reason behind the poor state of Muslims as highlighted by the Sachar Committee is that the majority of them (65-70%) live in Bihar, Bengal and Uttar Pradesh-states that had been economically backward. These states were ruled by so-called secular parties for most of the time since Independence. According to Sachar Committee, the economic condition of Muslims in Gujarat is much better than in West Bengal.

As for riots, they have been happening before 2002 too. Let's not forget Bhagalpur, Maliana (Meerut), Kokrajhar. Who was ruling the concerned states when these riots happened?

Instead of blaming the ruling party, it is important to try and understand why these riots happen. If you look at the communally sensitive spots in riot-prone cities you will notice that they are invariably in Muslim majority areas.

Why don't riots happen in Hindu majority areas? I have never seen riots in Nagpur where I grew up but when I moved to Gujarat, in 1983, I noticed communal riots invariably happening during Hindu festivals in these sensitive areas. Riots are bad and must be avoided but talking only about 2002 riots is wrong.

Other instances of communal violence based on accusations of love jihad and cow slaughter are on the rise. How would you explain them?

They are separate issues. Sangh did not coin the phrase "love jihad". It was used for the first time by justice K.T. Sankaran in a Kerala high court judgment. He saw a pattern of people hiding their real identities while getting into relationships. We are not opposed to bonafide inter-religious marriages, but if it is a part of some kind of design then it is a serious matter that should be discussed and rebuffed.

As for cow slaughter, it is not a religious issue but an economic one. Importance of cows grew as we became an agrarian society. It is observed that excessive use of chemical fertilizers is impacting our soil and affecting the food we eat. Importance of organic farming is increasing. The Indian breed of cow is important for organic farming. Medicinal properties of cow products helps everyone (people of all religions), not just vegetarians.

From Gandhi to Bahadur Shah Zafar, everyone has spoken about the protection of cows. Cow slaughter is already banned in J&K, a Muslim-majority state.

But the conversation about the importance of cows to our economy and society can no longer be separated from incidents in Dadri and Una.

We are opposed to violence in this matter and any other, but laws that exist should be enforced. Also, there has been a lot of false information circulated about Dadri and Una. Now the truth is emerging in the case of Dadri. As far as Una is concerned, the emerging facts indicate that it was stage-managed.

It is often said that the RSS has reservations about the Indian flag. Is that true?

The Indian flag as it was adopted by our Constitution must be respected by all. There have been people from the Sangh who have given up their lives to protect the flag so there is no question of us not accepting the flag. We are not interested in changing it.

Was there no objection to the flag when it was adopted?

The tricolour flag emerged in political scenario in 1921. It was Gandhiji's idea to have a flag representing all major communities. Hence a tricolour flag with red (not saffron) at

the bottom, green in middle and white at the top representing Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

Then itself, lot of people objected, calling it a communal flag. The very idea of identifying each community separately and trying to forge unity among them was termed as communal thinking. They demanded to have a non-communal, national flag.

This demand was so strong that All India Congress Working Committee appointed a seven member committee (popularly known as flag committee) to look into the matter. After hearing both the sides, the flag committee came to a unanimous conclusion.

The flag committee report published in 1931 says, *“It was decided that our flag should be artistic, distinct and non-communal. It was decided unanimously that it should be of one single colour. And if there is a colour that is more distinct than another, one that is more acceptable to the Indians as a whole and one that is associated with this ancient country by long tradition it is the saffron kesari colour.”*

The flag committee recommended a rectangular saffron-colour flag with a blue charkha on top corner. The communalization of the colour saffron has happened post-Independence - particularly post the insertion of the word secular in the Constitution, when the definition of what is communal and what is secular began to get distorted.

Both the RSS prayer and oath feature a pledge to Hindu rashtra. How does the RSS define that phrase?

Rashtra is often equated with nation in English. But the evolution of nation in Europe is a phenomenon of 15th century, as a reaction to the theocratic state. This was never the situation in *Bharat*. Here the concept of *rashtra* (nation) has existed since *Vedic* times, based on a shared view of life by all people living in *Bharat*, evolving into a

unique way of life, *Sanskriti*.

There is a distinction between nation and state. State is a political association, nation means the people. Well-known French philosopher **Ernest Renan** had this to say about “*What is a nation*” :

“The soil provides the substratum, the field for struggle and labour, man provides the soul. Man is everything in the formation of this sacred thing that we call a people. Nothing that is material suffices here. A nation is a spiritual principle, the result of the intricate working of history, a spiritual family and not a group determined by the configuration of the earth.

Two things which are really one go to make this soul or spiritual principle. One of these things lies in the past, the other in the present. The one is the possession in common of a rich heritage of memories and the other is actual agreement, the desire to live together and the will to continue to make the most of the joint inheritance.

Man cannot be improvised. The nation like the individual, is the fruit of long past spent in toil, sacrifice and devotion. Ancestor worship is of all the forms the most justifiable. Since our ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men and glory, I mean real glory-these should be capital of our company when we come to found a national idea.”

So, Hindu rashtra is an adjective of rashtra (people of Bharat) and stands for the way of life that people practise in India. The Hindu-ness of our society lies in recognizing the divinity within each human being but also in accepting that religion is a personal matter.

You can choose any path you like to your spiritual goals. *Hindutva* is the same as *Bharatiya* values. The confusion also arises because *Dharma* is wrongly translated as religion in English.

So there is no contradiction between a Hindu rashtra and a secular nation?

No. The best way to understand this is through a quotation by **Tagore** about Bharat in his essay “**Swadeshi Samaj**” :

“To feel unity in diversity, to establish unity amidst variety-this is the underlying Dharma of Bharat. Bharat does not regard difference as hostility, she does not regard the other as enemy. That is why without sacrifice or destruction she wants to accommodate everybody within one great system. That is why she accepts all ways and sees the greatness of each in his own sphere.

Because of this virtue, in Bharat, by seeing others we wouldn't get frightened as we don't consider any society or people as our enemy. Each fresh conflict will enable us to expand ourselves. The Hindu, the Buddhist, the Muslim and the Christian will not fight each other and die in Bharat - here they will find a meeting point. That meeting point will not be non-Hindu, but very specifically Hindu.”

Dr. Radhakrishnan has observed that *Hindutva* (Hinduism) is not a religion: it is a commonwealth of many religions. If you accept the Hindu way of life you are free to follow any religion you like.

In that case, where does the impulse for initiatives like ‘ghar wapsi’ come from?

As Hindus we do not believe in conversions. There are many Muslims and Christians who attend RSS shakhas but we do not seek to convert them. They keep following their own faith. A senior ideologue of the RSS, M.G. Vaidya, was professor of Sanskrit in a college run by Scottish Church in Nagpur.

Once, one of his colleagues, a Christian, asked him if he can join the RSS. Mr Vaidya replied, “*Oh! Sure! For*

that you need not leave your faith. Only you have to accept that there is salvation outside Church also.” On this the Christian professor quipped that he cannot accept this as he will lose his zeal to convert people.

The great Sarvodaya leader, **Acharya Vinoba Bhave** said, *“Salvation through this way only is non-Hindu and salvation through this way also is Hindu”*.

However, it is commonly known that a lot of people were converted en masse here and there is a growing urge among them to reconnect to their roots. Facilitating this urge to reconnect to roots is ‘*Ghar Wapsi*’ or home coming. It can be seen as a process of de-conversion.

(Live Mint, August 14, 2016)

विश्व में श्रेष्ठतम बने भारत

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ की विचारधारा, संघ के उद्देश्य, संघ द्वारा की जाने वाली राष्ट्र की परिकल्पना, संघ पर मीडिया के एक धड़े द्वारा लगाए जाने वाले आरोपों, विपक्षी दलों द्वारा संघ को लेकर की जाने वाली राजनीति जैसे तमाम मुद्दों पर 'पंजाब केसरी' के सतेंद्र त्रिपाठी व आदित्य भारद्वाज से राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के अखिल भारतीय प्रचार प्रमुख डॉ. मनमोहन वैद्य ने की खरी-खरी बात :-

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ विश्व का सबसे बड़ा मानव संगठन है, संघ की स्थापना के 90 वर्ष पूरे हो चुके हैं, किस तरह की अनुभूति होती है?

अनेक विरोध, अवरोध, बाधाओं को पार करता हुआ संघ कार्य लगातार बढ़ रहा है। समाज में इसकी स्वीकृति, स्वागत, समाज का सहकार, सहयोग, सहभाग तथा समर्थन भी बढ़ रहा है। इसमें कोई दोराय नहीं कि संघ कार्य का लगातार विस्तार हो रहा है। आज इतने वर्षों बाद देश की परिस्थिति और समस्याएं देखकर लगता है कि संघ कार्य में ऐसी बाधाएं, अवरोध जानबूझ कर खड़े न किए गए होते तो शायद समाज की और अच्छी स्थिति रही होती। संघ कार्य की यह सारी प्रगति, कार्यविस्तार अपने कर्मठ स्वयंसेवकों के बलबूते पर कर पाया है। स्वयंसेवकों द्वारा समर्पण भाव से संघ कार्य करते रहना ही संघ की ताकत है।

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ का उद्देश्य क्या है। संघ किस तरह की राष्ट्र की परिकल्पना करता है?

भारतीय अवधारणाओं के आधार पर अपना भारत दुनिया में

श्रेष्ठतम स्थान प्राप्त करे यह संघ का एकमात्र उद्देश्य है। वह आर्थिक दृष्टि से संपन्न एवं स्वावलंबी बने, सामरिक दृष्टि से संपूर्ण विश्व में अजेय बने, सभी प्रकार के ज्ञान का (भौतिक तथा आध्यात्मिक) एक अच्छा केंद्र बने जहां दुनिया भर से लोग जीवन जीने का सलीका सीखने के लिए आएँ और जीवन का अध्यात्म आधारित (स्प्रिचुअल) एकात्म एवं सर्वांगीण दृष्टिकोण जो भारत में हजारों वर्षों से विकसित हुआ है, जो भाषा, प्रान्त, मजहब, संपन्न, अमीर-गरीब, ग्रामीण, शहरी, वनवासी आदि के भेदों से ऊपर उठकर हम सभी को एक सूत्र में जोड़ता है, वह समाज जीवन के हर क्षेत्र में चरितार्थ होता हुआ प्रत्यक्ष आचरण में दिखाई दे। ऐसा समतायुक्त, शोषणमुक्त, निर्दोष, समरस, संगठित समाज निर्माण करते हुए यह लक्ष्य प्राप्त होगा। ऐसे ही समाज के निर्माण कार्य में संघ लगा हुआ है।

विपक्षी राजनैतिक दल शैक्षणिक व सांस्कृतिक प्रतिष्ठानों में वैचारिक फ़ैलाव के बहाने संघ कार्यकर्ताओं की घुसपैठ का आरोप लगाते रहते हैं। इस पर आप क्या कहेंगे?

यह केवल उनकी राजनीति है। अब भारत के शैक्षिक व सांस्कृतिक प्रतिष्ठानों में भारत का, इस धरती का अध्यात्म आधारित एकात्म एवं सर्वांगीण विचार नहीं दिखेगा तो क्या विदेशों का-पश्चिम का विचार दिखेगा? भारत के शैक्षणिक एवं सांस्कृतिक जगत में स्वतंत्रता के बाद भी जो पश्चिमी या अभारतीय विचारों का प्रभाव दिख रहा है। यदि वहां भारतीय विचार को प्रतिष्ठित करने का प्रयास किया जाए तो इसे घुसपैठ कैसे कह सकते हैं। यदि कुछ प्रयास किए जाते हैं तो वह एक प्रकार से औपनिवेशिक व्यवस्था और पूर्वाग्रही मानसिकता को तोड़ने का उपक्रम है।

अपने त्यागी और समर्पित कार्यकर्ताओं के बल पर राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ ने समाज और देश में सेवाभावी संगठन के रूप में एक प्रभावी भूमिका निभाई है लेकिन राजनीतिक लोगों और मीडिया के कुछ समूहों द्वारा संघ की आलोचना की जाती है।

इस पर आपका क्या कहना है?

बेबुनियाद एवं झूठे आरोपों के बीच ही संघ पला है, बढ़ा है। कार्यकर्ताओं की लगन, निष्ठा, परिश्रम एवं त्याग के बल पर संघ अनेक विरोध, अवरोधों को पार करता हुआ लगातार बढ़ रहा है, उसका विस्तार और समाज में प्रभाव भी बढ़ रहा है। मीडिया ने भी पहले संघ के साथ थोड़ा अन्याय किया। संघ के ऊपर लगाए गए बेबुनियाद आरोपों को तो मीडिया प्रसिद्धि देता रहा है लेकिन संघ के किसी अधिकारी या सरसंघचालक ने उसका उत्तर अपने भाषण में दिया तो उसे प्रसिद्धि नहीं मिलती थी बल्कि भाषण के अंश को तोड़-मरोड़कर समाज के सामने प्रस्तुत किया जाता था। लेकिन अब परिस्थितियां कुछ बदली हैं और संघ का विचार भी समाज तक पहुंचाने के लिए मीडिया अनुकूलता दिखा रहा है। यह संघ के समाज में बढ़ते हुए प्रभाव का ही परिणाम है।

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ ने देश की राजनीति में उपराष्ट्रपति से लेकर प्रधानमंत्री और कई राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्री दिए हैं। क्या इस कारण विपक्षी राजनीतिक दल बार-बार संघ को घेरने की कोशिश करते हैं?

संघ के स्वयंसेवक राजनीति में प्रभावी भूमिका में नहीं थे तब भी संघ का विरोध ये लोग करते ही रहते थे। उनके विरोध के बावजूद संघ कार्य तथा संघ का समाज जीवन में प्रभाव बढ़ता गया तो विपक्षी राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा संघ का बेबुनियाद विरोध और तीव्र होता गया। वे संघ का नाम बार-बार अकारण उछालते रहते हैं। हर विषय में बिना कारण संघ का नाम घसीटना यह उनकी निराशा का ही प्रतीक है।

विपक्षी दल आरोप लगाते हैं कि संघ आरक्षण को खत्म करना चाहता है। इस विषय पर आपका क्या कहना है?

आरक्षण के बारे में संघ ने समय-समय पर प्रस्ताव पारित कर अपनी भूमिका कई बार स्पष्ट की है। संघ का मानना है कि हिन्दू समाज में दुर्भाग्य से प्रचलित जिस जाति आधारित भेदभावपूर्ण

व्यवहार के चलते अपने ही समाज का एक वर्ग पिछड़ गया है उसे सबके साथ आगे आने के लिए आरक्षण की सुविधा आवश्यक है। अपने समाज में यह जाति आधारित भेदभाव का व्यवहार जब तक चलता रहेगा तब तक आरक्षण की आवश्यकता रहेगी। समाज के सभी वर्गों को मिलकर इस जाति आधारित भेदभाव के व्यवहार को ही समाप्त करना चाहिए, कारण सभी एक ही मां के पुत्र होने के नाते, भाई-भाई समान हैं।

सरकार के दो वर्ष के कार्यकाल को लेकर आपका क्या मत है। क्या आपको लगता है कि भाजपा देशवासियों की अपेक्षाओं पर खरी उतर रही है?

भारत में आजादी के बाद करीब छः दशकों तक एक ही विचारधारा के लोगों की सत्ता रही है। पहली बार अपने बलबूते एक राष्ट्रीय विचार की सरकार केंद्र में आई है। ऐसे में लोगों की अपेक्षाएं ज्यादा हैं और वह स्वाभाविक भी है। मुझे लगता है कि इस पृष्ठभूमि पर वर्तमान समय में मूल्यांकन करने के लिए दो वर्ष का कालखंड बहुत कम है।

राहुल गांधी ने संघ पर महात्मा गांधी की हत्या करने का आरोप लगाया था। बाद में कोर्ट में वह साफ मुकर गए। उन्होंने कहा कि संघ ने नहीं संघ से जुड़े लोगों ने उनकी हत्या की थी। आपको नहीं लगता कि इस तरह के बयान देकर बेकार का विवाद पैदा करने की कोशिश की जाती है?

शायद उनकी यह राजनैतिक मजबूरी हो सकती है। उनका सत्य से कोई लेना देना तो है नहीं। भारत की न्याय प्रक्रिया पर भी उनका भरोसा नहीं है ऐसा उनका आचरण है। भारत की न्याय प्रक्रिया द्वारा सर्वोच्च अदालत में गुनहगार साबित हुए आतंकवादियों का गौरवगान करने वाले, भारत की बर्बादी, देश के टुकड़े करने की बात करने वालों के समर्थन में वह निसंकोच खड़े दिखाई देते हैं और भारत की न्याय प्रक्रिया द्वारा अनेक स्तर पर निर्दोष स्थापित हुए संघ के खिलाफ मनगढ़ंत झूठे आरोप लगाते रहते हैं।

संघ विचारधारा से प्रेरित मुस्लिम राष्ट्रीय मंच जिस तरह इंद्रेश जी के मार्गदर्शन में अपनी गतिविधियों को अंजाम दे रहा है। क्या इसके कुछ सकारात्मक परिणाम दिखाई देते हैं?

मुस्लिम राष्ट्रीय मंच, यह मुसलमानों के द्वारा मुसलमानों के बीच में राष्ट्रीय विचारों के आधार पर चलने वाला एक मंच है। उनकी प्रेरणा भी अपना यह प्राचीन राष्ट्र ही है। राष्ट्रीय विचार से चलने वाले हर अच्छे कार्य में संघ का सहयोग रहता ही है। वैसे इनको भी है। यह स्वतंत्र मंच है। उसके क्या परिणाम हैं यह वह ही अच्छी तरह बता सकेंगे।

(पंजाब केसरी, सितम्बर 16, 2016)

नया गणवेश संघ को ज्यादा स्वीकार्य बनाएगा

राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ (आरएसएस) के कार्यकर्ताओं की पहचान रही है उनकी खाकी हाफ पैंट। पर इस विजयादशमी से संघ का गणवेश बदल जाएगा। अब वे फुल पैंट में दिखेंगे। इस बदलाव की पृष्ठभूमि और संघ से जुड़े अन्य पहलुओं पर शिवेंद्र सुमन ने आरएसएस के अखिल भारतीय प्रचार प्रमुख मनमोहन वैद्य से बातचीत की। प्रस्तुत हैं उस बातचीत के अंश :-

स्थापना के करीब 90 साल बाद आखिर ऐसा क्या हो गया कि राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ को गणवेश बदलना पड़ा?

अपने उद्देश्य की पूर्ति के लिए समय के साथ परिवर्तन किसी भी जीवंत संगठन का लक्षण है। इन 90 वर्षों में केवल गणवेश ही नहीं, संघ की प्रार्थना, आज्ञाएं, घोष की रचनाएं, सेवा-संपर्क-प्रचार जैसे कार्य विभाग, अन्यान्य गतिविधियां - ऐसी अनेक बातें हैं जो बदली हैं या नई जुड़ी हैं। उसी परंपरा में गणवेश में भी बदलाव हो रहा है।

इस बदलाव से संघ को क्या फायदा होगा? कुछ नुकसान भी हो सकता है क्या?

इससे संघ के साथ काम करने में समाज के लोगों को अधिक सहजता रहेगी। युवाओं का संघ से जुड़ना तो लगातार बढ़ ही रहा है। उसमें और अधिक सहजता आएगी। नुकसान का तो कोई कारण ही नहीं है।

हर संगठन या संस्था में किसी भी नए बदलाव का जहां कुछ लोग स्वागत करते हैं, वहीं कुछ विरोध भी करते हैं। क्या इस बदलाव को लेकर संघ के भीतर भी विरोध है, या था?

हर पीढ़ी में कुछ लोग यथास्थितिवादी रहते हैं। वे परिवर्तन को सहजता से स्वीकार करने में हिचकिचाते हैं। पर जब अधिकांश लोग स्वीकारते हैं तो ये भी उनके साथ हो जाते हैं। ऐसा ही इस समय भी होगा। संघ की एक विशेषता है कि चर्चा के समय सब अपना-अपना मत अवश्य व्यक्त करते हैं, पर निर्णय होने के बाद उसे सभी स्वीकार करते हैं। संघ के मुख्यालय नागपुर में जब नए गणवेश की बिक्री आरंभ हुई तब संघ के वरिष्ठ प्रचारक रामभाऊ बोंडाले का नए गणवेश में फोटो लिया गया। बोंडाले जी की आयु आज 93 वर्ष है और वे 1942 से यानी 74 वर्षों से संघ के प्रचारक हैं।

आरएसएस की पहचान उसकी शाखाओं में स्वयंसेवकों के शारीरिक व्यायाम को लेकर है। अब नए गणवेश में स्वयंसेवकों कैसे व्यायाम करेंगे? फुलपैट में उनको दिक्कत नहीं होगी?

संघ की पहचान उसका अनुशासन, सादगी, देशभक्ति तथा सेवा-भाव है। शारीरिक तो कार्यक्रम मात्र है। प्रदर्शन के लिए सभी शारीरिक कार्यक्रम इस नए वेश में भी आसानी से हो सकेंगे इसी तरह से इसे डिजाइन किया गया है। यह गणवेश केवल समारोह या शिविर, वर्ग आदि विशेष कार्यक्रम में ही पहनना होता है। रोज की शाखा में तो शारीरिक कार्यक्रम, खेल आदि के अनुरूप कोई भी वेश (निकर भी) पहनकर आ सकते हैं।

अब संघ का गणवेश बदल गया तो क्या आगे गणवेश के हिसाब से शाखाओं में होने वाले शारीरिक कार्यक्रम भी बदलेंगे?

गणवेश के अनुसार नहीं परंतु आयु के अनुसार शाखा पर शारीरिक कार्यक्रम बदल रहे हैं। तरुण एवं बालों के लिए खेल एवं सख्त शारीरिक कार्यक्रम अधिक रहते हैं। प्रौढ़ आयु के लिए खेलों के स्थान पर योगासन, प्राणायाम आदि चल रहे हैं।

नई पीढ़ी तकनीक प्रेमी है। खासकर स्मार्टफोन ने जमाने को बदल दिया है। ऐसी बदलती परिस्थिति में संघ कैसे खुद को अपडेट कर रहा है?

संघ तो अपने स्थापना काल से ही अपडेट रहा है और होता रहता है। सूचना प्रसारण के लिए तथा प्रबोधन के लिए आधुनिक तंत्र का पर्याप्त उपयोग होता है। परंतु व्यक्तिगत, आत्मीय संपर्क तो प्रत्यक्ष ही करना पड़ता है। उसका विकल्प नहीं हो सकता।

आज संघ के सामने सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है भारतीय संस्कृति की विचारधारा युवाओं तक पहुंचाने की। इसको लेकर संघ के पास क्या रणनीति है?

इंटरनेट के कारण युवाओं के मन में अपनी सांस्कृतिक पहचान तथा उसके बारे में गौरव की भावना की भूख तो बढ़ रही है। युवाओं को समझ में आए, ऐसी शब्दावली में और उपदेश न दे कर, संवाद के माध्यम से यह समझाया जा सकता है, ऐसा हमारा अनुभव है।

पिछले कुछ समय से संघ सामाजिक समरसता के तहत दलित समुदाय में पैठ बढ़ाने की कोशिश कर रहा है। क्या गोरक्षकों द्वारा दलितों पर किए गए हमले से संघ के इस प्रयास को झटका लगा है?

स्थापना के समय से ही संपूर्ण हिंदू समाज को संगठित करने की बात संघ ने की है और वैसा ही इसका प्रयास भी रहा है। इसलिए 1934 में वर्धा के संघ शिविर में जाकर महात्मा गांधी ने खास इस बात की ही पूछताछ की कि यहां जातिगत भेदभाव रखा जाता है या नहीं। उनके पूछने पर शिविर में भाग लेने वाले तब हरिजन कहे जाने वाले बंधुओं ने बताया कि यहां सभी के साथ समान एवं सम्मानपूर्वक व्यवहार होता है। छुआछूत का कोई सवाल ही नहीं उठता। इस पर गांधीजी ने प्रसन्नता व्यक्त की थी। इसका उल्लेख महात्मा गांधी के प्रकाशित समग्र वांग्मय में है। समरसता का भाव लेकर हम वर्षों से कार्य कर रहे हैं। यही कारण है कि अनुसूचित जाति के लोग तथा अन्य जाति-बिरादरी के नेता अधिक

विश्वास और आशा से संघ के पास आ रहे हैं। ऐसी घटनाएं जिनका उल्लेख आपने किया वे दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण हैं, परंतु कहीं-कहीं हुई हैं। मीडिया उसे बड़ा-चढ़ाकर बताता है।

(नवभारत टाइम्स, अक्टूबर 1, 2016)

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