

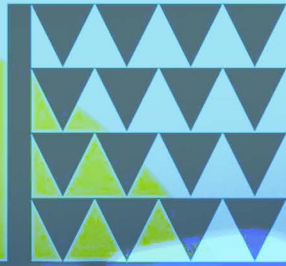
Brief

RSS Addresses US Forums on Technology, Innovation and Leadership

A Civilisational Vision for the Future of Humanity

Published April 29, 2026

Publication No. RP0745-29042026

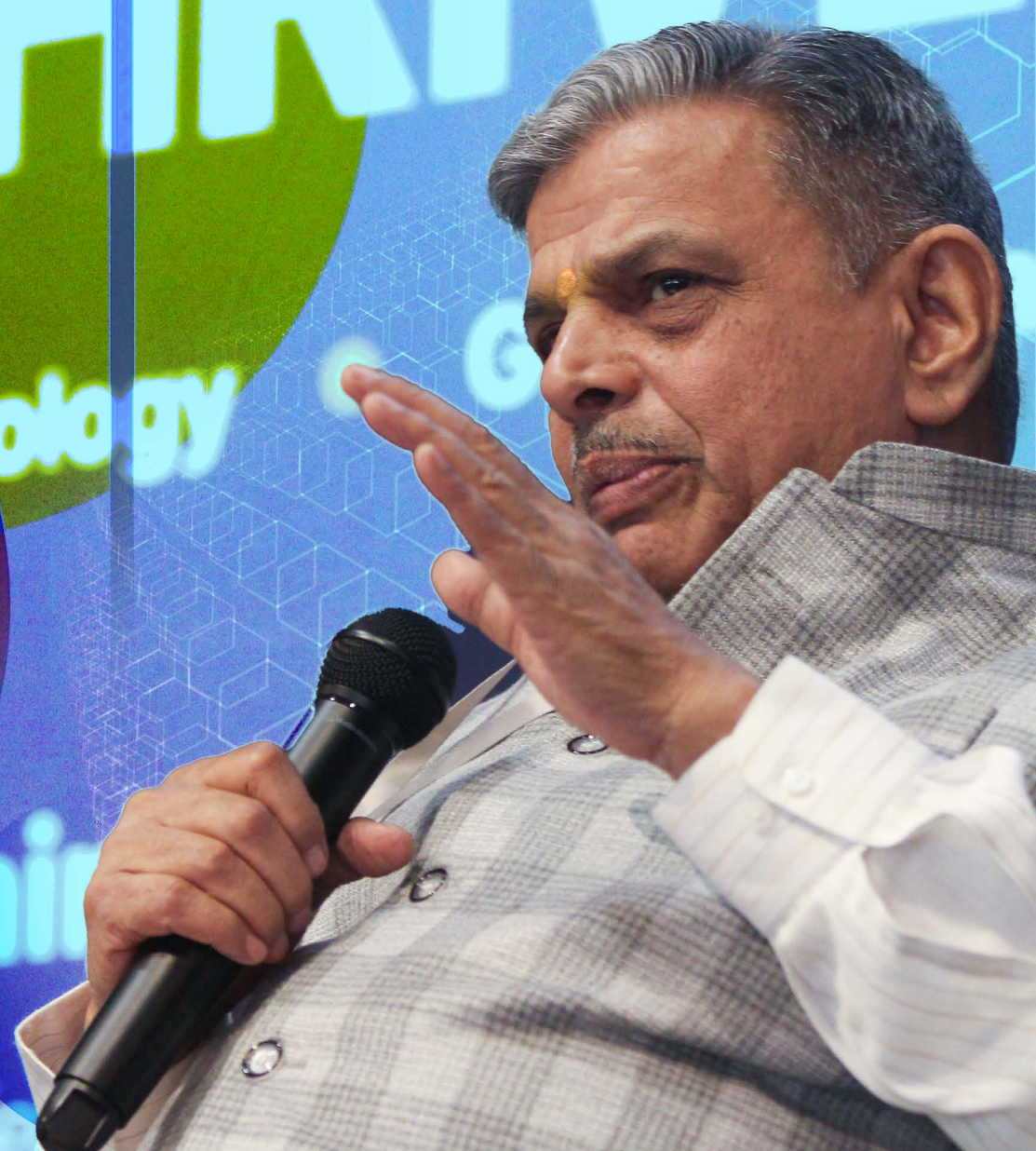


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Highlights

U.S. Visit

From April 16–26, 2026, on the invitation of Global Science and Innovation Forum (GSIF) and Hudson Institute, Washington D.C., Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarkaryavah (General Secretary) Dattatreya Hosabale undertook high-level engagements in United States, coinciding with RSS centennial of voluntary service to Hindu society & Bharat and designed to enable a substantive exchange with leading American thinkers across science, technology, philosophy and culture, marked by candour, mutual respect and a shared interest in conditions that allow great civilizations to flourish in a rapidly changing world.

At THRIVE 2026 summit held in Stanford Faculty Club on 17 April 2026 preceded by an opening dinner reception at Computer History Museum, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale joined Nobel laureates, global policymakers, visionary technologists and ethicists in deliberations across three core pillars, artificial intelligence, sustainability and health where more than twenty high-impact roundtables produced outcomes such as the Human Agency Standards, Trustworthy AI Audit Model, Edge AI Deployment Framework, Human and AI Work Design Model and policy blueprints for ethical governance.

At the Hudson Institute, in a fireside conversation with Walter Russell Mead, a senior Hudson scholar and one of the most known voices in American foreign policy, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale spoke with characteristic clarity and humility on nature of RSS, misperceptions surrounding it in the West, relationship between Hindu civilization and Indian nationhood, role of RSS in modern India, India-US people-to-people relations and centenary plans of RSS. He engaged the audience questions on volunteering and service (seva), participation of young people in RSS, and prospects for India-US partnership in twenty-first century.

About RSS

Founded in Nagpur in 1925 by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, RSS is a Hindu centric socio-cultural movement widely regarded as the largest congregation in the world, founded on conviction that India's national resurgence required revitalisation of society's core cultural values and underlying oneness, with Hindu civilization regarded as the enduring fabric and soul of Bharat.

For RSS, "Hindu" is understood in a cultural and civilisational sense, and Hindutva, or "Hinduness", encompassing Bharat's ancient heritage, philosophical traditions and a 'dharmic' way of life, represents the wellspring of national identity and social cohesion, rooted in culture and tradition rather than in any theocratic understanding; Hindu Rashtra, in turn, signifies not a religious state but a nation rooted in its civilizational ethos, one that upholds oneness in diversity and equal respect for all communities, having stood against divisiveness from its earliest days.

RSS is unique in its organizational structure at once highly disciplined and informal in texture: there is no membership form, no volunteer credits and no fee, one becomes a swayamsevak simply by attending local shakha and participating regularly while women participate in parallel through RSS-inspired Rashtra Sevika Samiti. RSS is mentored by the Sarsanghchalak, who serves as a friend, philosopher and guide to all volunteers. The RSS follows a consultative working style with broad policies decided annually by its apex Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (General Council), comprising representatives from all states and major inspired organizations.

The basic building unit of RSS is the shakha, a daily or weekly gathering of volunteers at a neighbourhood park or open space, where about an hour of physical exercise, yoga, traditional games, moral anecdotes, discussion and prayer builds physical fitness, friendship, discipline and a deeply felt sense of equality among volunteers from every walk of life. RSS operates through approximately 88,949 daily shakhas and 30,000 weekly assemblies across Bharat. RSS has, over a century, inspired a vast ecosystem of civic institutions across every major sphere of national life.

Having recently completed a hundred years of continuous existence, RSS exhibits in practice a strong sense of mission and a consensual succession of leadership: it is led by a Sarsanghchalak, who provides moral and ideological guidance. While the Sarkaryavah (General Secretary) directs day-to-day operations like the chief executive officer alongside Sah-Sarkaryavahs (Joint General Secretaries), RSS is supported by full-time functionaries called pracharaks. All offices are unpaid and pracharaks live a life of voluntary austerity, admired for their personal integrity.

Sustained by hundreds of thousands of full-time and part-time volunteers who serve without compensation or credit, RSS has inspired the rise of nearly forty nationwide institutions born out of voluntary effort and dedicated to affirmative, positive work across every major sphere of Indian public life. These include Vidya Bharati (education), Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (students), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (labour), Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (farmers), Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (tribal welfare), Sewa Bharati (social service), Rashtriya Sevika Samiti (women), Sanskar Bharati (arts and culture), Bharatiya Janata Party (politics), and Vigyan Bharati (science).

Panch Parivartan: Centenary Vision

RSS envisions a strong, self-reliant, just and inclusive India capable of offering elevated leadership as a Vishwaguru (guide for the world) and a Vishwamitra (global friend) drawing upon Bharat's civilisational contributions to science, medicine, yoga and spirituality.

In its centennial, RSS has crystalized its vision into Panch Parivartan, Fivefold Transformative ideas, comprising Samajik Samrasta (social harmony, breaking caste barriers and fostering inclusion), Kutumb Prabodhan (family awakening), Paryavaran (environmental stewardship), Swa (selfhood and self-reliance through indigenous culture, languages and products) and Nagrik Kartavya (civic duty), together forming a coherent programme for the comprehensive renaissance of society.

RSS takes an affirmative view of technology and modernity, seeking to integrate them within India's cultural framework through a techno - civilizational approach centred on Swa (self-reliance). It welcomes responsible artificial intelligence and digital sovereignty; promotes "production by the masses" alongside Swadeshi traditions, viewing itself as an evolving, organic, socio-cultural nation-builder that sees no contradiction between deep cultural inheritance and advanced technological capability.

Worldview and Philosophical Foundations

At the heart of RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's articulation is the philosophy of oneness, rooted in ancient ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family); since RSS sees the same oneness running through all beings, supremacy is philosophically incompatible with Hindu thought which treats plurality and diversity as an expression of unity.

On historic conduct of Hindu civilization, he affirmed that Hindus have never invaded any country nor enslaved any people and have nothing to apologize for; Indian civilization has spread through trade, philosophy, art and appeal of ideas rather than military conquest, offering an alternative model of civilizational presence.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale emphasized that Hindu thought is civilizational rather than narrow framework of religion. The soul of India being spirituality and Indian culture its expression; He furthered crystallized that its about cultural and traditional roots, not a theocratic understanding.

Tensions between communities, he candidly noted, arise from political interest, distorted readings of history and external manoeuvres rather than from civilisational tradition itself. The constructive path is continuous and comprehensive dialogue with RSS already engaged in conversations with the leadership of various religious communities and now extending the same commitment to global forums.

On modernization and cultural values, he invoked the Sanskrit concept of Sanatan (the eternal) and image of banyan tree with deep roots and ever-renewing branches to argue that the two are not opposed but conditions of one another. The experience of Bharat, Japan and others shows that significant modernization is compatible with civilizational continuity.

India-U.S. Relations

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale spoke in constructive terms of India-U.S. partnership, resting on three foundations of mutual trust, level playing field and mutual respect and emphasized on people-to-people relations through civic institutions, think tanks and universities as indispensable societal foundation of strategic relationship.

Technology and Civilisational Leadership

Speaking on the panel Science, Knowledge Systems and Civilisational Leadership at Stanford, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale offered a three-fold lens for evaluating scientific advancement, economy, ecology and ethics, framing it not as a constraint on innovation but as recovery of standards that great civilizations have always applied to their creative work. He spoke on AI and jobs, sustainability, democratization of knowledge and long-term governance within larger arc of civilizational continuity.

He cautioned that without proper understanding of traditional knowledge, scientific inquiries of the past risk being dismissed as superstition; Indian contributions in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, linguistics and yoga are sophisticated systems in their own right and future of artificial intelligence is enriched when it draws on full range of human reflection.

He articulated India's resurgence as Vishwaguru and Vishwa mitra as not political domination but moral and intellectual leadership of a civilization contributing distinctively to global conversation with technology placed at service of culture.

Volunteerism and Selfless Service

Distinguishing swyamsevak from a credit-driven and paid work understanding of "volunteer", RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale described it as a person who has adopted volunteering as a way of life, "twenty-four hours, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year" with daily shakha in over a hundred and ten thousand locations serving as the workshop for character building and personality development.

The pracharak tradition, full-time lifelong volunteers in voluntary austerity, has been the source of RSS leadership across a century and offers an answer to perennial question for civic movements: how to sustain across generations without descending into bureaucracy or personality driven initiatives.

Seva (Service) grounded in recognition of a divine spark in every individual is offered without distinction of community. From Partition relief in 1947 to disaster response across Gujarat, Maharashtra, the Himalayas, Bihar, Assam and Kerala has given rise to nearly forty inspired institutions operating autonomously yet held together by shared civilizational purpose.

Misconceptions and Indian Diaspora

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale addressed the enduring misconceptions on Bharat set against dated image of a "land of snakes, slums and swamis" and described the reality of contemporary India as a technology hub, a lunar explorer, world's fourth-largest economy and world's largest democracy, uniquely positioned to contribute to global prosperity through its cultural ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) that promotes harmony and unity.

He stated that misconceptions on RSS as a "Hindu supremacist", anti-minority or anti-modern force are incompatible with its Hindu philosophical foundations and operational record; describing RSS as a voluntary, organised service force that has worked silently for a hundred years rather than a group seeking power. He emphasized that the organisation embraces modernity, science and technology while cautioning against letting these slide into "Westernization" and urging that technology be harnessed for human betterment and development.

On Bharat's diaspora, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale urged them to be exemplary citizens of the host country combined with retained cultural connection to Bharat. He encouraged Indians abroad to be better citizens of their adopted nations and to offer leadership in every walk of life as contributing members of their local communities rather than only looking back to India. He encouraged the new generation of Indian Americans to participate in local cultural activities to preserve their roots casting the diaspora as a natural bridge between two democracies.

I. Executive Summary

In April 2026, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale, the General Secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), was invited to undertake a significant series of engagements with leading academic and policy forums in the United States. At the invitation of his hosts, he participated in the inaugural THRIVE 2026 summit convened by the Global Science Innovation Forum at Stanford Faculty Club and addressed a high-level dialogue at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. These engagements occurred at a particularly meaningful juncture, as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has just completed one hundred years of voluntary service to society and nation.

This brief, prepared by the Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies, presents a structured account of these engagements, the worldview they expressed, and the principal themes addressed by RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale during his conversations with American Nobel laureates, scientists, statesmen and scholars. It documents the philosophy, history and organisational character of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and devotes dedicated chapters to four substantive areas of particular global interest: RSS perspective on technology, innovation and civilisational leadership; the practice of volunteerism that animates the movement; the spirit of selfless service that lies at the heart of its work; and the careful correction of long standing misconceptions about Bharat and RSS in the United States.

The central insight of these engagements is that RSS approaches science, technology, civilisational continuity and global cooperation as integrated dimensions of the same human enterprise. In an age in which artificial intelligence, sustainability and health policy are reshaping the conditions of human life, RSS offers a worldview rooted in oneness, in service, in the family of nations, and in the conviction that the deepest cultural roots of a society are also the conditions of its capacity to flourish in the future. The brief seeks to make this worldview legible to a wider international readership, and in particular to the American policy and academic community that has begun, in the past decade, to take a serious interest in the worldview of contemporary India.

The reader will encounter, across the pages that follow, a movement of striking coherence: a hundred year old organisation that has never undergone a split, that operates over one hundred and ten thousand local units across India through a structure that pays no member, that has inspired forty national institutions, and that nevertheless approaches the conversation with the wider world in the spirit of humility and dialogue. The conversations of April 2026 mark the deliberate widening of that dialogue. This brief is a contribution to its continuation.

II. Scope of the Brief

Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies has long maintained a research interest in civilisational movements that shape the cultural and intellectual life of nations. Few organisations in modern history embody the long arc of cultural revival, voluntary service and disciplined nation building as fully as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, hereinafter referred to as RSS. The recent engagements of its General Secretary at two of the most respected academic and policy forums in the United States, namely Stanford University and the Hudson Institute, offer an important opportunity to study how the organisation articulates its worldview to a global audience.

This brief is organised around four interlocking purposes. First, it provides a structured introduction to RSS, drawing on its own published materials and the authoritative scholarly accounts produced by leading commentators on the organisation. Second, it documents the recent engagements at THRIVE 2026 and at the Hudson Institute, including the wider context of the conferences and the company in which RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale delivered his remarks. Third, it analyses select substantive themes that he articulated during these conversations, presenting the perspective of RSS in its own voice and on its own terms. Fourth, and most importantly for the present expanded edition, the brief devotes dedicated chapters to those areas of particular contemporary salience, namely technology and innovation, volunteerism, selfless service and the dispelling of misconceptions about India (Bharat) and RSS in the United States.

The brief is intended for policy researchers, area studies scholars, civic institutions, members of the diplomatic and diaspora community, and informed general readers who seek a clear and coherent statement of RSS worldview as expressed at these forums. It is written with attention to factual accuracy, to the scholarly sources upon which it draws, and to the dignity of the conversations that it documents. The substantive thrust of the brief is to make legible to an international readership a movement that, while extraordinarily large and influential within India, remains imperfectly understood beyond the nation's borders. By presenting the philosophy, history and organisational character of RSS alongside the words spoken by its General Secretary at Stanford and at Hudson, and by giving particular weight to the themes that bear most directly upon the future of human cooperation, the brief seeks to contribute to the very project of mutual understanding that RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale and his American invitees agreed was the indispensable foundation of any deeper relationship between the two great democracies.

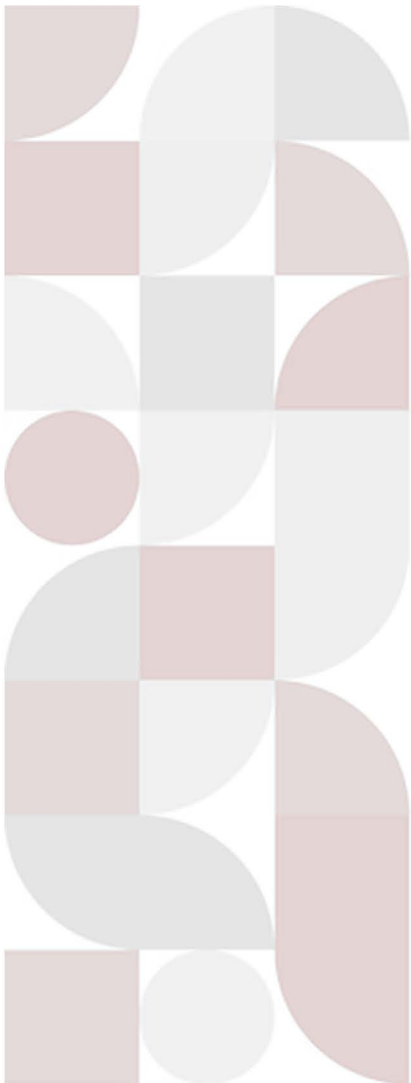
A note on terminology is in order. The brief uses Bharat and India interchangeably, in keeping with the dual usage that has been part of the Indian self understanding from the earliest days of the modern republic. It uses Hindu in the cultural and civilisational sense employed by RSS itself, and it preserves the Sanskrit terms swayamsevak, pracharak, shakha, seva and others where these convey nuances that English equivalents cannot fully capture. Each such term is explained on its first appearance.

III. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: An Overview

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is a socio-cultural movement, founded in the city of Nagpur in central India in 1925. It is widely described, including by independent observers, as the largest voluntary organisation in the world. RSS draws its name from three Sanskrit words. Rashtriya means national; Swayamsevak refers to a self motivated volunteer; RSS denotes an association or coming together. Read together, the name articulates the very purpose of the movement, which is the formation of self motivated volunteers who place the well being of the nation and the wider human family at the centre of their lives.

RSS conducts its principal activity through daily and weekly local gatherings called shakhas, in which volunteers known as swayamsevaks engage in physical exercise, games, discussion, song and prayer. As of the current count, RSS conducts approximately 88,949 daily shakhas across India, supplemented by approximately 30,000 additional weekly assemblies. From these shakhas there has emerged, over the course of a century, a vast ecosystem of inspired civic institutions that operate in fields like education, student affairs, labour, rural development, tribal welfare, religious and cultural life, environmental work and social service.

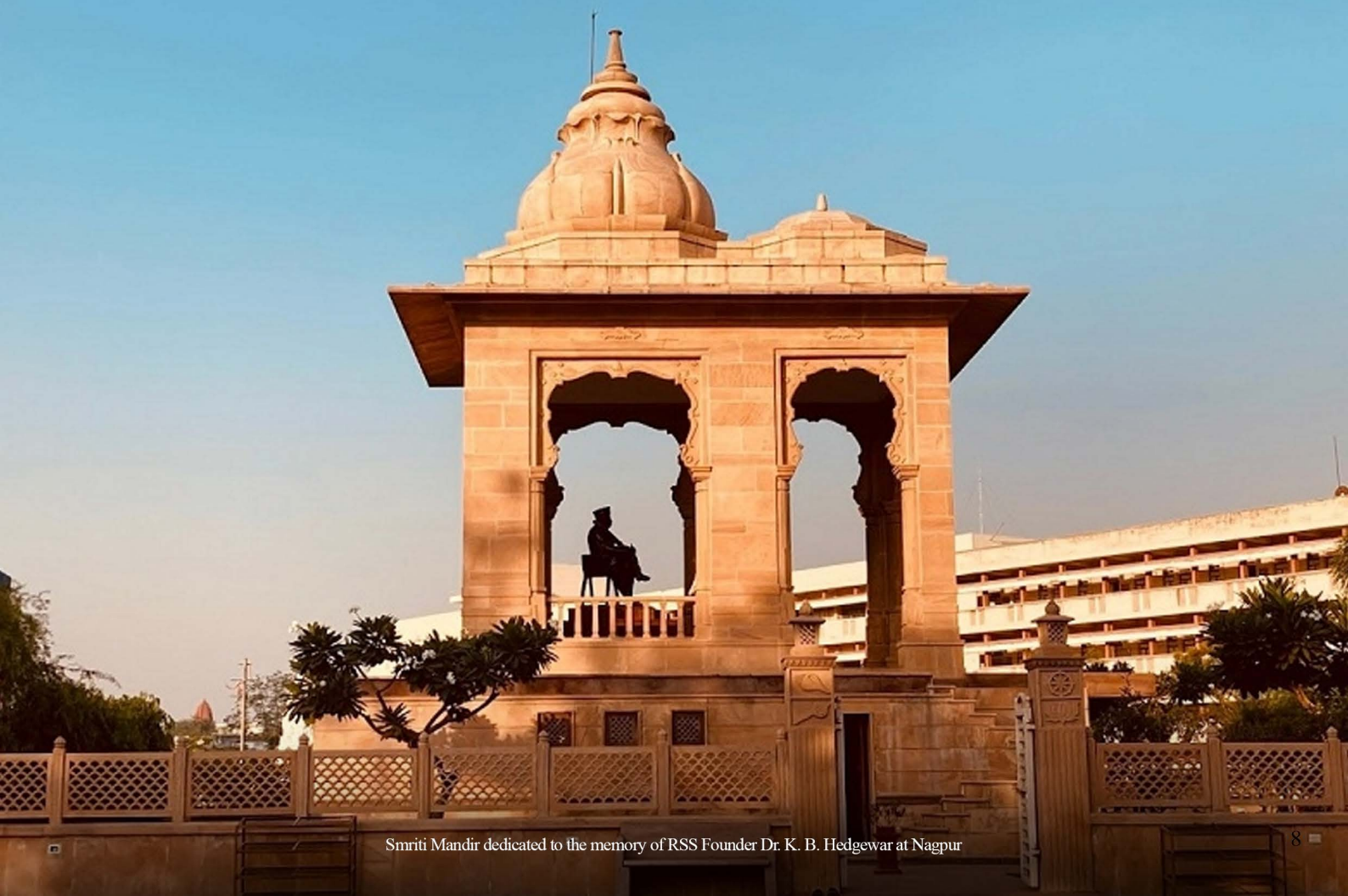
RSS has recently completed one hundred years of continuous existence. A continuity widely attributed to its strong sense of mission, its consensual succession of leadership. RSS is led by a Sarsanghchalak, a position of moral and ideological guidance, while day to day operational direction is exercised by a Sarkaryavah or General Secretary, supported by a team of full time functionaries called pracharaks. All offices in RSS are unpaid; pracharaks live a life of voluntary austerity and are admired for their personal integrity.



In the words of its current Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat, and as articulated in scholarly works produced by senior functionaries, RSS views Hindu civilisational values as the enduring fabric of the Indian nation, with cultural unity and selfless service to society as the twin pillars of its mission. RSS is at once a school of character, a vehicle of cultural continuity, and a vast network of inspired institutions that work in nearly every domain of national life.

The scale of RSS, when stated in plain numbers, is striking. Over one hundred and ten thousand local units convene every week or every day across the country. Hundreds of thousands of full time and part time volunteers contribute their labour without compensation or credit. Approximately forty inspired institutions, most of them themselves nationwide, work in every major domain of public life. This scale, however, is not the most significant fact about RSS. The most significant fact is that this scale is achieved without coercion, without paid employment, without compulsory membership and without external funding. It is achieved through the slow, patient cultivation of voluntary commitment over many years and across many generations.

It is this experience that RSS Sarkaryavah (General Secretary) Hosabale brought to his recent engagements in the United States. The General Secretary of RSS occupies a unique vantage point. He is responsible for the day to day functioning of the entire movement; he travels widely across India and increasingly across the world; he is in continual conversation with volunteers at every level, from the youngest swayamsevak in a neighbourhood shakha to the most senior pracharak engaged in national discussions; and he speaks not in his own name but in the name of the long tradition that RSS embodies. His remarks at the Stanford Club and at the Hudson Institute, accordingly, are the articulation of a worldview of one of the most influential socio-cultural movements of the present age.



IV. Founding and Historical Evolution

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was founded on the Hindu festival of Vijayadashami in the year 1925 by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a physician in Nagpur. At the time of its founding, India was under British colonial occupation and Dr. Hedgewar had been actively engaged in the freedom movement. He had concluded, however, that beyond the immediate task of ousting the colonial administrators, the deeper challenge before Indian society was the cultivation of unity, self confidence and rekindling the shared purpose among its people. He believed that strength comes only through organisation and that society needed to rebuild its character before it could secure and sustain its political freedom.

Dr. Hedgewar accordingly envisioned a non political, grassroots voluntary movement that would gather young people in open spaces for daily exercises, prayer, games and discussion. These daily gatherings, called shakhas, became the cellular unit of the then new movement. From a small founding group of young men in Nagpur, the movement grew steadily through the late 1920s and 1930s. In 1926 the organisation received its formal name, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and Dr. Hedgewar was unanimously chosen as its first Sarsanghchalak.

Even at this earliest stage, Dr. Hedgewar set in place the principles that would shape the character of the organisation for centuries to come. He shunned personal glory and described himself simply as a swayamsevak among swayamsevaks, declaring that the Bhagwa Dhwaj (the saffron flag), would be revered as the supreme guru of the organisation rather than any person. This practice continues to this day; RSS activities salute the saffron flag as the embodiment of timeless values rather than offering allegiance to any individual or figure. Dr. Hedgewar also instituted the tradition of self reliance through small offerings called 'Guru Dakshina', by which volunteers contribute modest sums to fund the work of RSS, thereby preserving its independence from government and from external patrons.



After Dr. Hedgewar's passing in 1940, M. S. Golwalkar, known affectionately as Guruji, became the second Sarsanghchalak. Over a tenure of thirty three years, Guruji elaborated the philosophy of RSS and expanded its reach across the length and breadth of Bharat. Under his leadership RSS grew from a regional movement into a nationwide one. In subsequent decades RSS participated in significant social moments, including the relief efforts during the Partition of 1947, the campaign against the suspension of democratic rights during the internal emergency of 1975 to 1977, and the wider movement of cultural renewal in late twentieth century India.

Each of the six elevated men who have served as Sarsanghchalak, from Dr. Hedgewar in 1925 to the current Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat, has upheld the same core vision while adapting strategy to the changing requirements of the times. The continuity of leadership and the absence of internal schism are widely regarded as among the most distinctive features of RSS. Observers have attributed this stability to the consensual succession of its Sarsanghchalaks, the strong shared sense of mission, and the cultural emphasis on duty over privilege within the organisation.

It is instructive to dwell, even briefly, on the extraordinary fact of RSS organisational continuity. In a century of upheaval that has seen the rise and fall of empires, the formation and dissolution of countless political parties, and the splintering of innumerable civic movements, RSS has continued, decade after decade, to refresh itself from the bottom up through the ordinary work of the shakha. New volunteers join. Older volunteers age into senior positions. Pracharaks travel from one part of the country to another. Annual gatherings deliberate broad policies. The flag is saluted; the prayer is sung; the work continues. The continuity is itself a form of cultural achievement.

As RSS approached its centenary year, beginning in October 2025 and continuing through Vijayadashami of 2026, its leadership has reflected on the long arc of its growth. From a handful of young men in a Nagpur park, the movement has become a presence in every state of India and the inspirer of dozens of nationwide organisations. The image most often invoked in RSS literature is that of the banyan tree, with deep roots and a single trunk that supports many branches; some branches grow roots of their own, but all are connected by a shared trunk of core values.

It is in this centenary year that RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale travelled to the United States to address Global Science Innovation Forum at Stanford Faculty Club and the Hudson Institute. His remarks accordingly carry both the weight of a hundred year tradition and the freshness of a movement looking outward to its second century.

V. Philosophy and Ideological Foundations

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was founded upon a simple yet profound idea, namely that the national resurgence of India required the revitalisation of the society's core cultural values and its underlying oneness. Dr. Hedgewar and his successors viewed Hindu civilisation as the enduring fabric of the Indian nation. In the words of several Sarsanghchalaks, the Hindu culture is the life breath of Bharat; without it India would remain a mere geographical entity rather than a nation with a soul.

The term Hindu, in RSS usage, is understood in a cultural and civilisational sense. RSS sees India's ancient heritage, its philosophical traditions and its way of life, collectively termed Hindutva or Hinduness, as the wellspring of national identity and social cohesion. This usage does not denote a theocratic agenda; rather, it denotes cultural and traditional roots. Successive Sarsanghchalaks have made clear that Hindu Rashtra refers not to a religious state but to a nation rooted in the shared ethos of its civilisation, a nation that ensures oneness in diversity and equal respect for all communities. From its earliest days RSS has stood against divisiveness.

RSS embodies the notion that the body and mind are dedicated to society. Service to society, in this view, is service to the divine, and it extends naturally to the welfare of the entire world. The core philosophy of RSS can therefore be summarised as cultural oneness, selfless service, and universal goodwill.

A key philosophical tenet of RSS is the idea of strength through shared Samskruti i.e. shared tradition and culture. Only a strong and united society can safeguard its freedom and dignity. An early RSS resolution declared that it is the duty of every Hindu to consolidate Hindu society, with RSS acting as the instrument to carry out this task. This focus on unity translates directly into social inclusivity. RSS considers all Indians as part of one extended family. It invokes the ancient Sanskrit ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the whole world is one family. In practice, RSS has, over the years, undertaken many initiatives to erode caste barriers and promote social harmony. Its shakhas have always been open to people of all castes and backgrounds, and inter dining and oneness across social strata are common in its gatherings.



Iconic stone wheel from the Konark Sun Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, symbolizes the chariot of the Sun God, Surya and is a representation of the cosmic cycle, 'Wheel of Life' portraying the cycle of creation, preservation and achievement of realisation.

Spiritual humanism, as advocated by RSS thinkers, holds that there is a divine spark in every individual. Service or 'seva', to the poor or afflicted is therefore considered a form of worship. Humanitarian relief and community service have become a prominent aspect of RSS work. Since its inception, RSS volunteers have been mobilised for relief during natural disasters and national crises, from helping refugees during Partition of India in 1947 to almost every earthquake and flood relief in later years. This philosophy of seva, combined with patriotism, has caused RSS to evolve as an organisation devoted to the uplift of the nation rather than to any narrow self interest. Even prominent commentators on Indian public life have acknowledged the personal integrity and dedication of RSS selfless volunteers.

The concept of leadership in RSS is that the ultimate guru is the ideal, symbolised by the Bhagwa Dhvaj (saffron flag), and not any living person. No leader is considered infallible or beyond the organisational principles. From the very beginning, Dr. Hedgewar himself cautioned the members never to treat him or any individual as a supreme leader. RSS ideology hopes for a future society in which social institutions function harmoniously, guided by Dharma, that is, by the righteous moral order. In guiding its volunteers, RSS therefore lays great emphasis on humility, discipline, respect for all, especially elders and inclusive teamwork.

The daily routine of the shakha, in which volunteers collectively perform exercises, games and rituals and take turns leading activities, is intended to ingrain an ethos of cooperative action without egotism. By prioritising nation before self and emphasising that the mission is bigger than any one individual, RSS philosophy creates character rich nationals who can serve the nation in many different capacities. It is upon this foundation of philosophy that all work of RSS, from its civic institutions to its global engagements, is ultimately built.



A serene idol of Lord Ram enshrined within the sacred Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, symbolizing devotion, righteousness, and timeless spiritual heritage.

VI. Vision for India's Future

From its inception, the vision of RSS has been the all round national rejuvenation of India based on its civilisational values. Dr. Hedgewar often spoke of an independent India rediscovering its civilisational glory, and the long arc of his thought has shaped every successive Sarsanghchalak's articulation of the RSS mission. RSS seeks the building of a society that is self confident, united and capable of resisting both external threats and internal social ills, with cultural strength as the foundation of national strength.

In practical terms, RSS envisions India as a strong, self reliant, just and inclusive nation, capable of offering elevated leadership on the world stage. The aspiration of India as a Vishwaguru, a world teacher or guide, draws upon Bharat's historic civilisational contributions to science, technology, medicine, yoga and spirituality, as well as upon its harmonious worldview rooted in the welfare of all humanity and all beings. Contemporary RSS thinkers therefore articulate a model of national development in which modern progress advances alongside spiritual wisdom, ethical conduct and cultural rootedness, the four moving together as inseparable dimensions of the same human enterprise.

RSS usage the term Hindu Rashtra does not connote a theocratic state. Rather, it refers to an inclusive nation enlightened by the age old Sanatana Dharma, that is, governance guided by the eternal values of India's heritage. The vision is one of an India whose institutions, public life and civic culture are informed by the wisdom of its long civilisational inheritance, while remaining open to the best that other cultures have to offer.

In its centennial year the RSS vision has crystallised into Panch Parivartan, the Fivefold Transformations, a social initiative launched for the centenary that promotes five core areas of behavioural and cultural change. To proliferate thoughts at an even greater pace, and to deepen and expand its work, the RSS now carries forward the idea of Panch Parivartan as the considered direction of the comprehensive renaissance of society. The vision forwarded by swayamsevaks is accordingly oriented toward the comprehensive development of the nation, with the five transformations together forming the practical map of that development.

The five components of Panch Parivartan together constitute a coherent programme. Samajik Samrasta, social harmony, aims to foster unity within Hindu society by breaking inherited barriers of caste and fostering inclusion across every community. Kutumb Prabodhan, family awakening, emphasises the strengthening of family bonds and the instilling of traditional values to create a cohesive society. Paryavaran, environmental stewardship, advocates a lifestyle change that protects nature, including organic farming, water conservation and the wider recovery of an ecological sensibility that has long been part of Indic civilisation. Swa, selfhood, promotes culture, languages and products, marking the considered movement from political freedom (Swatantrata) to genuine self reliance. Nagrik Kartavya, civic duty, emphasises the practice of following traffic laws, paying taxes and keeping public places clean, treating these as responsibilities rather than as mere rights.

The current Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat has spoken about creating a society in which science and technology advance in concert with cultural rootedness and ethical responsibility. RSS thinkers promote ideals such as Integral Humanism, a philosophy originally propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, which envisions a model of development that balances material and spiritual well being. In social terms, the vision of the RSS includes the eradication of caste discrimination, the uplift of the underprivileged and the acknowledgement of women's power, called Naari Shakti, all within a framework of cultural continuity that draws strength from inherited wisdom rather than from imported ideologies.

On the question of technology and modernity, the RSS view is unmistakably affirmative. The movement seeks to integrate modern technology within a framework of traditional Indian culture, promoting a philosophy in which culture and modernisation flourish together. RSS articulates a techno civilisational approach that places self reliance (Swa) at the centre, embracing technology for national development while preserving the depth of India's cultural sensibility. Technology, in this view, is necessary and welcome for development; the considered intent is that India should be a creative master of technology and shape its uses for the wider human good rather than be reshaped by it.

The application of this affirmative vision is wide ranging and concrete. RSS views production by the masses rather than only mass production, harnessing modern tools to ensure dignified employment for India's vast population, and using technology to strengthen rural development, organic farming and small scale industries within the broader Swadeshi tradition. RSS welcomes artificial intelligence as a transformative force for economic renewal and agriculture, and it advocates digital sovereignty in Indian technology. Its outreach extends to digital skill development and the considered engagement of technology in education, ensuring that the next generation is equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the present age.

In its own self description, RSS is an evolving, responsive and organic entity that uses modern technology to strengthen India's traditional identity. The image is fitting; the movement that has carried a hundred year tradition of voluntary service into the digital age sees no contradiction between the deepest cultural inheritance and the most advanced technological capability. The two, in the RSS view, are conditions of one another, and the integration of the two is the work of the present generation.

In the near term, the RSS sees its role as that of a socio-cultural nation builder, guiding societal elevation, fostering cultural and civilisational values among the youth, and responding to the nation's needs as they emerge. Its vision consistently emphasises work beyond the realm of government, through communities and individuals, to bring about change in character and consciousness. In a phrase the RSS frequently uses to describe itself, the organisation is a guiding, providing and protective force in society; it guides moral values, its volunteers provide selfless service and relief, and it upholds cultural integrity. This is the vision the RSS carries into its centenary year and into its conversations with the world, and it is the vision that informs every theme covered in the chapters that follow.



Atal Setu-India's longest sea bridge spanning 21.8 km, seamlessly connecting Mumbai with Navi Mumbai and redefining modern infrastructure.

VII. Organisation and Working

RSS is unique in its organisational structure, which is at once highly disciplined and informal in its texture. There is no official membership form, no volunteer credits and no fee. One becomes a member, that is, a swayamsevak, simply by attending the local shakha and participating regularly. There is also no age bar or qualification. Boys typically join in childhood or youth, men of all ages may join at any time, and women may participate in parallel through the separate RSS inspired women's movement called Rashtra Sevika Samiti.

The basic unit of RSS is the shakha, which can be as small as a dozen volunteers who meet daily, or weekly in some cases, in a neighbourhood park or any open space. The shakha usually lasts about an hour and includes physical exercises, often including yoga and traditional Indian games, the recitation of moral anecdotes, group discussion and the singing of an RSS prayer that salutes Bharat Mata, the Mother India. This routine has been the bedrock of the RSS; it instils physical fitness, friendship, discipline and a deeply felt sense of equality among participants from every walk of life.

From thousands of such shakhas, RSS wider volunteers emerges. Local units are grouped, for purposes of coordination, into districts, regions and provinces, designated in Hindi as Nagar, Prant and so forth, up to the all India level. The organisation as a whole is mentored by the Sarsanghchalak. He is a friend, philosopher and guide to all volunteers and the working style of RSS is consultative. There exists an apex council called the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha or general council, which has representatives from all states and major inspired organisations and which meets annually to discuss and decide broad policies. On a day to day basis, much of the operational leadership lies with the Sarkaryavah, the General Secretary, and a team of pracharaks who serve as full time functionaries for various zones and projects. Notably, even the Sarsanghchalak, supremely respected, lives a simple life like any other pracharak.

One hallmark of RSS organisational culture is the spirit of selflessness and volunteerism at every level. All functionaries of RSS, from local shakha volunteers to the Sarsanghchalak himself, are unpaid. Many give their full time to the work of RSS, renouncing professional careers and often remaining bachelors so as to be more mobile in their service. These full time workers, the pracharaks, are highly respected. They are supported by the wider volunteer groupings when it comes to basic needs, but they do not draw any salary or fee. This voluntary character has won admiration from many observers, as it has produced honest and austere leaders.



Internal decision making in RSS emphasises consensus. The RSS principle that positions are responsibilities, not privileges. In RSS, an official post is referred to as *dayitva*, that is, responsibility, highlighting duty over authority. This approach has helped to keep the organisation cohesive across generations.

Another striking aspect of the structure of RSS is its network of inspired organisations. While RSS confines its scope to running *shakhas* and enlisting volunteers with capacities and capabilities, those volunteers are encouraged to work in different sectors of national life based on their interests. Over time, dedicated *swayamsevak*s have voluntarily founded a plethora of organisations aligned with RSS ideals; for example, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad in student affairs, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh in labour and trade unions, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in the sphere of religious and cultural activities, Seva Bharati for seva or service projects, Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram for tribal welfare, and Vidya Bharati running schools, among many others.

Several RSS volunteers in 1951 also played a key role in the formation of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which later evolved into the Bharatiya Janata Party, which remains inspired by RSS philosophy. RSS itself, however, pointedly stays out of party politics as an organisation. However, *swayamsevak*s go on to hold key presence in various social, cultural, educational, developmental, labour and political fields across India basing their interest and merit.

This expansive ecosystem allows for specialised work in many domains while the core of RSS focuses on its primary task of character building. RSS inspired organisations operate independently but maintain relations with RSS; a coordination forum called the Samanvay committee ensures that all such organisations communicate with one another and uphold common values. RSS is the ideological and moral guide while its inspired organisations implement those ideas in their respective domains.

Throughout its organisational evolution, RSS has adapted gracefully to changing times. In recent years it has evolved some practices; for instance RSS has begun making considered use of digital tools for internal communication and outreach. Yet the essence of its organisational model remains the daily *shakha* and the personal bond between *swayamsevak*s as members of an extended family of brothers, and through the Rashtra Sevika Samiti also as sisters, working for a common ideals.



Rashtra Sevika Samiti volunteers participate in a Path Sanchalan (Route Marche) in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

VIII. The United States Engagement of April 2026

Between April 16-26, 2026, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale was invited to U.S. and undertook two significant engagements in the United States. The first was his participation in the inaugural THRIVE 2026 summit at Stanford University, convened by the Global Science Innovation Forum on 16 and 17 April 2026. The second was a fireside conversation at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C., held with Walter Russell Mead. These engagements were designed to enable a substantive exchange between the leadership of RSS and leading thinkers in the United States across science, technology, philosophy and culture. Both events were marked by candour, mutual respect and a shared interest in the conditions that allow great civilisations to flourish in a rapidly changing world.

VIII.I THRIVE 2026 at Stanford

The Global Science Innovation Forum announced the successful conclusion of THRIVE 2026, its inaugural invitation only summit, a convening of Nobel laureates, global policymakers, visionary technologists and ethicists to advance the dialogue at the intersection of cutting edge science and technology. The conference was held at the Stanford Faculty Club and was preceded by an opening dinner reception at the Computer History Museum. It focused on three core pillars: artificial intelligence, sustainability and health.

The opening dinner included a fireside chat with Ram Shriram, founding board member of Google, and Vinod Khosla, founder of Khosla Ventures, and an intimate engagement with Consuls General representing more than twenty countries who shared global perspectives on technology policy and governance. The main conference on 17 April 2026 hosted more than twenty high impact roundtables spanning artificial intelligence and technology, health, sustainability and civilisational leadership. These sessions produced concrete and actionable outcomes, including the Human Agency Standard, the Trustworthy AI Audit Model, the Edge AI Deployment Framework, the Human and AI Work Design Model, and a set of policy blueprints for ethical governance, all aimed at ensuring that technology serves humanity, promotes equity and supports long term civilisational flourishing.

Distinguished participants at the summit included Professor Steven Chu, Nobel Laureate in Physics and former United States Secretary of Energy; H. R. McMaster, former United States National Security Advisor; Ram Shriram of Google; Professor Dame Juliet Gerrard, former Chief Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Speaking on the panel titled Science, Knowledge Systems and Civilisational Leadership, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale offered a clear articulation of RSS view of the relationship between scientific advancement and the deeper ethical and ecological foundations of human life. He stated, *“Scientific advancement must be evaluated not just through economic outcomes but through a broader lens of economy, ecology and ethics. If traditional knowledge is not properly understood, all those scientific inquiries of the past will be concluded as only superstitions.”*

The remark was a single moment of a wider conversation in which RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale joined Nobel laureates, statesmen and technologists in considering the conditions under which the next generation of technological transformation can serve the wider human good. The exchange among the panellists revealed a striking convergence of concerns. Steven Chu spoke of the simultaneous



There was never a divide between the spiritual and the scientific, only a unified pursuit of truth.

- Dattatreya Hosabale (RSS Gen. Secretary) at GSIF Thrive 2026 summit at the Stanford Faculty Club

challenge of artificial intelligence replacing many jobs and demographic decline reducing the working population; Vinod Khosla observed that the cheapest technology can also be the most sustainable if humanity puts its mind to it; Ram Shriram described the democratisation of knowledge through artificial intelligence as the next great frontier in adaptive learning; and Juliet Gerrard called for bipartisan, non political bodies across the world to take long term decisions on health and wellness. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's contribution placed these technological conversations within the larger arc of civilisational continuity.

The setting at Stanford Faculty Club itself carried significance. The Faculty Club is among the most respected academic venues in the world for the convening of leading minds in science and policy. The Computer History Museum, where the opening dinner took place, is the symbolic centre of the digital age. Conference Chair Professor Anurag Mairal, in his opening remarks, characterised the Global Science Innovation Forum as a forum focused on enabling global collaboration among scientists, engineers and innovators to address the biggest problems the world faces, with solutions anchored in the cultural and civilisational context of local communities and ensuring that everyone benefits.

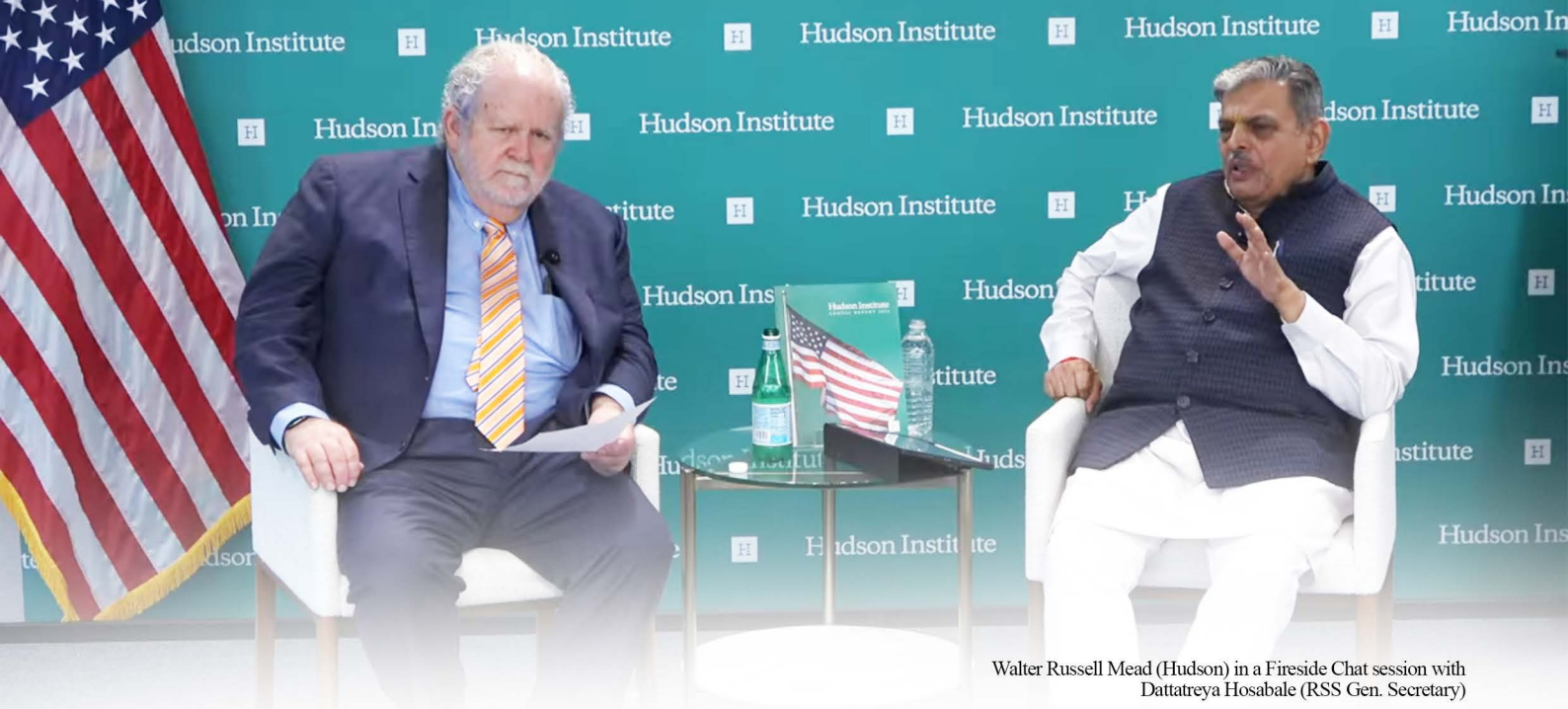


What we call “spiritual texts” today often encoded deep scientific frameworks. Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is one such example.

- Dattatreya Hosabale (RSS Gen. Secretary) at GSIF Thrive 2026 summit at the Stanford Faculty Club



Thrive 2026 Panel Discussion on Science, Knowledge Systems & Civilizational Leadership
 In picture from L to R: Moderator: Bill Drexel, Senior Fellow at Hudson Institute USA, Panelists Dattatreya Hosabale, General Secretary, RSS; Dr. William Hurlbut MD, Consulting Professor, Neuroscience Institute, Stanford & Ben Olsen, Responsible AI at Microsoft and Meta



Walter Russell Mead (Hudson) in a Fireside Chat session with Dattatreya Hosabale (RSS Gen. Secretary)

VIII.II Dialogue at the Hudson Institute

Following his engagements at Stanford, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale travelled to Washington, D.C., where he addressed a dialogue at the Hudson Institute. The dialogue was conducted in the form of a fireside chat with Walter Russell Mead, a senior scholar at Hudson and one of the most respected voices in American foreign policy. Mead opened the conversation with an observation that captured the importance of the engagement. He noted that the RSS is one of the largest organisations in the world today, that its trajectory may be the longest of any comparable movement of the modern era, and that its field of operation is the world's most populous country. Yet, he added, RSS remains almost unknown territory even for many in the United States who think of themselves as knowing something about India.

Mead recalled that he had himself been introduced to RSS some years earlier and had begun to acquaint himself with how it works. He acknowledged the size of the organisation, the breadth of its impact and the long trajectory ahead of it. To have the General Secretary of RSS willing to answer questions from the Hudson community, Mead remarked, was a real privilege. The dialogue that followed was, accordingly, a genuine encounter between American policy thinking and the worldview of one of the world's great civilisational movements.

Across the dialogue, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale answered questions on the nature of RSS, the misperceptions that surround it in the West, the relationship between Hindu civilisation and Indian nationhood, the role of RSS in modern India, India and United States people to people relations, the centenary plans of RSS, and the wider question of how civilisational learnings can serve as a foundation for harmony rather than division. He spoke with characteristic clarity and humility, acknowledging the size of RSS achievements while insisting that the strength of the movement lies in its volunteers and not in its leaders.

The Hudson dialogue closed with audience questions, including a thoughtful exchange on volunteering and seva, on the participation of young people in RSS, and on the prospects for the India United States partnership in the twenty first century. Mead concluded the conversation by characterising the relationship between the United States and India as decisive for the peace and stability of the world in the present century, and by expressing the hope that India would take its full place among the great nations and civilisations of the world. The remainder of this brief presents, the principal substance of what RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale said at these forums.

IX. RSS Sarkaryavah's Interactions in US

Dialogues at THRIVE 2026 and at the Hudson Institute produced a wide ranging articulation of RSS worldview. The select themes that follow have been chosen for their analytical importance and for their resonance with the questions that occupy the wider international conversation. They are presented in flowing prose rather than as a checklist, in keeping with the manner in which RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale himself approached the conversations: deliberate, civil and holistic. Further substantive themes, including those on technology and innovation, on volunteerism and selfless service, and on misconceptions of Bharat and RSS in the United States, are addressed in dedicated chapters of greater depth in the sections that follow.

IX.I The Philosophy of Oneness and the Universal Family

At the heart of the worldview articulated by RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale is the philosophical proposition that Hindu thought is built upon oneness and on the conception of the universal family. He spoke of this directly during the Hudson dialogue. Hindu philosophy and Hindu culture, he observed, do not allow it to be supremacist, because RSS sees that the whole world is one family and all are brothers and sisters. There is no question of supremacy in such a worldview, and RSS sees the same oneness running through all beings, both living and non living. When this is the basic philosophy, he added, the supremacist nature of Hindus simply cannot be present.

This articulation is rooted in the ancient Sanskrit ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world is one family, which has long been a guiding sentiment of Indian civilisational thought. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's point at the Hudson Institute was that the philosophical premises of Hindu

civilisation are inherently incompatible with any form of group supremacy. The strength of Hindu philosophy is precisely that it sees plurality as an expression of unity and unity as the ground of plurality. Where some traditions emphasise the boundary that separates the believer from the non believer, Hindu thought emphasises the deeper continuity in which all beings participate.

This worldview has practical implications. It informs RSS approach to social work, in which seva (selfless service) is offered to anyone in need without distinction of community. It informs RSS approach to international affairs, in which India is conceived as a friend to all nations and the antagonist of none. And it informs the everyday culture of the shakha, in which volunteers from every caste and background sit together, exercise together, eat together and sing together. The philosophy of oneness is therefore not a metaphysical abstraction but the ground of a way of life.



Humility begins with a simple realization: we are all part of the same universal energy.

- RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale In conversation with
Walter Russell Mead at Hudson Institute, Washington DC

IX.II Historical Conduct and Peaceful Reach of Hindu Civilisation

In a particularly significant moment of the Hudson dialogue, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale offered a calm and confident summary of the historical record of Hindu civilisation in its dealings with other peoples. Hindus, he stated, have never invaded any country, and Hindus have never enslaved any people. He concluded with the observation that Hindus have nothing to apologise for. This articulation is consistent with the historical record as it appears in scholarly accounts of the geographic and cultural reach of Indian civilisation. Hindu civilisation has expanded outward through trade, philosophy, art and the gentle dissemination of cultural ideas, rather than through military conquest or the institution of slavery.

The reach of Indian civilisation across the centuries has indeed been considerable. Indian thought informed the philosophical traditions of much of South East Asia. Indian numerals, Indian mathematics, Indian astronomy and Indian medicine travelled across continents long before the modern age of communication. Indian merchants traded with the Roman Empire, with the Chinese empires and with the kingdoms of Africa. Yet none of this expansion was accompanied by armies of occupation or by the enslavement of conquered populations. The civilisational reach was achieved through the appeal of ideas and the patience of commerce, not through the sword.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's point at the Hudson Institute was therefore an invitation to consider the historical record carefully. A civilisation with such a record offers, by its very nature, a different model of how a culture can engage with the wider world. It is not a record of subjugation followed by retreat; it is a record of patient civilisational presence over very long periods of time. RSS sees in this record both a source of legitimate self confidence and a model for the future engagement of India with the world. India can be present in the world without seeking to dominate it. The model of civilisational expansion through the appeal of ideas remains, RSS suggests, the most enduring.

IX.III Hindu as Civilisational Rather than Narrowly Religious

One of the most important conceptual clarifications offered by RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale at the Hudson Institute concerned the nature of Hindu itself. In the view of RSS, he explained, Hindu is a civilisational identity rather than a religious one; it is not defined by faith in the narrow sense. Civilisation and values, worldview and the manifestations of those values in life, the relation of the human being with nature, and the historical experience of a people, all of these contribute to the formation of a culture. Religion, in the narrow sense in which the term is sometimes used in the West, is not the principal force shaping this culture. That is why RSS has consistently emphasised the cultural ethos and civilisational values that, while compatible with the religious life of communities, are not reducible to religious identity.

Walter Russell Mead suggested an analogy to the Jewish experience, in which Jewish identity is at once religious for some and cultural for others, while remaining a coherent civilisational identity for the people as a whole. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale responded to the analogy with the qualification that no comparison is ever completely exact. He went on to explain that the soul of India, in the long history of its civilisation, is spirituality, and the culture of India is the expression of that spiritual soul. This articulation captures RSS understanding of Hindu identity as essentially civilisational; a way of being in the world that has religious expressions but is not exhausted by them.

The clarification has an important policy implication. When Western interlocutors hear the term Hindu, they frequently assume a narrowly religious referent and draw the inferences that would be appropriate to such a referent. RSS usage, however, is civilisational. To say that India is a Hindu civilisation is, in this usage, akin to saying that Europe is a Christian civilisation in its historical and cultural sources, even though many Europeans are no longer Christians in the practising sense and many of European civilisation's most lasting contributions are not narrowly religious in nature. The civilisational sense is the sense in which RSS consistently uses the term.

IX.IV Tensions Born of Politics and the Path of Continuous Dialogue

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale was candid about the fact that tensions sometimes arise between communities and between nations. He addressed this with candour about the causes. Tensions, he observed, have arisen on and off because of political interest, because of wrong understanding or interpretation of history, and because of various manoeuvres external to the basic life of the communities concerned. Such tensions, in his view, are not the consequence of the philosophy of RSS or of the civilisational tradition that it carries; they are extrinsic and political in origin. This is an important distinction because it locates the source of friction in human choices and political dynamics that are open to correction, rather than in the intrinsic nature of the communities involved.

From this diagnosis RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale drew a constructive prescription. RSS, he said, believes that continuous and comprehensive dialogue with all groups will definitely help in clearing misconceptions or any fears that may exist. RSS is itself engaged in such dialogues with what he called the so called minorities and their leadership. The point is not to seek a thin or merely diplomatic accommodation but to invite the genuine encounter of communities at the level of values, history and shared aspirations.

RSS preference for dialogue over confrontation reflects its deepest philosophical convictions. If all beings are connected by an underlying oneness, then no group is permanently alienated from any other, and the work of mutual understanding is always possible. The history of RSS engagements with diverse communities, including its long standing dialogues with the leadership of various religious traditions, illustrates this conviction in practice. The same logic was extended in his remarks to the engagement with international audiences. The conversations at Stanford and at Hudson were themselves expressions of this commitment to comprehensive dialogue, now extended to the global stage.

IX.V Coexistence of Modernisation and Cultural Values

One of the most extensively developed themes of the Hudson dialogue concerned the relationship between cultural values and modernisation. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale stated that the two are not strictly opposed. While modernisation may bring industrialisation, technology and individualistic trends, and while cultural continuity is rooted in older patterns of life, the two can exist simultaneously, even if some adaptation is required from time to time. He pointed to the experience of many oriental societies in the recent decades; whether one looks at Hindu society in India, or at Japan, or others, all have modernised significantly while keeping their cultural and civilisational values intact and drawing inspiration from those values.

To illustrate the point philosophically, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale invoked the Sanskrit word Sanatan, which means the eternal. Sanatana, in the philosophical tenets of Hindu thought, is at once ancient and ever growing. The image one can imagine resembles that of the banyan tree. The banyan tree has deep and strong roots, which are its cultural and civilisational ethos, and at the same time many branches in which every season new sprouts, leaves and flowers bloom. The tree is therefore as new as it is old, and as old as it is new. Culture and modernisation, he concluded, can live together; they are part of nature.

In the exchange, Walter Russell Mead noted that in the Anglo American tradition the philosopher Edmund Burke is associated with the idea of modernisation rooted in tradition, and that Burke argued that the loss of touch with the roots ultimately reduces the capacity to modernise successfully. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale added a reference to T. S. Eliot, who has also written about tradition and modernity. The point was clear; in many traditions of philosophical reflection, both Eastern and Western, the deepest cultural roots and the most ambitious projects of modernisation are seen not as adversaries but as conditions of one another. Mead suggested that this constitutes one of the most promising areas of intellectual exchange between American and Indian thinkers in the years ahead, and RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale endorsed the suggestion warmly.

IX.VI India and the United States as Partners

Asked about the strategic relationship between India and the United States, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale spoke in characteristically constructive terms. India, he said, wishes to have good relations with all countries, both near and distant, and particularly with major powers such as the United States. Given India's size, its demographic dividend, its technological advancement and its position as the fourth economy in the world, a deeper partnership with the United States is naturally called for. Such a partnership, however, is built on three foundations, namely mutual trust, a level playing field and mutual respect; recognising the needs of each other is essential for an enduring relationship between the two democracies.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale placed particular emphasis on the importance of people to people relations. The deeper the human and cultural connection between Americans and Indians, he suggested, the more secure the

foundations of the broader strategic relationship. Civic institutions, think tanks and universities, both state and non state actors, can do a great deal to facilitate the encounter of people from each society with the people of the other. In doing so they help to dispel prejudice, to clarify the meaning of expressions that might otherwise be misunderstood, and to build the kind of mutual understanding that allows cooperation to flourish.

RSS vision of the India-United States relationship is therefore more societal in its scope. It rests on the conviction that two great democracies, two large and diverse societies, two traditions of free thought and inventive enterprise, have much to learn from one another and much to contribute together to the welfare of humanity. The deepening of this relationship is, in RSS view, not the work of governments alone but of the whole fabric of civic and cultural life of the two nations. The conversations at Stanford and at Hudson are themselves contributions to that fabric.



Group photo of Nobel laureates, policymakers and industry leaders at Inaugural THRIVE 2026 Summit organised by the Global Science Innovation Forum (GSIF) at Stanford University's Faculty Club.

X. Technology, Innovation and Civilisational Leadership

The Stanford engagement was, by its very theme and venue, an engagement with the future of technology and innovation. The Global Science Innovation Forum had convened the leading minds of artificial intelligence, sustainability and health for two days of structured dialogue. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale brought to this conversation the perspective of a hundred year old civilisational movement that has thought deeply about the relationship between knowledge, ethics and human flourishing. This chapter draws together, with adequate weight, the substantive contributions that RSS perspective offers to the global technology conversation.

X.I The Stanford Setting: AI, Sustainability and Health

THRIVE 2026 was structured around three core pillars, namely artificial intelligence, sustainability and health, and across more than twenty roundtables it produced concrete instruments and frameworks of policy. These included the Human Agency Standard, the Trustworthy AI Audit Model, the Edge AI Deployment Framework and the Human and AI Work Design Model. Each of these frameworks reflects a sophisticated effort to bring artificial intelligence into a constructive relationship with human values and human institutions. The very titles of the frameworks signal the sensibility that animated the conference: that human agency must be preserved, that artificial intelligence must be auditable for trust, that the deployment of intelligent systems at the edge of networks must be deliberate, and that the human and the algorithmic must be designed to work together rather than at cross purposes.

Within this setting, several luminaries offered distinctive contributions. Vinod Khosla observed that the cheapest technology can also be the most sustainable, and that this is achievable if humanity puts its mind to it. Ram Shriram described how artificial intelligence is poised to make knowledge free and democratized at a far greater pace than the internet alone has done, with adaptive learning customised to each user. Steven Chu, the Nobel laureate in physics, identified the central paradox of the present moment as the simultaneous prospect of artificial intelligence replacing many jobs while populations decline, and he characterised this transition as a huge challenge.

Juliet Gerrard, speaking on the health panel, called for bipartisan and non political bodies across the world to assume decision making authority over long term health and wellness questions.

RSS engagement with this conversation was not as a technological actor in its own right but as a carrier of the civilisational sensibility within which technology is to be evaluated. RSS does not run laboratories or design semiconductors. It does, however, ask the question that animates every great technological project once the laboratory work is done: to what end? The answer that RSS offers is rooted in its philosophy of oneness, of selfless service, and of the welfare of the whole world. Technology is to be evaluated by what it does for the human family and all beings, not by what it does for the few.

X.II The Wider Lens: Economy, Ecology and Ethics

The most concentrated articulation of RSS contribution to the THRIVE conversation was the panel statement on Science, Knowledge Systems and Civilisational Leadership. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's formulation that scientific advancement must be evaluated not just through economic outcomes but through a broader lens of economy, ecology and ethics distils a worldview into three terms. The first term, economy, recognises the legitimate place of material progress and prosperity in human life. The second term, ecology, places that progress within the larger order of the living world upon which all human flourishing depends. The third term, ethics, places the whole within the moral order that is the proper context of any considered human action.

This three fold lens is offered not as a constraint on innovation but as a fuller framework for it. A technology that delivers economic growth at the cost of ecological collapse cannot, by this measure, be regarded as a successful technology. A technology that produces extraordinary wealth for a few while leaving many behind cannot, by this measure, be considered ethically sound. A technology that erodes the very social fabric within

which human beings find meaning cannot be considered, in any deep sense, beneficial. The integration of economy, ecology and ethics is therefore not the imposition of an alien standard upon innovation but the recovery of the standards that great civilisations have always applied to their own creative work.

The lens that RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale offered at Stanford has obvious resonance with several of the conversations that THRIVE 2026 itself produced. Khosla's remark that the cheapest technology should also be the most sustainable can be read as an economic and ecological synthesis. Chu's identification of the demographic and labour challenge points toward an ethical concern with the dignity of human work in an age of automation. Gerrard's call for bipartisan health bodies points toward the ethical insulation of long term human well being from short term political pressures. RSS civilisational contribution is to insist that all of these conversations belong together within a single integrated horizon.



Ancient systems were both ethical and scientific; designed for real, everyday human challenges. For progress to be meaningful, knowledge must flow into education, and from education into technology.

- Dattatreya Hosabale (RSS Gen. Secretary) at GSIF Thrive 2026 summit at the Stanford Faculty Club

X.III Traditional Knowledge and Modern Inquiry

The second part of RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's panel statement at Stanford addressed the relationship between traditional knowledge and modern scientific inquiry. If traditional knowledge is not properly understood, he warned, all those scientific inquiries of the past will be concluded as only superstitions. The remark contains a deep philosophical point. The systems of knowledge that pre modern civilisations developed, including Indian medical thought, Indian mathematics, Indian astronomy, Indian linguistics and Indian philosophy of mind, are not failed precursors to the modern sciences. They are, in many cases, sophisticated systems of inquiry in their own right, with their own methods, their own internal coherence and their own remarkable achievements.

RSS point is therefore not the antiquarian preservation of tradition for its own sake. It is the recognition that the modern scientific project is enriched, not impoverished, by the careful study of older knowledge systems. Yoga, originally developed within the Indian philosophical tradition over millennia, is now globally recognised as a science of mind and body with measurable benefits for human well being. Ayurveda, originally

developed as a comprehensive system of medical thought, continues to attract scholarly engagement for its insights into preventive health and personalised medicine. The mathematical traditions of India, including the development of zero, the place value system and significant work in algebra and trigonometry, are foundational to all modern computation. To dismiss these contributions as superstition because they are old, or because they are non Western in origin, is to impoverish the world's knowledge inheritance.

This concern has direct relevance to the contemporary technology conversation. As artificial intelligence systems are trained on the corpora of human knowledge, the question of which corpora are included and which are neglected becomes a question of global significance. RSS contribution at Stanford was to argue, gently but firmly, that the great non Western knowledge traditions deserve a serious place in this gathering of humanity's intellectual heritage. The future of artificial intelligence, in this view, is more abundant when it can draw upon the full range of human reflection rather than upon a narrow slice of it.



India's knowledge tradition doesn't separate science from spirituality, it unifies perception, reasoning, and the beyond. From Yoga Sutras to Upanishads, it has always been about understanding the cosmos, the self, and nature now being rediscovered and revived.

- Dattatreya Hosabale (RSS Gen. Secretary) at GSIF Thrive 2026 summit at the Stanford Faculty Club

X.IV Civilisational Leadership in Technology

The third dimension of RSS contribution to the technology conversation is its conception of civilisational leadership. RSS has long invoked the aspiration of India becoming a Vishwaguru, a world teacher or guide. The term must be understood carefully. Vishwaguru does not connote political domination over other nations. It connotes the moral and intellectual leadership of a civilisation that has something distinctive to contribute to the wider human conversation. A Vishwaguru is a civilisation that, by the example of its life and the depth of its insight, helps other civilisations to find their way.

In an age of rapid technological transformation, the aspiration of civilisational leadership takes on a particular relevance. Artificial intelligence will not be governed by any single nation. Sustainability cannot be achieved by any single nation acting alone. Health is increasingly a global commons, with the lessons of one society flowing rapidly to all others. The need is not for a single hegemonic voice but for a chorus of civilisational voices, each contributing the wisdom of its long experience to

the shared project of stewarding human flourishing in the present age. RSS sees India as a natural and important contributor to that chorus, with technology at the service of culture rather than the other way around.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale closed his Stanford remarks with the observation that science, technology, culture and civilisational values can advance together. The future to which RSS aspires is not one in which technology overrides tradition or in which tradition retreats from technology. It is a future in which the deepest cultural inheritance of India, and of every great civilisation, finds expression in the most advanced technological capabilities of the age. RSS conception of leadership is therefore not a leadership of force but a leadership of integration. India, in this view, can lead by demonstrating in its own life how a civilisational continuity of five thousand years can flourish in an age of artificial intelligence, and by inviting other civilisations to undertake the same integration in their own distinctive ways.



RSS Sarsanghchalak (Chief) addressing an audience during a landmark lecture series titled "100 Years of Sangh Yatra - New Horizons"

XI. Volunteerism as a Civilisational Practice

If there is a single human practice that distinguishes the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh among the civic movements of modern history, it is the practice of volunteerism. RSS is, in its very name, an association of selfless self motivated volunteers. This chapter sets out, with the depth that the subject deserves, the distinctive character of RSS volunteerism, the way of life that it constitutes, the institution of the pracharak that anchors it, and the ways in which people from all walks of life are gathered into its working.

XI.I Swayamsevak Ethos: Volunteering as a Way of Life

In the closing portion of the Hudson dialogue, an audience question from Sahana Singh, an author based in Ithaca, New York, occasioned one of the most clarifying statements of the conversation. She asked RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale to distinguish the volunteering and seva of RSS from the volunteering that her daughter had undertaken in high school, where the activity was attached to academic credits. In the United States, she observed, volunteering is often counted in hours and rewarded with credits. In RSS, no such incentive is offered, and yet many millions of people undertake the work. How is the difference to be understood?

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's responded that the term volunteer is a loose translation of the Sanskrit term swayamsevak. The meaning of the original is richer. A swayamsevak is not a person who gives some hours to community work and receives a credit in return. A swayamsevak is a person who has adopted volunteering as a way of life. RSS own formulation is that the volunteer is twenty four hours by seven days a week and three hundred and sixty five days a year. Once a swayamsevak, the saying goes, always a swayamsevak. The commitment is not to a particular project but to a particular way of being in the world, in which service is woven into every dimension of life: family, profession, community, nation.

This understanding of volunteering as a way of life has important consequences. It means that RSS does not measure its work in hours, because the work is not bounded by time. It means that RSS does not advertise rewards, because the reward is

the life itself. It means that RSS does not need to motivate its volunteers through external incentives, because the motivation comes from within. The civic energy of the swayamsevak is the energy of a life dedicated to a purpose larger than itself.

The mechanism by which this way of life is cultivated is the daily shakha. The shakha is not a forum for indoctrination but a daily rhythm of physical exercise, song, discussion and friendly fellowship. Over months and years, the swayamsevak forms friendships that last a lifetime, develops habits of discipline and self reliance, comes to associate his own well being with the well being of the wider community, and gradually internalises the values that RSS seeks to cultivate. The daily shakha is therefore the training ground not of a profession but of a character. The civilisational achievement of RSS is to have sustained this training ground in over a hundred and ten thousand locations, every day, for one hundred years.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale described the human texture of the shakha in his answer to a separate question at the Hudson Institute. He spoke of the personal one to one contact at the daily shakha, the camaraderie that emerges from it, and the friendly and cordial atmosphere that allows volunteers to attend daily over decades. The continuity of the work, he emphasised, is sustained by both an organisational structure and the personal bonds of friendship and shared mission that grow within the shakha. This is the basic mechanism by which RSS draws individuals into its civilisational practice.

XI.II The Pracharak Tradition

Among the most distinctive features of RSS volunteerism is the institution of the pracharak. A pracharak is a full time, lifelong volunteer who renounces a private career, often remains unmarried, and dedicates himself entirely to the work of RSS. He receives no salary. He is supported by the wider community of swayamsevaks for his basic needs. He travels frequently, living a life of voluntary austerity, and serves wherever the organisation requires his presence.

The pracharak tradition has produced, over a century, a remarkable cohort of austere and devoted men whose only credential is their service. Many have spent decades travelling from one part of India to another, organising shakhas, mentoring young volunteers and embodying in their own lives the values that RSS seeks to inculcate. RSS leadership has consistently been drawn from this pracharak tradition. The Sarsanghchalak himself, although the highest moral authority within RSS, lives the same simple life as any other pracharak. The norms of RSS do not cultivate any individual persona around individual leaders, and the pracharaks themselves cultivate the habit of self effacement.

This tradition has international resonance because it offers an answer to a question that all civic movements eventually face. How can a movement sustain itself across generations without descending into bureaucracy on the one hand or personality cult on the other? RSS answer has been the pracharak tradition. The pracharak is neither a salaried official nor a charismatic leader. He is a volunteer who has made his volunteering complete. Through his life he keeps the spirit of the movement alive in a thousand local settings, and through his unselfishness he immunises the movement against the corruptions to which civic organisations are otherwise prone.

It is from the pracharak tradition that RSS leadership has consistently emerged. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale himself has spent his adult life as a pracharak. The current Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat is a pracharak. Each of the previous Sarsanghchalaks lived the same austere pattern. The continuity of leadership without internal schism that has marked RSS entire century is, in significant part, the achievement of the pracharak tradition. It is also, in its own quiet way, a contribution to the wider human conversation about how civic movements can sustain themselves with dignity.



Mohan Bhagwat, the current Sarsanghchalak (Chief) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) speaking at a podium on national identity, culture and social harmony.

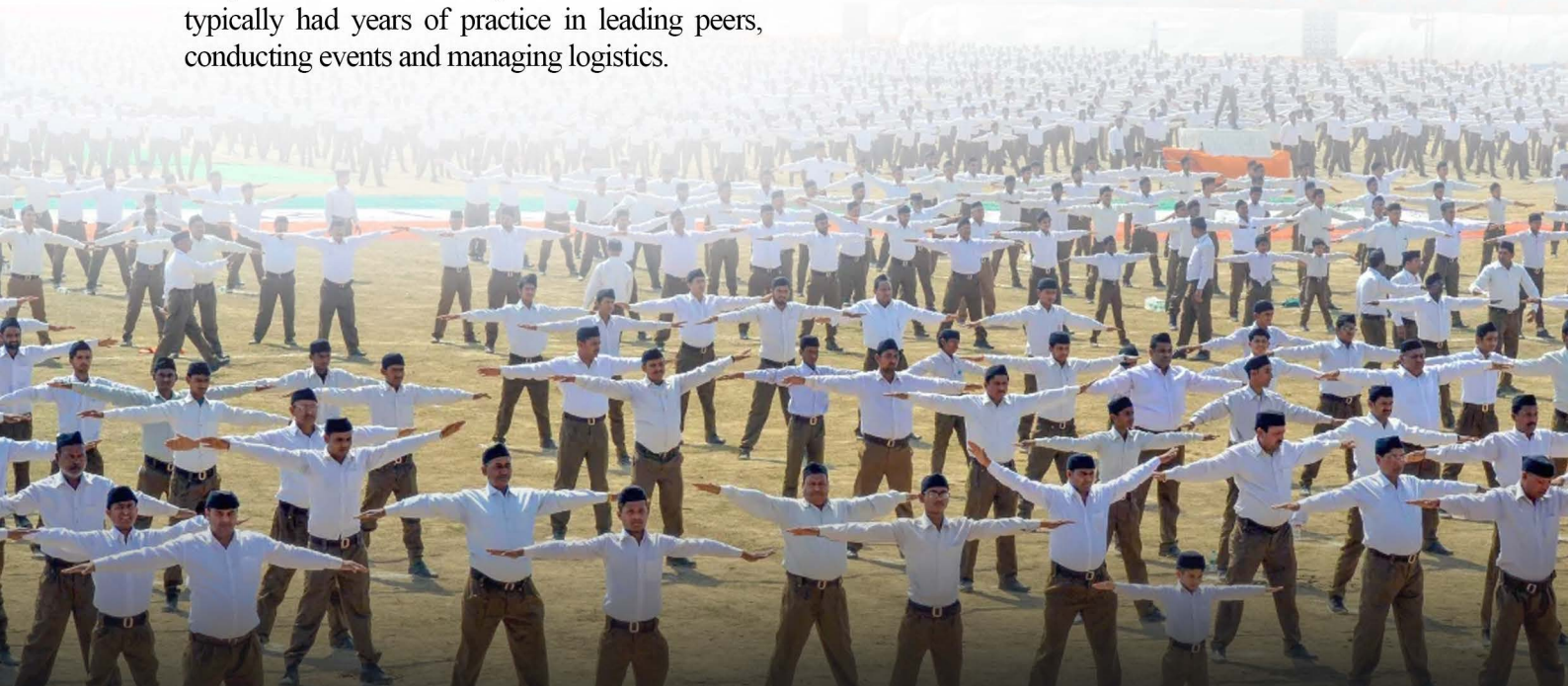
XI.III Young Volunteers and the Continuity of Leadership

A second audience question at the Hudson Institute, from a doctoral researcher at Johns Hopkins University focused on political communication for young people, asked how RSS incorporates young people into its decision making body in an era when modernity calls for the participation of younger voices. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's reply was characteristically practical. Within RSS, he said, all are young at heart, and many activities are designed specifically by age group. There are shakhas for school going children, separate shakhas for young professionals, and gatherings tailored to senior citizens. Each shakha is structured to suit the life stage of its participants, with activities and conversations that meet them where they are.

Beyond age appropriate design, RSS actively cultivates young leadership. Volunteers in their twenties and thirties are entrusted with substantial organisational responsibilities. The shakha itself rotates leadership among its participants, so that each volunteer takes turns leading exercises, conducting discussions and overseeing the schedule. Through this rotation, leadership skills are diffused across the entire body of swayamsevakas rather than concentrated in a few hands. Training camps, conducted at intervals, deepen the organisational capacity of those who show interest and capability. By the time a swayamsevak is in early adulthood, he has typically had years of practice in leading peers, conducting events and managing logistics.

This is a quiet but important contribution that RSS makes to Indian society. India is a young country, with hundreds of millions of citizens under the age of twenty five. The challenge of giving these young people meaningful roles, responsibilities and pathways to leadership is among the central tasks of any society that hopes to flourish in the present century. RSS shakha system, with its rotating leadership and its age stratified design, is one model among several for taking up this challenge. It is a model that has proved itself across a hundred years of operation in a vast and diverse country.

The continuity of leadership within RSS is therefore not merely the legacy of a few towering figures at the top. It is the patient outcome of the daily formation of millions of young people in the habits of cooperative work, civic responsibility and self effacing service. From these millions, the next generation of pracharaks emerges. From the pracharaks emerge the senior functionaries. From the senior functionaries, in time, emerges the leadership of the entire organisation. The system is self renewing, by the deliberate design of its founders and the patient stewardship of its successive generations.



Assembly of RSS volunteers at "Rashtrodaya - Swayamsevak Samaagam"

XII. Selfless Service: Beating Heart of RSS

If volunteerism is the practice that distinguishes RSS, then selfless service is the value that animates the practice. The Sanskrit term *seva*, often rendered into English as service, carries connotations that the English word does not fully capture. *Seva* is the offering of one's capacities, time and presence to others without expectation of reward, recognition or return. It is undertaken not as a transaction but as a way of honouring the divine spark in every human being. This chapter sets out, in the depth that the subject deserves, the philosophical foundations of *seva*, the practical record of RSS service in times of crisis, and the wider ecosystem of inspired service institutions that has grown from RSS soil.

XII.I Philosophical Foundations of Seva

The literal commitment of a *swyamsevak* is that his physical capacities and his mental faculties are placed at the disposal of society. The motivation is not gratitude for something received but recognition that one is, by nature, indebted to the larger life that sustains one.

The philosophical foundation of this commitment is of spiritual humanism, which holds that there is a divine spark in every individual. If this is true, then service to another human being is, in a real sense, service to the divine itself. *Seva* is therefore not an external obligation imposed upon the *swyamsevak* by the requirements of social policy. It is the natural expression of a worldview in which the well being of every other human being matters as deeply as one's own.

This philosophical grounding distinguishes RSS *seva* from much of what is called philanthropy or charity in the modern world. Philanthropy in the modern sense often presupposes a giver who has resources and a recipient who lacks them, and the relationship is essentially one way. *Seva*, in RSS understanding, is not a one way transfer from giver to recipient. It is the offering of oneself in a relationship in which both parties are dignified, in which the server is neither superior nor pitying, and in which the service rendered is itself a privilege gratefully accepted. The *swyamsevak* who carries refugees to safety during a flood is not performing charity; he is participating in the deeper human reality that connects all beings to one another.

This philosophical grounding has practical consequences. It means that *seva* can be offered to anyone in need, regardless of community, caste, religion or nationality. It means that *seva* continues during times of normality as well as during times of crisis, because the underlying reality of human interconnection is permanent. It means that *seva* is offered without expectation of acknowledgement, because acknowledgement is not the point. And it means that *seva* is the indispensable ground of RSS wider work; without *seva*, the cultural and civilisational mission of RSS would have no meaning.



RSS volunteers selflessly serving at the crash site, humanitarian service (*seva*) regardless of risk

XII.II Service in Times of Crisis

Since the very inception of RSS, swyamsevaks have been mobilised for relief during natural disasters and national crises. The historical record is striking and illustrates the central place of seva in RSS life. During the Partition of India in 1947, when communal violence and forced migration affected millions of people, swyamsevaks worked across the new border to help refugees, escort vulnerable families, distribute food and medicine, and reunite separated relatives. The work was undertaken at considerable personal risk, and the dedication of swyamsevaks during this period is recorded in many independent accounts.

In the decades since, RSS service work in times of crisis has continued unabated. When earthquakes have struck in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and the Himalayan region, swyamsevaks have been among the first to arrive on the scene, often before government agencies, with food, clothing, medical supplies and the simple gift of human presence. When floods have inundated regions of Bihar, Assam, Kerala and the eastern coast, RSS volunteers have set up relief camps, organised the supply of clean water, and helped families to rebuild their homes. When cyclones, landslides or other calamities have occurred, the same pattern has repeated itself. RSS has, in the words of one observer, become an institutional infrastructure of service that the country can rely upon when ordinary infrastructure fails.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale himself, when describing the work of RSS at the Hudson Institute, listed disaster relief as one of the principal activities of the organisation, alongside education, health, self help groups, rural development and environmental work. The list is not random. Each of these areas represents a sustained domain of seva in which RSS inspired institutions have built up decades of operational experience. Education through Vidya Bharati, RSS inspired schools network, reaches millions of students each year. Health through various RSS inspired clinics and hospitals reaches communities that government services often cannot. Rural development through RSS inspired self help groups and panchayat work has transformed villages across the country. Environmental work through tree planting, water conservation and ecological education has gradually become a major focus of the organisation.



RSS Swyamsewak (volunteer) is not just giving some time for some community service and getting some credits, he feels that it is a way of life that they have adopted. From day one they feel that they belong to this nation and culture and they have to do something for society and pay back to society.

- RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale In conversation with Walter Russell Mead at Hudson Institute, Washington DC



RSS Volunteers at community-driven effort to provide food and support, for patients' families, attendants, or people in need around the hospital.

XII.III Wider Ecosystem of Inspired Service Organisations

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale noted at the Hudson Institute that swayamsevaks have created over forty civic institutions, most of which have become nationwide organisations engaged in nation building activities. This figure represents one of the most striking facts about RSS: that from a single voluntary movement focused on the formation of character has grown an entire ecosystem of inspired institutions, each focused on a particular domain of service. The list of these institutions is illuminating. Akhil Bharatiya Vidarthi Parishad serves the world of student affairs. Bharatiya Mazdoor RSS works with labour unions and the dignity of working people. Vishwa Hindu Parishad addresses religious and cultural questions. Seva Bharati conducts charitable service projects in urban slums and rural villages. Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram works with tribal communities for their welfare and cultural continuity. Vidya Bharati operates a vast network of schools.

Each of these institutions operates autonomously. Each has its own leadership, its own governance, its own annual work plan. Yet each is connected to the wider RSS family by shared values and by the personal histories of its leaders, who are typically swayamsevaks of long standing. The coordination forum called the Samanvay committee ensures that the various parivar organisations communicate with one another and uphold common values, while preserving the operational independence of each. The architecture is both decentralised and coherent: a confederation of inspired institutions held together by a shared civilisational purpose.

This wider ecosystem of inspired service institutions is one of the most consequential outcomes of RSS hundred years of work. It means that the values cultivated in the daily shakha find expression in nearly every domain of national life. It means that the civilisational vision of RSS is not a matter of speech alone but of sustained institutional achievement. And it means that any honest description of RSS contribution to Indian society must take into account not only the daily shakha and the pracharak cadre but also the dozens of inspired institutions that together constitute RSS Parivar.

The wider international relevance of this institutional architecture lies in its demonstration that civilisational values, when carefully cultivated within a single source movement, can flow outward into a vast range of social institutions over time. RSS has not built a centralised conglomerate. It has built a forest of inspired growth, in which each tree finds its own light while drawing nourishment from a common soil. This model of inspired civic institution building is itself a contribution that RSS offers to the wider human conversation about how societies can renew themselves through voluntary action over generations.

XIII. Misconceptions of Bharat and RSS in the United States

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's engagement at the Hudson Institute addressed with patience and clarity, the misconceptions about Bharat and RSS that persist in segments of American discourse. He approached the task with characteristic equanimity, neither defensive nor confrontational, but inviting his interlocutors into a fuller and more accurate understanding. This chapter sets out, in the depth that the subject deserves, the principal misconceptions that he addressed, the realities that he placed against them, and the constructive path that he proposed for their correction.

XIII.I Old Images and the New India

The first cluster of misconceptions concerns India itself. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale observed at Hudson, with gentle good humour, that the American perception of India has too often been that of an over populated country full of slums and poverty, a land that he summarised in the alliterative phrase land of snakes, slums and what some have called swamis. These images, he suggested, are partial at best and misleading at worst. They reflect a picture of India that is several decades out of date and that misses the most important developments of contemporary Indian life.

The reality of contemporary India, as RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale set it out, is rather different. India is a technology hub. Indian scientists have reached the moon, in a successful programme of lunar exploration that placed India among the small group of nations to have achieved soft landings on the lunar surface. India is the fourth largest economy in the world, with a vast and growing middle class, a flourishing services sector, a world leading information technology industry, and an entrepreneurial culture that has produced some of the most valuable companies of the twenty first century. India is the world's largest democracy, with electoral participation rates that few mature democracies can rival, and with civic institutions that have proven robust across many decades of independent governance.

None of these dimensions of contemporary India is well represented in the older images that continue to circulate in segments of Western media and discourse. Yet the older images persist, in part because they are familiar and in part because the work of replacing them with more accurate pictures has been slow. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's observation was therefore an invitation to American institutions, including think tanks, universities and policy bodies, to undertake the patient work of bringing the picture into focus. RSS, for its part, sees this work as one of its own responsibilities in the years ahead, and the engagement at Stanford and Hudson was itself a deliberate contribution to it.



India embraces modernity, get modernized but having its cultural roots strong enough so that the succeeding generations of India should be able to fulfill and realize the dream of the great patriots who worked for the emancipation of India for last centuries.

- RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale In conversation with
Walter Russell Mead at Hudson Institute, Washington DC

XIII.II Mischaracterisations of RSS

The second cluster of misconceptions concerns RSS itself. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale acknowledged, with the same equanimity, that long standing narratives have, knowingly or unknowingly, portrayed RSS as Hindu supremacist, anti minority, anti Christian, anti modern. Each of these characterisations, on closer examination, dissolves before the actual life of the organisation.

The charge of Hindu supremacism is incompatible with the philosophical foundations of RSS. As RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale explained, Hindu philosophy is built on the conception of the universal family and on the recognition that the same oneness runs through all beings. A philosophical tradition built on such premises cannot, by its own internal logic, generate a doctrine of group supremacy. The supremacist nature of Hindus, he stated plainly, simply cannot be there.

The charge that RSS is anti minority is incompatible with the inclusivity that has marked the shakha from its earliest days. RSS shakhas have always been open to people of all faith, castes and backgrounds. Inter dining and oneness across social strata are common in its gatherings. RSS has actively engaged in dialogue with the leadership of many religious communities, including its long standing conversations with Christian and Muslim leaders on matters of social harmony. The work of seva offered by RSS and its inspired institutions is offered without distinction of community, in keeping with the philosophical foundations described in the previous chapter.

The charge that RSS is anti modern is incompatible with the actual record of the organisation. As discussed in the chapter on technology and innovation, RSS leadership engages thoughtfully with the most advanced conversations of contemporary science and technology. RSS inspired institutions operate world class schools, hospitals and research centres. RSS has adopted modern communications technology for its own internal coordination. Its current Sarsanghchalak speaks publicly about the integration of science and spirituality. The image of an organisation hostile to modernity simply does not fit the working life of RSS. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale stated RSS is a public, voluntary organisation built upon the doctrine of universal family, the inclusion of all communities, and the practice of selfless service in the most public possible way.

RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale's point in addressing these misconceptions was constructive rather than defensive. The misperceptions of the past, he suggested, can be steadily replaced by accurate understanding through sustained dialogue. The work of one hundred years in shakhas, in disaster relief, in education and in social harmony has been steady. The image will, in time, catch up with the reality. RSS contribution to the catching up is to make itself available for honest conversation, in forums such as those at Stanford and Hudson, in which the organisation can speak in its own voice and answer questions directly.



America's misunderstanding about India is that it is over populated full of slums and poverty and it is a land of snakes, slums and swamies. However, India is also a tech hub technology Indian scientists have reached moon and India is a fourth economy in the world

-RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale In conversation with
Walter Russell Mead at Hudson Institute, Washington DC

XIII.III Role of the Indian Diaspora

A third dimension of the misconceptions question concerns the Indian diaspora in the United States. An audience question at the Hudson Institute, from a member of the Indian Foreign Service now working in geopolitics and rural transformation, raised the role that the Indian diaspora can play in bringing the two countries into closer alignment. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale offered a thoughtful response. The Indian diaspora in the United States, he observed, is not a single uniform community. It includes citizens of long standing whose families have been in the country for decades, recent professional immigrants, students currently in American universities, and those born in the United States who hold the citizenship by birthright. Each of these segments brings its own perspective and its own pattern of engagement with both countries.

The duty of the diaspora, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale suggested, is first to be good citizens of their country of residence. Those who have taken American citizenship owe their first allegiance to the United States and have a duty to be exemplary citizens of the country that has

welcomed them. At the same time, the cultural connection with India can and should be retained. It will, he suggested, be retained naturally; but it can also be deliberately cultivated through participation in cultural, educational and civic activities. From this dual rooted position, the diaspora is well placed to help build the relationship between the two great democracies.

The diaspora can, in particular, serve as a bridge of understanding. By embodying in their own lives the integration of Indian cultural inheritance with American civic citizenship, members of the diaspora demonstrate to both countries that the integration is not only possible but flourishing. They bring their American colleagues a fuller picture of contemporary India. They bring their Indian relatives a fuller picture of contemporary America. They contribute to American civic life through service in many domains, from medicine to information technology to academia, while also contributing to the cultural life of their families and communities. RSS sees the Indian diaspora as a precious resource for the strengthening of the India United States relationship in the present century.

XIII.IV Foundations of Mutual Understanding

Throughout the Hudson dialogue, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale returned repeatedly to the importance of people to people relations as the foundation of mutual understanding between India and the United States. Civic institutions, think tanks and universities, both state and non state actors, can do a great deal to facilitate the encounter of people from each society with the people of the other. The Hudson Institute itself, as Walter Russell Mead observed, has invested significant resources in this work in recent years, taking American journalists and think tank researchers on visits to India and bringing Indian voices to Washington for substantive conversations.

Mead acknowledged candidly that despite these efforts, the foundations of the relationship had not been built quickly enough to prevent some difficulties in recent months. His response, however, was not retreat but redoubled effort. The conclusion he drew was that more people to people

contact is needed, more cultural engagement, more deep reading on each side of the wisdom of the other. RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale endorsed this view warmly. Civic institutions, he agreed, can also help in this way in a big way. The constructive future is not one of fewer engagements but of more, conducted with greater seriousness and at deeper levels.

The Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies is itself a participant in this work, and the present brief is a contribution to it. As more conversations of the depth seen at Stanford and Hudson take place, as more Americans come to understand the actual life and worldview of RSS, and as more Indians come to understand the actual life and concerns of contemporary America, the misconceptions that have shadowed the relationship will give way to the mutual understanding that the moment requires. The work is patient and long term, but it is the only work that can build a relationship adequate to the responsibilities of the present century.

XIV. Panch Parivartan: Five Centenary Focus Areas

At the Hudson Institute, when asked about the next phase of RSS work as it crosses the threshold of its centenary, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale set out, with quiet conviction, the five focus areas to which RSS is dedicating its energies in the years ahead. These five areas are the very five transformations of Panch Parivartan, the centennial vision of RSS, now placed before an international audience in the words of the General Secretary himself. What was articulated earlier in this brief as the considered direction of RSS for its second century takes substantive form here, in the language and emphasis with which RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale chose to commend them to American academic and policy audiences. They are, he emphasised, universal in their significance; they speak not only to the needs of India but to the needs of humanity at large.

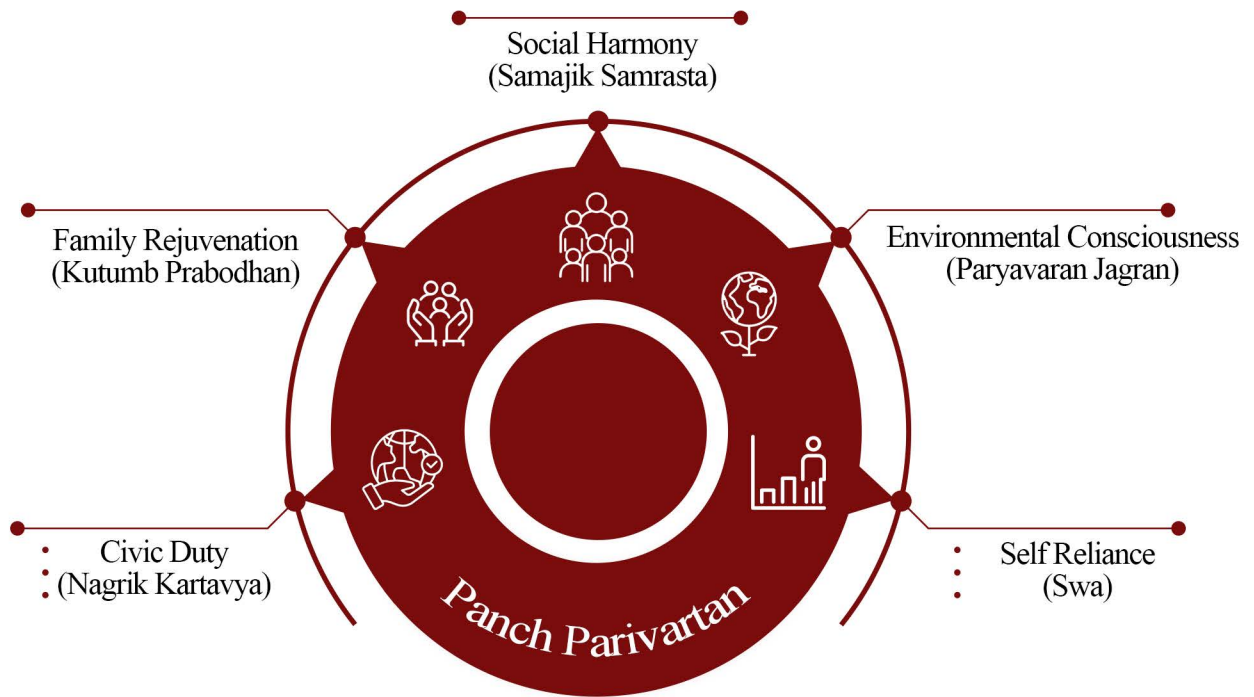
The first focus area is social harmony and cohesion, expressed within Panch Parivartan as Samajik Samrasta. Within Indian society, as within any large and diverse society, the existence of disparities and varied identities can occasionally generate tensions. RSS has therefore set itself the task of strengthening social harmony at every level of society, with a particular emphasis on overcoming inherited barriers and on building friendships across communities. Social harmony, in the RSS view, is not the suppression of diversity but the flowering of unity within it. It is achieved through patient work in shakhas and inspired institutions, through inter community gatherings, through the celebration of festivals together and through the daily practices of common life that gradually weave the threads of a society into a single fabric.

The second focus area is an eco friendly life at the personal and family level, articulated within Panch Parivartan as Paryavaran. Environmental issues are widely discussed on international forums, public policies are framed and protocols are signed; yet ultimately, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale observed, environmental outcomes depend on how individuals, families and communities behave with respect to nature. RSS has therefore set itself the task of communicating small but doable actions that ordinary people can

The third focus area is family values and the inculcation of cultural and humanistic values in the upcoming generation, expressed within Panch Parivartan as Kutumb Prabodhan. Families, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale observed, are built on affection and trust. In the conditions of modern life, families come under various pressures and risk losing their cohesion. RSS therefore places emphasis on healthy families, in the conviction that healthy families are the guarantee of healthy nations. Family values, in this sense, are not narrow or constraining but expansive; they include affection, respect, lifelong learning, ethical formation and the transmission of cultural memory across generations. RSS sees the family as the fundamental institution within which character is formed, and the strengthening of the family as therefore the most direct contribution to the strengthening of the wider society.

The fourth focus area is national self reliance, expressed within Panch Parivartan as Swa, the considered cultivation of selfhood, and captured more widely in the contemporary term Atmanirbharta. Self reliance, in this sense, is not the closing of doors but the maintenance of self respect and capacity. Nations must be able to provide for their own essential needs in economy, in security and in many other domains. At the same time, the doors remain open. International cooperation, trade and intellectual exchange continue, and indeed flourish on a stronger foundation. The point, as RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale emphasised, is that any engagement with another society or nation must be on terms that are fair to one's own nation and that protect its long term interests. Self reliance is therefore the foundation that allows generous engagement with the world to be sustained, including the embrace of modern technology, artificial intelligence and digital sovereignty that the affirmative RSS view of innovation supports.

The fifth focus area is civic duties and a wholesome sense of citizenship, expressed within Panch Parivartan as Nagrik Kartavya. RSS recognises that the institutions of democracy, the institutions of public life and the institutions of



community require citizens of character to function well. The cultivation of civic sense, of duties as well as rights, of consideration for fellow citizens, of basic ethical practices in everyday life such as following traffic laws, paying taxes and keeping public places clean; these together constitute the wholesome citizenship that makes a great nation possible. RSS has therefore committed itself to imbibing these qualities in individuals and communities across the country. The cultivation of civic character is, in the RSS view, the indispensable counterpart to the formal institutions of democracy. Without civic character, formal institutions become brittle; with it, they flourish.

These five focus areas, RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale concluded, are universal. Samajik Samrasta, Paryavaran, Kutumb Prabodhan, Swa and Nagrik Kartavya, the five transformations of Panch Parivartan, are not particular to India alone. They are conditions of human flourishing wherever human beings live. RSS has begun to embed them within its own volunteers and is now extending them, in this centenary year, to the wider society. The aspiration is to create a strong and prosperous nation that can

contribute meaningfully to the welfare of the entire world. As RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale put it at Hudson, an emotional exhortation alone cannot bring the dream of a great nation to life; the nation must be strong and self confident enough to serve the cause of humanity wherever there is hardship.

Walter Russell Mead, in closing the dialogue, remarked that there is nothing in the five focus areas of RSS with which a thoughtful person, on either side of any cultural boundary, would disagree. The five focus areas therefore constitute, in their universality, an invitation to the wider human conversation. They are the RSS offering to the global discussion about how societies can flourish in the present century. Distinctively Indian in their cultural texture and universally applicable in their underlying principles, the five transformations of Panch Parivartan embody, in compact form, the integration of cultural rootedness with global responsibility that has been the principal theme of all the engagements documented in this brief.

XV. Conclusion: Toward a Shared Civilisational Future

The engagements of RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale at THRIVE 2026 in Stanford and at the Hudson Institute in Washington offer a window into the worldview of one of the most significant civilisational movements of the present age. Across both forums, the message of RSS was consistent. Cultural rootedness and modern progress are not opposed; oneness and diversity are not opposed; service and strength are not opposed; the strength of one nation and the welfare of the human family are not opposed. In each pairing, the apparent tension dissolves when the deeper unity is rightly understood.

At Stanford, RSS message took the form of an integrated vision in which artificial intelligence, sustainability and health are evaluated not only by their economic outcomes but by their contribution to ecology and ethics. The wider lens of economy, ecology and ethics is RSS distinctive contribution to the global technology conversation, and it bears upon every great question that the present century has placed before humanity. At Hudson, the message took the form of a careful and patient explanation of what RSS is and what it is not, of the philosophical roots of its commitment to oneness, of the historical record of Hindu civilisation in the world, and of the practical work of shakhas, service projects and inspired institutions through which RSS seeks to build human social capital for the nation and for humanity.

Across the dedicated chapters of this brief, the depth of RSS contribution becomes visible. In the chapter on technology, innovation and civilisational leadership, RSS emerges as a carrier of the integrated horizon within which the next generation of technological transformation can be evaluated. In the chapter on volunteerism, RSS emerges as the cultivator of a way of life in which service is woven into every dimension of human existence. In the chapter on selfless service, RSS emerges as a movement whose hundred years of work in disaster relief, education, health, rural development and environmental stewardship constitute one of the great achievements of voluntary action in modern history. In the chapter on misconceptions, RSS emerges as a movement willing and able to engage in patient dialogue with those who have misunderstood it, in the conviction that mutual understanding is the work of generations and worth every effort it requires.

The five focus areas that RSS has set for its second century, namely social harmony, ecological responsibility, family values, self reliance and civic sense, identify the core elements that allow any society to flourish in conditions of rapid change. They are aspirations as appropriate to the United States and to the wider community of free nations as they are to India. The work of RSS, in this sense, is part of a wider human work to which RSS contributes its distinctive voice.

The Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies concludes this brief with the observation made by Walter Russell Mead at the close of his conversation with RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale. The relationship between India and the United States, he suggested, is decisive for the peace and stability of the world in the present century. If India can take its full place among the great nations and civilisations of the world, contributing as a civilisational power, generating wealth and ideas, and helping to build a culture of mutual understanding, the result will be a more humane world for everyone. The engagements of April 2026 are a step on that road.

The vision that emerges from these conversations is at once ancient and forward looking. It honours the deep roots of Indic civilisation while embracing the technologies and possibilities of the present age. It recognises that the future story of humanity will be written by all the great civilisations together; that no single tradition has a monopoly on wisdom; and that the well being of one people is bound up with the well being of all peoples. This is the spirit in which RSS approaches its second century, and it is the spirit in which the Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies commends this brief to its readers.

In the years ahead, as the conversations begun at Stanford and Hudson unfold into wider engagements, the framework set out by RSS Sarkaryavah Dattatreya Hosabale will continue to inform RSS contribution to the global discussion. The wider lens of economy, ecology and ethics will continue to be offered as a contribution to the technology conversation. The way of life of the swayamsevak will continue to be offered as a contribution to the conversation about civic engagement. The practice of seva will continue to be offered as a contribution to the conversation about service. The patient work of dispelling misconceptions through honest dialogue will continue to be offered as a contribution to the conversation about how nations and civilisations can come to know one another deeply.

In each of these offerings, RSS seeks not domination but companionship, not the imposition of its own way upon others but the sharing of what it has learned in the hope that others, in their own ways, will share what they have learned in turn. This is the spirit of the universal family, which has been at the heart of Indic civilisation for thousands of years and which now finds, in the present century, an unprecedented opportunity for global expression.

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