



SEWA INTERNATIONAL: RSS CHARITY WING PROMOTES HINDUTVA IDEOLOGY

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Sewa International, the international charity wing of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh RSS was established in 1989 by Madhukar Deoras. The prime objective of the RSS charity wing is to collect funds from Indian diaspora in a bid to promote Hindutva ideology. A London based organization Awaz- South Asia Watch Limited researched Sewa International. The research unveiled that the organization was “dedicated to building a Hindu nation based on Hindu extremist ideas, glorifying the RSS, recruiting for the RSS and expanding RSS physical and ideological training cells (shakhas) in India.”¹ The organization as far as the research of Awaz- South Asia Watch Limited is concerned was also responsible for arranging training camps in different countries to indoctrinate Hindutva ideology. Though the organization portrays itself as a well-intentioned philanthropic effort for humanity abroad, the world is still incognizant of the fact that Sewa International uses a philanthropic card to promote RSS fascist ideology.²

Sewa International has a strong presence in the United Kingdom. The organization for the victims of the Gujarat Earthquake in 2001 in the UK collected nearly 4.3 million pounds. Surprisingly, one-third

¹ Savitha Ganshe "Sewa International: Diaspora Funds As a Key Means to Consolidate Power at Home," *Gauri Lankesh* May 24, 2021. <https://gaurilankeshnews.com/twitter-ceo-donates-to-rss-affiliated-sewa-international/>.

² Ibid.

of the total finding under the organization in the name of rehabilitating victims of the earthquake went into the construction of RSS schools. Schools, under the influence of RSS, brainwashed the young students with an extremist nationalist ideology of Hindutva. The textbooks of the Vidhya Bharati schools in India are lucid manifestation of anti-Muslims and anti-Christian sentiments.³ Sewa International has numerous charity organizations across the world. In the pretext of charity and welfare work, the organization is obsessed with the "consolidation of Hindu society". Under the guise of rural development work within India, the organization mobilizes the Hindu community against the oppressed minority groups.⁴

Lord Patel, who remained a Labour Party Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom, was also a patron of Sewa International's Earthquake Relief Fund in the UK. He soon realized the disdain activities of the organization argued that Sewa International was not "Seva" (service) rather the money was granted to RSS affiliated organisations to carry out propagate against Muslims and Christians. Patel after knowing the real face of Sewa International resigned from the organization. While giving an interview to the U.K. newspaper Sunday Mercury, Patel articulated that "I very much regret ever having been part of this racist organisation. ... Sewa International is a front for militant Hindu organisations. ... I am sure a lot of the donors don't realize the money is being sent to help terror groups like the RSS,".⁵

Money donated by US-based organisations to Sangh-affiliated charitable groups from 2001 to 2012:

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA	\$27 million
India Development and Relief Fund	\$19.4 million
Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America	\$3.9 million
Sewa International (from 2005)	\$3.3 million
Param Shakti Peeth of America (from 2004)	\$1.9 million

Data: Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups
Scroll.in

Source: Scroll in July 2, 2014

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Sewa international: Service with an ideological edge", *Outlook*, November 2002.
<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/sewa-international-service-with-an-ideological-edge/217971>

⁵ Dionne Bunsha, "The Hidden Face of Charity," *Frontline*, April 23, 2004.
<https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/article30222073.ece>.

Sewa International has also been operating in the US. The above data shows that the organization from 2001 to 2012 had received a donation of US \$ 3.3 million.⁶

The prevailing Covid-19 turns out to be a blessing in disguise for five Indian organizations including Sewa International functioning in the US under the tutelage of Hindu supremacist and religious groups. According to United States' Small Business Administration (SBA), the five Hindu supremacist and religious groups in the US have received US \$833,000 relief funds.⁷ Sewa International has also received US\$150,621 Covid-19 relief. In this regard, Al Jazeera news started the investigation of Covid-19 relief funds being collected by five Hindu supremacist and religious groups. Intriguingly, other Indian organizations were reluctant to respond to the allegations of Al Jazeera except for Sewa International and Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America VHPA. Both Sewa International VHPA responded to the accusations said that "We comply with the government regulations and send money to several approved charitable organisations in India."⁸

Sunita Viswanath, the New York-based, co-founder of Hindus for Human Rights expressed her reservations over the US pandemic relief funds collected by Indian organizations. Viswanath maintained that the funds would likely be used in the consolidation of hate campaigns against the minority groups in general and Muslims in particular. She further reiterated that "All the organizations you have mentioned are sympathetic to Hindutva ideology. American organizations such as the VHPA openly acknowledge that they are inspired by India's Hindu nationalist organizations, such as the VHP and the RSS,"⁹ It is pertinent to mention here that Jack Dorsey Twitter CEO on 10 May 2021 also announced US \$2.5 million donations to Sewa International.¹⁰ It is disgusting to note that even the CEO of Twitter is thoroughly oblivious to the hidden agenda of the organization.¹¹

It is exceedingly alarming, RSS ideology's presence is no more confined to South Asia, it is omnipresent everywhere, committed to promoting the ideology of M S Golwalkar who in his book titled "We or Our nationhood Defined" overemphasized Hindu nationalist ideology and gave fierce

⁶ Johari, Aarefa. "New Report Shows How Hindutva Groups Operate in the US, Send Money to India." *Scroll.in*. July 2, 2014. <https://scroll.in/article/668870/new-report-shows-how-hindutva-groups-operate-in-us-send-money-to-india>.

⁷ Naik, R. H. "Hindu right-wing groups in the US got \$833,000 of federal COVID fund", *Al Jazeera*, April 02, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/2/hindu-right-wing-groups-in-us-got-833000-of-federal-covid-fund>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Pieter Friedrich, "Twitter gives millions to "Welfare wing" of India's RSS paramilitary", *Baaz*, May 12, 2021. <https://www.baaznews.org/p/twitter-donates-millions-sewa-international-rss>

¹¹ Ibid.

warning to the religious minorities to adhere to Hindu's acculturation and its identity.¹² The world community needs to realize the gravity of foreseen threats emanating from Hindutva ideology. The clandestine activities of Sewa International ought to be scrutinized by the West. Under the garb of charity and welfare work, the organization projects Hindutva ideology and its tenets are based on oppression of the minority groups. The presence of Sewa International in the West negates Western values and poses a formidable threat to its democracy. In short, the West should also understand that Indian Prime Minister Nehrdera Modi is following in the footsteps of the Golwalkar. He has converted the world's so-called largest democracy into the world's largest fascist democracy.

¹² Dost Muhammad Barrech, "Indian Democracy from Secularism to RSS" *Pakistan Observer*, October 9, 2019. <https://pakobserver.net/indian-democracy-from-secularism-to-rss/>