

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: IND17817
Country: India
Date: 1 March 2006

Keywords: India – Tamil Nadu – RSS – “Places of Violence” – Muslims – Tamil Nadu Development Foundation Trust

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Could you please clarify who started the RSS?
2. Have four places, Coimbotore, Nagore, Melapalayam and Mutherpet, been declared places of violence?
3. Has the RSS set a manifesto to cover 150 years, during which time all Muslims in India will be killed?
4. Is there a village of Rajnagar, near Bangalore in Karnataka? Is its main street Raju Street?
5. Is there a lodge 'Nijam' in a street called 'Main Bazaar' in Hyderabad?
6. Is there a village called Narendar Pattiya in Gujarat?
7. In Bombay is there a mosque called 'Haj Committee' in the main street? If so, can people stay there?
8. Is there a hotel 'Asok Inn' near the beach in Kovalam, Kerala?
9. Is the office of Arivagam and/or TNDFT in Chennai located in the Theni District in Muthuthevanpatti, at Chennai number 2 Farax Road?

RESPONSE

1. Could you please clarify who started the RSS?

The *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) website states that Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar found the RSS in 1925:

It redounds to the foresight of Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) that he anticipated the need for strengthening the foundations of the Hindu society and for preparing it for challenges on social, economic, cultural, religious, philosophical and political planes. A galaxy of savants such as Dayananda and Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Tilak, had sown the seeds of the most recent phase of national renaissance. What was needed was a sufficiently strong instrumentality for carrying that process

onward.

This instrumentality was created and bequeathed to the nation by Dr. Hedgewar in the form of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh which he, after years of deliberate and patient preparation, founded at Nagpur on 27th September, Vijayadashami Day of 1925.

(‘Sangh – A dynamic power house’ 2003, RSS Website

http://www.rss.org/New_RSS/index.jsp sourced from

<http://forum.skadi.net/showthread.php?t=22649> – Accessed 21 February 2006 – Attachment 1).

Other academic sources also state that Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was the founder of the RSS. These sources include the following:

- An excerpt providing information about the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* in *Revolutionary Dissident Movements of the World*, available at Attachment 2. (‘India’ 2004, *Revolutionary and Dissident Movements of the World*, 4th edn. p.157 – Attachment 2).
- Attachment 3 provides information supporting that Hedgewar is the founder of the RSS in an excerpt from Swamy, A.R. 2004, ‘Ideology, Organization and Electoral Strategy of Hindu Nationalism: What’s Religion got to do with it?’ in Satu P. Limaye, Mohan Malik and Robert G. Wirsing eds., *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, pp.73-100 Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu. (<http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/Religious%20Radicalism%20and%20Security%20in%20South%20Asia.pdf> – Accessed 13 December 2005 – Attachment 3).

Information about the founder of the RSS is also available in the following Country Research Responses:

- RRT Country Research 2003, *Research Response IND15708*, 20 February – Attachment 4;
- RRT Country Research 2001, *Research Response IND22491*, 27 April – Attachment 5;
- RRT Country Research 2001, *Research Response IND14866*, 12 November – Attachment 6.

Information located in a 2004 report by AWAAZ, South Asia Watch states that the RSS was founded by two people, Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, as stated above, along with an individual named B.S Moonje:

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

The RSS is modelled on Italian Fascist youth movements that were growing at that time.

Its founders (K. B.Hedgewar and B. S.Moonje) and its second leader (M. S.Golwalkar) were all strong admirers or supporters of both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. (“Section One: Sewa International UK and Hindutva” in

In Bad Faith? British Charity and Hindu Extremism, AWAAZ South Asia Watch
<http://www.awaazsaw.org/ibf/ibflores.pdf> – Accessed 21 February 2006 –
Attachment 7).

No information as located in the sources available indicated that Dr Burnijay, Dr Mijay Bulwabu, Dr Acktaf or Dr Charataf were responsible for starting the RSS.

2. Have four places, Coimbatore, Nagore, Melapalayam and Mutherpet, been declared places of violence?

In 1997 and 1998, violent incidents were recorded in the city of Coimbatore. In November 1997, police allegedly sided with rioters and looked on while political leaders and their “followers were forced to run for their lives”:

The Tamil Nadu police have come under heavy fire for the November 30 violence in Coimbatore that took a communal turn. The cops, it is alleged, had openly taken sides with the rioters.

Intelligence reports say that while many policemen joined hands with the rioters, certain others looked the other way when Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam legislator C T Dhanapani and his followers were forced to run for their lives. Dhanapani had gone to pay homage to the policeman who was murdered by rioters.

The rioters also raised slogans against the police's intelligence unit for allegedly misleading the government on the communal front.

Coimbatore has lately been the hotbed of communal clashes. The district was rocked by violence earlier this year, following the killing of 'Palani' Baba (a Muslim fundamentalist leader) by a mob, reportedly imported from Kerala. Incidentally, it is in areas bordering neighbouring states that communal clashes have been rampant.

(Moorthy, N. S. 1997, 'Tamil Nadu police under heavy fire for Coimbatore violence', *Rediff News* online, 8 December. (<http://www.rediff.com/news/dec/08coim.htm>) - Accessed 24 March 2004 – Attachment 8).

In February 1998, devastating terrorist bombings occurred in Coimbatore city with 46 people killed and 200 injured. The following article from *Frontline* describes the violence:

ON February 14, Coimbatore was subjected to the most devastating attack of terrorist bombings Tamil Nadu has ever witnessed. The attack, blamed on Muslim fundamentalist groups, came barely three months after 18 Muslims were killed in the city in November-December 1997 in a pogrom unleashed by a section of the police in concert with Hindu militants following the killing of a police constable, allegedly by three Muslim youth.

On Saturday, February 14, forty-six persons - 35 men, 10 women and one child - were killed and over 200 injured in 13 bomb attacks in 11 places, all of them within a 12-km radius. Ten more persons were killed in the next few days: six suspected Muslim fundamentalists died following a police raid on their hideout in Tirumal Street on February 15, and four teenaged Muslim boys died following a stray blast in Al-Ameen Colony on February 17. (Subramanian, T. S. 1998, 'Behind the Coimbatore tragedy', *Frontline* online edition, Volume 15, Number 5, 7 – 20 March. <http://www.flonnet.com/fl1505/15050090.htm> - Accessed 23 March 2004 – Attachment 9).

The Muslim group *Al Ummah* was allegedly responsible for the explosions in Coimbatore, according to a 1998 article from the South Asia Analysis Group:

Incipient signs of the prevailing unhappiness/anger in some sections of the community driving some of the Muslim youth to take to terrorism to give vent to their anger. Examples: The Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), which has been responsible for many acts of terrorism in different parts of India involving the use of explosives, and the Al Ummah of the South (mainly Tamil Nadu and Kerala), which has been responsible for many acts of explosions in Tamil Nadu, including the series of co-ordinated explosions in Coimbatore in February, 1998. (Raman, B. 'Minority Separatism in India: *The Muslim Minority*, South Asia Analysis Group <http://www.saag.org/papers12/paper1144.html> – Accessed 22 February 2006 – Attachment 10).

No information was located in the available sources suggesting that Nagore has been declared a place of violence. However, in relation to the town of Melapalayam, the following article in *The Hindu* describes violent attacks occurring in 1997 resulting in the murder of five Hindus:

Five Hindus were murdered in Melapalayam town in August 1997. A local Hindu Munnani activist was done to death at Pattamadai a year later. The Hindu fundamentalists retaliated by killing a Muslim trader in December 1997 at Melapalayam. The "Muslim-pockets", more particularly Melapalayam, were categorised as "sensitive areas" in the wake of these killings and counter-killings. ('Targets of hate' 2000, *The Hindu* online edition, 12 December. <http://www.hindu.com/2000/12/17/stories/05171344.htm> – Accessed 14 August 2003 – Attachment 11).

No information was found in the available sources suggesting that Muthupet has been declared a place of violence.

3. Has the RSS set a manifesto to cover 150 years, during which time all Muslims in India will be killed?

No information was found in the available sources stating that the RSS has set a manifesto to cover 150 years, during which time all Muslims in India will be killed. However, information conveying the ideology of the RSS in relation to Muslims, is outlined in the following 2004 article:

The RSS's second leader, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, supported Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In his key book *We, or our nationhood defined*, published in 1939, he openly supported the anti-semitic policies of Nazi Germany towards German-Jews, openly supported Hitler's violent invasion of other sovereign territories, lauded Fascist Italy and said these were models which India could learn and profit by. In this book, which the RSS re-published after the end of the Second World War (after the horrors of the Holocaust were fully known), and which the RSS in the 1950s called an 'unassailable doctrine of nationhood', Golwalkar stated that in India, minorities deserved no rights whatsoever, not even any citizen's rights. Minorities were to either give up their beliefs or live at 'the sweet will of the majority'. In 2002, the RSS stated that the safety of Muslims in India lies in 'the goodwill of the majority'. ("Section One: Sewa International UK and Hindutva" in *In Bad Faith? British Charity and Hindu Extremism*, AWAAZ South Asia Watch -

<http://www.awaazsaw.org/ibf/ibflores.pdf> – Accessed 21 February 2006 – Attachment 7).

A Resolution has been made by the RSS in regards to their treatment of Muslims. It strongly espouses the RSS commitment to Hindu nationalism and refers to the Gujarat massacre as a “natural and spontaneous” event in reaction to a Godhra incident where 60 Hindus were killed. The Resolution entitled ‘Bangalore Resolution on Godhra and after’ is available at Attachment 12. (‘Bangalore Resolution on Godhra and after’ (No Date) on Vishva Samvad Kendra Gujarat website http://www.vskgujarat.com/rss_resolution_godhra.htm – Accessed 16 February 2006 – Attachment 12).

Further information regarding the RSS Resolutions is available in an article in *The Milli Gazette*:

At Bangalore in mid-March, the Pratinidhi Sabha of the RSS adopted a Resolution in which it stated: "Let the Muslims understand that their real safety lies in the goodwill of the majority." This statement is an ultimatum to the Muslim Indians, and by implication to other Indians who are not Hindus or committed to the philosophy of Hindutva. But it is fully in accord with its fascist ideology. The RSS obviously rejects the Constitution based on the principles of Freedom, Equality, Justice and Fraternity. It has a Hindu-centric view of India and its strategic mission is to transform the secular State into the Hindu State, with all non-Hindus, nay, all those who do not swear by the Hindutva ideology as second-class citizens and politically, economically and socially under the permanent dominance of the Sangh Parivar. It has long propagated the view that after a ‘thousand years of slavery’, the Hindus have now gained freedom to lord it over the non-Hindus so that they settle the account of the centuries with their ‘historic adversaries’. It thus sees non-Hindus not as equally free Indians but as vassals, born to obey the demands of their masters and to ingratiate themselves with their wishes and firmans. The only difference between Nazi-Germany and Hindu India is that the theory of the master race is substituted by that of the master religion and the master caste. (‘RSS Ultimatum to Muslims: A challenge to all minorities and other secular forces’ (No date) in *The Milli Gazette* <http://www.milligazette.com/Archives/15042002/1504200257.htm> – Accessed 16 February 2006 – Attachment 13).

A 2006 excerpt from the magazine *Searchlight* describes the political and ideological objectives of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS). At the core of these objectives, is the assertion that India has been and should be a Hindu-only country:

The Sangh Parivar, or "family of organisations", is an umbrella term used to describe the range of social, educational and political organisations and groups that have been formed by the Indian Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) since the 1950s.

However, the ideas that the Sangh promotes have existed, in one form or another, for over 150 years. They generally have a series of common ideological or political objectives, with different emphases at different times. These can be broadly summarised as follows:

India has been in the past, and should be in the future, a Hindu-only country. Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists are accepted as being within the Hindu "community" (whether they like it or not!).

Hinduism is a unified religion and civilisation (without conflicts of sect, caste, region, "theology", even when such conflicts clearly exist) which goes back thousands of

years. Hindus need to be re-educated and be proud of their historical destiny. (Paul Crofts and Anjona Roy 2003, 'Hindu fundamentalism -- why we are concerned' in *Searchlight* magazine, January 2003 on The Campaign to Stop Funding Hate website <http://stopfundinghate.org/resources/news/0103SearchLight.htm> - Accessed 22 February 2006 – Attachment 14).

4. Is there a village of Rajnagar, near Bangalore in Karnataka? Is its main street Raju Street?

According to a map on the Map My India website, available at Attachment 15, a village called Rajajinagar, which may be considered a variation on the spelling of Rajnagar is located to the on the outskirts of Bangalore city. (Bangalore Map, Map My India website <http://www.onlinebangalore.com/guide/map/blrmap.html> – Accessed 16 February 2006 – Attachment 15).

A street named Dr Rajkumar Road, (which Raju street may be an abbreviation of), is referred to in a listing of “*Tata Authorised Service Centers*” on the Maps of India website. This reference is available at Attachment 16 (and the reference can be found under the heading *Tata Authorised Service Center – Bangalore – Hi-Tech Auto India (P) Ltd*). ('List of Dealer Workshops, Tata Motors Authorised Service Center, Tata Motors Authorised Service Point' (No date), Maps of India website <http://www.mapsofindia.com/mapserv/stateservlet?state=karnataka> – Accessed 16 February 2006 – Attachment 16).

5. Is there a lodge 'Nijam' in a street called 'Main Bazaar' in Hyderabad?

No information was located in the available Tribunal sources confirming the existence of a lodge called Najim lodge in Hyderabad. Nor was any reference found to a street called Main Bazaar, Hyderabad.

On the 24th of February 2006, an e-mail was sent to an Indian tourism online assistance website at the following address, helpdesk@tourismindia.com, seeking assistance to discover whether there is a lodge called Nijam in a street called Main Bazaar, Hyderabad. The e-mail is attached at Attachment 17 (RRT Country Research 2006, 'Request for Information – Nijam Lodge, Hyderabad' 24 February – Attachment 17). At this stage, no response has been received by the Tribunal. The researcher will notify the Member if this information becomes available at the first instance.

6. Is there a village called Narendar Pattiya in Gujarat?

No information was located in the available Tribunal sources confirming the existence of a village called Narendar Pattiya in Gujarat.

On the 24th of February 2006, an e-mail was sent to the Office of The Registrar General, India at the following address, rgoffice@censusindia.net, seeking assistance to discover whether there is a village called Narendar Pattiya in Gujarat. The e-mail is attached at Attachment 18. (RRT Country Research 2006, 'Request for Information – Narendar Pattiya,

Gujarat' 24 February – Attachment 18.) At this stage, no response has been received by the Tribunal. The researcher will notify the Member if this information becomes available at the first instance.

7. In Bombay is there a mosque called 'Haj Committee' in the main street? If so, can people stay there?

No information was located in the available Tribunal sources confirming the existence of a mosque called Haj Committee in the main street.

On the 24th of February 2006, an e-mail was sent to the Haj Committee, India website contact at the following address: hajcommittee@hathaway.com, seeking information on whether there is a mosque called Haj Committee in Bombay's main street. The e-mail is attached at Attachment 19. (RRT Country Research 2006, 'Request for Information – Haj Committee Mosque, Bombay' 24 February – Attachment 19.) At this stage, no response has been received by the Tribunal. The researcher will notify the Member if this information becomes available at the first instance.

8. Is there a hotel 'Asok Inn' near the beach in Kovalam, Kerala?

No information was found regarding a hotel entitled Asok Inn near the beach in Kovalam, Kerala. However, a listing for a beach resort named Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort, which may be considered a variation of Asok Inn was located on the Ashex Tourism website and is available at Attachment 20. ('Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort' Ashex Tourism website <http://www.ashextourism.com/hotelsresorts/kerala/kovalamashok.htm> – Accessed 24 February 2006 – Attachment 20).

9. Is the office of Arivagam and/or TNDFT in Chennai located in the Theni District in Muthuthevanpatti, at Chennai number 2 Farax Road?

No information was located referring to the office of Arivagam and/or TNDFT in the Theni District at 2 Farax Road. However, a 2004 article from *The Hindu* makes reference to:

“an institution, "Arivagam" at Muthudevanpatti in Theni district...(that)..had contacts with the Tamil Nadu Development Foundation Trust at Periyapet in Chennai”.

(Ragunathan, A. V. 2004, 'Fundamentalist outfit busted in Nellikuppam', *The Hindu* online edition, 29 October <http://www.hindu.com/2004/10/29/stories/2004102908420100.htm> - Accessed 19 January 2006 – Attachment 21).

The full report describing the Tamil Nadu Development Foundation Trust is available at Attachment 21. (Ragunathan, A. V. 2004, 'Fundamentalist outfit busted in Nellikuppam', *The Hindu* online edition, 29 October

<http://www.hindu.com/2004/10/29/stories/2004102908420100.htm> - Accessed 19 January 2006 – Attachment 21).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports

United Nations (UN)

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

Non-Government Organisations

South Asia Analysis Group <http://www.saag.org/>

International News & Politics

Rediff News <http://www.rediff.com/news>

Region Specific Links

AWAAZ South Asia Watch <http://www.awaazsaw.org>

Topic Specific Links

RSS website http://www.rss.org/New_RSS/index.jsp

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Yahoo search engine <http://www.yahoo.com/>

Online Subscription Services

Janes Intelligence Review <http://jir.janes.com/public/jir/index.shtml>

Library Networks

State Library of New South Wales <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/>

Databases:

Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
	<i>REFINFO</i>	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i> .
RRT Library	<i>FIRST</i>	RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. 'Sangh – A dynamic power house' 2003, RSS Website
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2. 'India' 2004, *Revolutionary and Dissident Movements of the World*, 4th edn. p.157.
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3. Swamy, A.R. 2004, 'Ideology, Organization and Electoral Strategy of Hindu Nationalism: What's Religion got to do with it?' in Satu P. Limaye, Mohan Malik and Robert G. Wirsing eds., *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, pp.73-100 Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu.
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10. Raman, B. ‘Minority Separatism in India: The Muslim Minority in South Asia Analysis Group <http://www.saag.org/papers12/paper1144.html> – Accessed 22 February 2006.
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<http://www.hindu.com/2000/12/17/stories/05171344.htm> – Accessed 14 August 2003.
12. ‘Bangalore Resolution on Godhra and after’ (No Date) on Vishva Samvad Kendra Gujarati website http://www.vskgujarat.com/rss_resolution_godhra.htm – Accessed 23 February 2006.
13. ‘RSS Ultimatum to Muslims: A challenge to all minorities and other secular forces’ (No date) in *The Milli Gazette*
<http://www.milligazette.com/Archives/15042002/1504200257.htm> – Accessed 23 February 2006.
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<http://stopfundinghate.org/resources/news/0103SearchLight.htm> - Accessed 22 February 2006.
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