

# RELIGIOUS DIMENSION AND LINKAGES OF INDIAN NATIONALISM: A STUDY OF RSS

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This dissertation is an attempt to know about the religious dimension of Indian nationalism with special reference to RSS. It is about the past as well as the present and focuses on an issue (nationalism) and an organization (RSS). While undertaking this research, it has been consciously attempted to explore the Hindu, Urdu and Punjabi sources of pre-Partition days.

The dissertation is divided into 6 chapters.

- (1) **NATIONALISM: A THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVE:** This chapter offers a theoretical discussion of the origin and growth of the concept and movement of nationalism worldwide. This study was necessary as nationalism in India took birth and developed generally in with global trends. The chapter argues that nationalism is a construct of vocal and dominant sections of society and ‘Myth-making’ is an essential part of this process.
- (2) **ORIGINS OF INDIAN NATIONALISM:** This chapter evaluates the claim that Hindu nationalism existed since ancient times and has been a living phenomenon in India. The chapter demonstrates how nationalism in India is a modern phenomenon.
- (3) **RELIGIOUS DIMENSION: DIVISION OF INDIAN NATIONALISM INTO HINDU AND MUSLIM VARIANTS:** It deals with the bifurcation of Indian nationalism into Hindu and Muslim variants.
- (4) **INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF HINDU NATIONALISM: THE ORIGIN OF THE RSS AND ITS LINKAGES:** This chapter presents a detailed account of how Hindu nationalism with the formation of RSS got institutionalized.
- (5) **RSS AND THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE:** It details how and why the RSS kept aloof from the Freedom Movement.
- (6) **THE STRATEGY OF HEGEMONY: THE CHANGING RSS CONCEPT OF HINDU NATIONALISM:** The last chapter traces the roots and origin of the RSS concept of Hindu nation which was juxtaposed to the idea of a composite secular-democratic India. Its concept of Hindu nationalism and nation symbolized as ‘Hindutva’ passed through many phases of ‘construction’ in order to suit

different political environments.

The dissertation comes to the conclusion that the RSS concept of Hindu nationalism is a 'construct' as part of the political Hinduism. It stands for an amalgamation of race and caste. It believes in the inherent inequality of the Hindu society. It is deeply committed to the two-nation theory. Its immense hatred for Muslims and Christians is the outcome of its religious belief in Castism. By depriving them of all civil and political rights it intends to have a neo-Sudra caste at the disposal of traditional Sudras. This will help in maintaining its horizontal hegemony of the Hindu society which has aggressively been challenged by the Dalits.