



RSS: A Non-Political Organization

For Prelims: About Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), History, Related facts, Political Organisations, [Emergency](#).

For Mains: Implications of Lifting Ban on RSS activities for government employees and related issues.

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Indian government officially **lifted a ban** that prevented public servants from participating in the activities of the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**.

- This decision, issued by the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)**, removed references to the RSS from official memorandums dating back to 1966, 1970, and 1980.

Note:

- This circular is **only for central government employees**.
- State governments have their own Conduct Rules for their employees, and issue such instructions from time to time.

What does the Rules Say on Government Employees Joining RSS?

- **DoPT's Directive:**
 - On 9th July 2024, the **DoPT** announced the **removal of references to the RSS** from **Official Memorandums (OM) issued in 1966, 1970, and 1980**.
 - The RSS is **no longer considered a "political" organisation**, allowing central government employees to participate in its activities without penalties under **Rule 5(1) of the Conduct Rules**.
 - However, this reclassification **does not apply to the Jamaat-e-Islami**, which remains a political organisation, prohibiting government officials from engaging in its activities.
 - **Rule 5 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964** prohibits government servants from being associated with political parties or engaging in political activities.
- **Official Memorandums (OM) of 1966, 1970, and 1980:**
 - **OM of 1966:** On **30th November 1966**, the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** issued a circular clarifying its stance on government employees' involvement with the RSS and Jamaat-e-Islami, labelling participation in these organisations as contrary to government policy.

- The circular referenced **Rule 5 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964** and stated that those involved with these groups could face **disciplinary action**.
- A similar rule is present in the **All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968**, applicable to **IAS, IPS, and Indian Forest Service officers**.
- **OM of 1970:** On 25th July 1970, the MHA stressed that government employees should face disciplinary action for violating the instructions issued on 30th November 1966.
 - During the Emergency (1975 to 1977) government issued directives for action against members of various groups, including the **RSS, Jamaat-e-Islami, Ananda Marg, and CPI-ML**, whose activities were prohibited at that time.
- **OM of 1980:** On 28th October 1980, government issued a directive emphasising the **importance of maintaining a secular perspective among government employees** and highlighted the critical need to **eliminate communal sentiments** and biases.
- **Position Before 1966:**
 - Prior to 1966, government employees in India were governed by the **Government Servants' Conduct Rules of 1949**, which **explicitly prohibited participation in political activities**.
 - This prohibition was reiterated in **Rule 23 of the 1949 rules**, aligning with **Rule 5 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964**, and the **All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968**.
- **Penalty for Violations of Rules:**
 - Violations of these rules (**Rule 5 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964**, and the **All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968**) can lead to serious consequences, including **dismissal from service**.
 - Both rules state that if there's any uncertainty about a party's political involvement or an activity's compliance, **the government's decision is final**.

What is Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)?

- **About:**
 - The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a **Hindu nationalist volunteer organisation** founded in **1925** in **Nagpur** by Dr. K.B. Hedgewar in response to perceived threats to Hindu culture and society, particularly during British colonial rule.
 - It aims to **promote the idea of Hindutva**, which emphasises Hindu cultural and national identity.
- **Pre-Independence Era:**
 - The organization played a significant role in social and cultural mobilisation among Hindus. It focused on community service, education, and the promotion of Hindu values.
- **Post-Independence:**
 - After India's independence in 1947, the RSS faced scrutiny, especially after the **assassination of Mahatma Gandhi** by **Nathuram Godse** in 1948. The organisation was banned for a short period but was later reinstated.
- **Ideology:**
 - The central ideology of the RSS, articulated by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, promotes the idea that India is fundamentally a **Hindu nation**.
 - The RSS emphasises the **importance of Indian culture and heritage**, aiming to unite people under a common national identity.
 - The organization engages in various **social service activities**, including education, health care, and disaster relief, promoting the idea of "Seva" (service) among its members.
- **Contribution to Freedom Struggle:**
 - RSS **did not** participate directly in the Indian independence movement, it contributed to the socio-political awakening of Hindus.
- **History of Ban of RSS:**
 - **1948:** Banned after Gandhi's assassination; lifted in 1949 after pledging loyalty to the Constitution.
 - **1966:** Government employees banned from joining RSS, reiterated in 1970 and 1980.
 - **1975-1977:** Banned during Indira Gandhi's Emergency; lifted in 1977.
 - **1992:** Banned post-Babri Masjid demolition, lifted in 1993 after a commission deemed the

ban unjustified.

▪ **Structure and Functioning:**

- The RSS operates through a network of **shakhas (branches)** across India and abroad, focusing on physical, intellectual, and cultural training.
- It has inspired many other organizations, including the **Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal,** and **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP).**

▪ **Political Influence:** It is considered the ideological **parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**, which has been a major political force in India since the 1990s.

Jamaat-e-Islami

- It is a socio-religious and political organization that was founded in **1941** in British India by **Abul A'la Maududi**.
- It aims to **promote Islamic values** and implement Islamic principles in society and governance.
- It advocates for the establishment **of an Islamic state governed by Sharia law.**
- The Government of India officially banned Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir in March 2019 under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).**

Ananda Marg:

- It was founded by **Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar** in **1955**, is a **socio-spiritual organisation** known for its **Progressive Utilisation Theory (Prout)**.
 - **Prout** is a socioeconomic alternative model that promotes the **welfare and development of every person, physically, mentally, and spiritually.**
- It gained popularity in the 1960s, leading to conflicts with the West Bengal government. Key events include the 1975 assassination of railway minister L N Mishra, for which four members were convicted, and Anandamurti's 1971 arrest for allegedly ordering a disciple's murder.
- **It was banned during the Emergency (1975-1977).**

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the role of political organisations and pressure groups in the Indian freedom struggle. How did these entities influence the course of the movement and contribute to the eventual independence of India?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Who among the following is associated with 'Songs from Prison', a translation of ancient Indian religious lyrics in English? (2021)

- (a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
- (d) Sarojini Naidu

Ans: (c)

Q2. With reference to the British colonial rule in India, consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in the abolition of the system of 'indentured labour'.
2. In Lord Chelmsford's 'War Conference', Mahatma Gandhi did not support the resolution on recruiting Indians for World War.
3. Consequent upon the breaking of Salt Law by Indian people, the Indian National Congress was

declared illegal by the colonial rulers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Bring out the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi during Non-Cooperation Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement. **(2021)**

Q. The banning of 'Jamaat-e — Islamic' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over- ground workers (OGWs) in assisting terrorist organizations. Examine the role played by OGWs in assisting terrorist organizations in insurgency affected areas. Discuss measures to neutralize the influence of OGWs. **(2019)**

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