

Harijan Sevak Sangh

Harijan Sevak Sangh is a non-profit organisation founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1932 to eradicate untouchability in India, working for Harijan or Dalit people and upliftment of the Depressed Class of India.

About the Harijan Sevak Sangh

- The All India Harijan Sevak Sangh is an independent national-level non-profit voluntary Organisation, also known as All India Anti-Untouchability League
- It was founded on September 30, 1932, in the wake of Gandhiji's Epic Fast at Yervada Jail, Pune, resulting in the historic Poona Pact
- The Sangh was established to combat untouchability and a new weekly paper, the Harijan, was started
- Since its inception, the organisation has helped the backward classes in many ways. The Sangh helped the depressed classes to access public places such as temples, schools, roads and water resources, also conducted inter dining and inter-caste marriages
- Harijan Sevak Sangh had constructed and still maintains several schools and hostels across the country

About Harijans

Harijan literally stands for "Children of God" and Gandhiji gave this name to those who had till then been known as untouchables or depressed classes.

Gandhiji mandated that the Hindus belonging to the upper castes should devote themselves to the service of the Harijans to atone for the sins committed by their ancestors in perpetuating oppression and exploitation upon the untouchables from generation to generation.

Objective of Harijan Sevak Sangh

The objective of Harijan Sevak Sangh was eradication, by truthful and nonviolent means, of untouchability in Hindu society with all its incidental evils and disabilities suffered by the so-called untouchables.

A Brief Background of the Organisation

- The immediate historical background dates back to the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931 when Gandhiji opposed the segregation of the depressed classes (untouchables) of the Hindu community into a separate electoral group
- He believed that the Britishers were willing to do so to create a split in the Hindu community and follow their sinister path of divide and rule

- In Yervada Jail at Pune, Gandhi started his fast unto death on September 20 1932, which aroused the conscience of the Indians against the evil practice of untouchability. Only after the assurance of Hindu leaders regarding the same, and approval of the Poona Pact, he broke fast on September 24, 1932

Headquarters & Offices of Sangh

- The Harijan Sevak Sangh is headquartered at Kingsway Camp in Delhi with Branches in 26 States across the country
- The 20-acre verdant green woodland known as Gandhi Ashram at Kingsway Camp is a historic place
- This campus has various buildings and structures which are historically important as Gandhi spent 180 days here along with Kasturba. The important structures include:
 - Kasturba Kuti - where they lived during their sojourn to Delhi
 - Prarthana Mandir - where Gandhiji did his Sarva-Dharma (all religions) prayers

Initiatives & Activities of Harijan Sevak Sangh

A few of the important initiatives by the Harijan Sevak Sangh have been given below:

- Kasturba Balika Vidyalaya for girls was constructed at one of the Sangh's campuses in New Delhi
- The Sangh runs 20-odd Ashram schools and hostels for Harijan children with grant-in-aid from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India
- In 1964, a unique institution, named Safai Vidhyalaya was established by the Sangh in Ahmedabad to train Safai workers in the use of modern technology, tools and instruments to improve the otherwise unhygienic conditions at their workplace