



8th Annual National Conference
of
Rashtriya Samaj Vigyan Parishad (RSVP)
On
**“The Concept of Nation in Social Sciences:
A Bharatiya Perspective”**
In collaboration with Magadh University, Bodh Gaya (Bihar)
Dates: 17th, 18th, and 19th January 2026

The Rashtriya Samaj Vigyan Parishad (RSVP) warmly invites you to its 8th Annual National Conference on the theme “The Concept of Nation in Social Sciences: A Bharatiya Perspective.” This premier academic event aims to revitalize India’s timeless philosophies, values, and knowledge systems. By bringing together scholars, educators, and researchers, the conference seeks to reimagine and reshape the social sciences through the lens of Bharatiya philosophy—focusing on spirituality, inclusivity, and harmony. Join us on this transformative journey to explore the rich intellectual heritage of Bharat and its relevance to contemporary challenges.

Concept Note

The post-1960 period debate on the concept of nation centres around two opposite strands: Modernists vs. Historicists. Modernists like John Breuilly, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and Ernest Gellner rejected the traditional notion of nation and considered it as a purely political concept and product of modernity. Reacting to the Modernists’ claim, Historicists like Anthony D. Smith, Adrian Hastings, and John Hutchinson treated nation as a historical community grown into a nation over a long period of time reflecting certain values, beliefs, and modes of living. One is dismayed to see that in this ongoing debate between Modernists and Historicists, the Indian notion of *Rashtra* finds no place. Unlike Modernists and Historicists, the Bharatiya concept of nation connotes that ‘every nation, like an individual, has a body—an organic life, an aesthetic temperament, a developing mind, and a soul behind all ... signs and powers for the sake of which they exist.’ This definition of *Rashtra* has the potential of resisting both the Modernist as well as the Historicist models.

It is wrong to say, as claimed by some of the Western and Indian social scientists, that the concept of nation has evolved in the West, and is the product of Western thought and development. The truth is that the concept of nation has existed in India since the times of Rigveda. The word nation (राष्ट्र) is mentioned in the Vākdevī Sūkta of Rigveda.

अहम् राष्ट्रि संगमनी वसूनां चिकीर्षुषी प्रथमायज्ञियानाम्।
तां मा देवा व्यदधुः पुरुत्रा भूरिस्थात्रां भूर्याविशयन्तीम्॥

I am the Rashtra, the gatherer of vasus (treasures), knower of Brahman, the first (chief) of the object of yagna (worship). The Gods have dispersed me in many places, having many abodes, causing me to pervade (or overpower) many.

The evolution of words and their connotations also refers to the evolution of civilization and the configuration of culture. The essential difference between the body-oriented civilization of the West and, conversely, the soul-oriented civilization of India can be understood in a very subtle manner through the words prevalent in these civilizations and the meanings they convey in their evolution. For example, in the West, whether the word nation is used in the sense of *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*, it refers to a person as a body. In a nation in the sense of *jus soli*, a person is identified by his place of birth, and in a nation in the sense of *jus sanguinis*, a person is identified by his right to blood. In sharp contrast, in India, what we call a *Rashtra*, is not synonymous with the English word "nation", as the Indian concept of *Rashtra* recognizes the human being as a soul and understands it in relation to other elements of creation. It is noteworthy that in the hymns of the Rigveda, *Rashtra* is conceptualized in the transcendental sense of time, not in the temporal sense of time. For this reason, these hymns neither mention geographical boundaries nor any reference of loyalty to a king. This is a natural consequence of the self-realization-oriented nature of Indian civilization, and its fundamental logic is that boundary perception and political allegiance are matters of body-righteousness, not of self-righteousness.

In addition to the transcendental nature of time, there has been extensive writing in India about the temporal nature of time in the context of the nation, but its fundamental tone has generally remained the same as that derived from the tenth mandala of the Rigveda. Even in the Manusmriti and Shanti Parva, the seven-fold state theory, the word *Rashtra* does not fundamentally translate to the meaning of nation. The main reason for this is that the loyalty is not expected from the people, but expected from the king. This is expressed at several places in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata. For example, "Arajakeshu Rashtraeshu Dharma Na Vyavatishtate."

अन्योयमभक्षायन्ति अत्र बलवन्तो यवीयसः

In this verse, there is mention of loss of dharma in the situation of anarchy and oppression of the weak by the strong, but even in the situation of anarchy, the feeling of nationhood does not disappear. That is, a nation will not emerge due to the existence of a king, but the nation basically exists before the coronation of the king. It is written in Shanti Parva itself that –

यश्च धर्मेण राष्ट्रस्य प्रजाः पालयते नृपः।

Yasch Dharmen Rashtrasya Prajah Palayate Nripah

In Indian civilization, indigenous ideologies did not introduce any fundamental deviation in the meaning of the word *Rashtra*, but rather, were introduced time to time enhancements. The essence is that the prestige of the apolitical nature of the nation remained intact in these indigenous adaptations. However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that even in modern times, the same understanding of the *Rashtra*, derived from the fundamental principles of the eternal tradition, finds reiteration in the thoughts of Vivekananda, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, and Gandhi.

For Sri Aurobindo, a nation is not merely a geographical entity but a living organism with its own soul and consciousness. It is very different from a "nation-state", for it is not merely a struggle for political independence but a spiritual awakening,... essentially about realizing the divine consciousness within a collective group of people sharing common cultural and spiritual heritage. The same conceptualization of Indian Nationalism flows through the writings of Swami Vivekananda. Dharma, in his view, is the backbone of Indian nationhood. Even in the dim and distant age of remote antiquity, underlying principles of *rashtra* were chanted in the hymns of the oldest literary records of humanity, i.e. Rigveda. For Tagore, India's identity lay not in a nationalist pride but in its deep-rooted spiritual heritage, in its universal declaration, सर्वभूतहिते रताः the basis for the governance of society, state and economy. Nation is the element that prevents the state from becoming inert and mechanical. For Gandhi, India was not a motley collection of groups but consisted of people sharing common aspirations and interests and a vague

but nonetheless real commitment to the kind of spiritual civilization. It is not the nation which is evil, rather what is evil is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness of modern nations. Unlike the European countries, Gandhi argued, India was not merely a nation but a civilization distinguished by its plurality, diversity and tolerance. Ambedkar sought to realize this same nation through the transformation of 'Ashikshit Bharat' into 'Prabuddha Bharat.' Deendayal Upadhyaya sought to realize this eternal, grand concept of the nation through 'Integral Humanism,' and through the concept of 'Hindutva,' Savarkar also sought to promote unity and reduce fragmentation within the same nation.

It is, therefore, amply clear that in our Indian tradition, the fundamental tone of the nation has remained the same, even though the waves and tunes of that tone have varied. Various paradigms can be developed to comprehend India's concept of nation as a whole which could be based on chronology; or according to a specific text or individual; and also, according to the value system of ideology. A coordinated format of diverse paradigms can also be developed.

Considering the all-inclusiveness of the Indian *Rashtra*, the conference could encompass deliberation pertaining to the following sub-themes:

1. Rashtra in Ancient Indian Texts and Cultural Symbols
2. Western Nation vs. Indian Rashtra: Comparative Conceptual Evolution
3. Social Reforms, Re'Awakening', and the Making of Modern Indian Rashtra
4. Indian National Movement and the Crystallization of Rashtra
5. Monarchy, Republicanism, and City-States in Indian Polity
6. Dharma Shastra/Sutra: Concept of Statecraft and Governance
7. The Idea of Dharma, Rajya and Kingship in Buddhism
8. Royal Patronage, Science, and Urban Governance in Ancient-Medieval India
9. Pre-Colonial Public Administration and Social Stratification
10. Bharatiya Rashtra's Socio-Economic Policies
11. Economic Systems, Nationhood, and Resource Distribution
12. Indigenous Economic Thought and Social Reforms
13. State, Society, and Social Justice in Modern India

Papers on other aspects of social sciences are also welcome!

About RSVP

The Rashtriya Samaj Vigyan Parishad (RSVP), founded in 2008, is a distinguished national scholarly association committed to indigenizing the social sciences in harmony with classical Indian thought and philosophy. Despite India's rich tradition of indigenous knowledge, modern social sciences often fail to resonate with Indian values, culture, and ethos, creating a disconnect in fostering national identity and pride. RSVP seeks to create bond by reorienting social sciences to align with the unique structural and cultural dynamics of Indian society. Through a wide array of initiatives—conferences, seminars, workshops, and research—it has emerged as a vital platform for intellectual discourse, driving scholarship that strengthens the nation-building process. RSVP has so far organized seven annual conferences at the following places: Kanpur (2012), Bhopal (2014), Patna (2018), Tumkur (2019), New Delhi (2022), Bilaspur (2024), and Pune (2025).

About Magadh University

Magadh University is a large, state-run university established in 1962, located on a 460-acre campus in Bodh Gaya, Bihar. Magadh University was founded as a result of the sincere efforts of the educationists and intellectuals in the Magadh region. The eminent philosopher and then President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, laid the foundation stone of the University. The distinguished historian Dr. K.K. Dutta served as the first Vice-Chancellor of the University. Magadh University is renowned for its extensive academic offerings, which include undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD programs across its many constituent and affiliated colleges. It takes pride in being one of the largest universities in Bihar, with 19 constituent colleges and approximately 39 affiliated colleges spread across the districts of Gaya, Nawada, Jehanabad, Arwal, and Aurangabad. This serene centre of learning is situated near Bodh Gaya, the holy site where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment.

About Gaya & Bodh Gaya

One of the holiest cities for both Hinduism and Buddhism, Gaya is situated in the southern part of the Indian state of Bihar, in the Northeastern part of India. It is 12 km North of Bodh Gaya and 100 km South of Patna. The major attractions in and around Gaya include the famous Vishnupad Temple, Mangla Gauri Temple, Brahmayoni, Ramshila & Pretshila hills, Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, and Nalanda. In the Vishnupad temple, during the Pitrapaksha mela, every Hindu is duty-bound to worship their ancestors and perform shraddha rituals, as well as offer Pinda Daan. In Bodh Gaya, the holy spot where the Buddhist prince Siddharth found enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree and became the Buddha. The Bodhi tree, the Mahabodhi Temple, and several Buddhist Monasteries are the main attractions for Hindus and Buddhists.

We intend to organise a one-day tour to Nalanda, Rajgeer and Pawapuri

Submission Guidelines

1. Please fill out the Abstract Submission Form to upload the abstract. Early submissions are strongly encouraged and will receive priority in the review process.
2. Citation and references should comply with the APA style of referencing. Abstract should be maximum 250 words. Restrict the length of the article to around 4000 words. Participants must send their paper in either English or Hindi.
3. **Presenter has to ensure that his/her paper is not presented elsewhere and it is the original and plagiarism-free.**
4. Pre-registration for the programme is available only through the Google Form. Registration is mandatory for both participants and attendees. Certificates of participation will be issued to all the registered participants and attendees. In the case of multiple authors, certificates will be issued only to the registered author(s). If registered participants fail to attend the conference, the registration fee paid will not be reimbursed.
5. The organizers will provide hospitality and accommodation (on a shared basis) to a select few from the evening of 16th January 2026 to 19th January 2026. The paper presenters will receive reimbursement for their travel fare (3-tier AC) upon submission of their travel ticket.

Important Dates

Abstract Submission: 15th December 2025

Full Paper Submission: 31st December 2025

Email to: rsvpconferencemu2026@gmail.com

Link to submit the abstract:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdr56N-OxqrFjLkX8a2WgRHhHb4JKOrXewQl7L14tgbACZuQ/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=113482583959517578615>

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3. Annual: Rs. 1000/-		4. Enrolled Ph.D. student (Annual): Rs. 750/-	

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