

NATIONALISM

Nationalism is a vital force that has played significant role in moulding and shaping the aspirations of the people all over the globe. Nationalism, broadly speaking is a sentiment, an idea, a feeling of reverence and devotion, the centre for which is the nation. In other words, nationalism implies feeling of love among the people for their country. It is an intense feeling of love and patriotism for one's motherland. Nationalism, indeed, includes two opposite tendencies a tendency of integration and a feeling of separateness. Nationalism teaches that the interest of the nation is above the interests of all the individuals and groups that constitute it. No doubt, person attaches more importance to one's personal interests and then that of family, of the community, of the religious groups etc. Nationalism means that individual should subordinate all these interests to the interests of the nation. He should be prepared if a need be, to sacrifice all other interests at the altar of the nation. In this sense, nationalism is an integrating and unifying force.

Nationalism also conveys a sense of separateness. The people belonging to a national have a feeling that they are politically, economically and culturally separate from similar national groups. People possess a sense of national pride and one always proposed to do all they can for the all-round progress of their nation. They feel happy if their nation attains prosperity, glory and greatness and they also feel ejected if it suffers and goes down.

3.1 Nationalism : Its meaning and other implications

A lot of confusion exists regarding the precise meaning of the terms Nation, nationality and nationalism. The word '**Nation**' is derived from the Latin 'Natio' which denotes the idea of a common birth or descent. Broadly speaking, the term nation stands for a group of people, who are bound together by ties of common race, common language and literature, common land, common history, common religion, common joys and sorrows and common political aims and aspirations. It is not enough that these bonds are there, the people must be aware of these emotional and psychological ties and factors. Carleton Hayes maintains that a nation "is any group of persons who speak a common language, who cherish common historical traditions and who constitute or they think that they constitute a distinct cultural society. In the words of Ramsay Muir, a Nation is a body of people who feel themselves to be naturally linked together by certain affinities. On the other hand, the term 'Nationality' is a sentiment of oneness that unites people of a particular kind and differentiate them from other who do not share

similar feelings and sentiments. Nationality is largely a non-political concept and it can exist even under foreign domination. A nation implies a population of a self-governing state, may very well include several nationalities, the English, the Scots, the Welsh and the North Irish. As soon as the Nationality acquires political unity and sovereign independence, it becomes a nation. That is why a nationality is regarded as a nation in the making. **Lord Bryce** thus holds the view that Nationality is a group of persons bound by similar sentiments who are either independent or desire to do so. Nationalism, on the other hand, is a state or a condition of mind characteristic of certain people with a homogenous culture living together, in close association in a given territory and showing a belief in a distinctive existence and a common destiny. Nationalism has been thus identified with love for the motherland to patriotism. **Encyclopaedia Britannica** defines Nationalism as "a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to nation-state." Likewise, the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences maintains that "nationalism in its broader meaning refers to the attitude which ascribes to national individuality a high place in the hierarchy of values. According to E. Asirvatham, "Rightly understood, nationalism stands for the historical process by which political units of the legitimate right of people who form a distinct and vigorous nation or nationality to a place in the sun."

3.2 Evolution and Growth of Nationalism

It may be noticed that nationalism as a concept emerged in the West as a result of the decline of Papacy and the rise of sovereign secular states in the early modern period. The hold of the Christian Church (the so called old myth of the Christendom) lost its hold as a result of the great movements like the **Renaissance** and **Reformation** and geographical discoveries led to the establishment of strong monarchies which created national consciousness. The Protestant Reformation movement freed European states from the irksome papal control and stimulated national consciousness. The grand Monarchy of Europe set up highly centralised governments and created the spirit of national unity in their respective countries. The feudal state made way to the monarching state and narrow feudal loyalty yielding place to the loyalty of the Monarch. Similarly, personal and tribal ties made room for national ties. Countries like England and France forged national unity much earlier than Germany and Italy and long before people in other countries even thought of nationalism. Spain, Portugal and Switzerland achieved national unity by the end of 15th century. It may be recalled that Macchiavelli strongly supported the case of unification of Roman people. Nationalism, however, received great impetus after the French Revolution of 1789 that unleashed the forces of unification on grounds of patriotic sentiments. G.P.Gooch maintains that "Nationalism is a child of the French Revolution". The French Revolution spread the spirit of Nationalism to all corners of the Western hemisphere. Earlier, several factors had forged national unity in the British colonies in America. The great awakening in the eighteenth century and the desire to be free from the British

control led to the American War of Independence (1776) which gave inspiration to other revolutions like the French.

The rise of nationalism in the West not only entailed decline of the Papacy and the Christendom and on its debris the rise of nation-state system, it also led to the advent of imperialism. The geographical discoveries and opening of sea-routes led the Western nations to carry their flags, their culture, their language and their political and economic institutions to the poor and backward regions of the world and thereby converted those vast countries into their dependencies, markets, colonies and the like. Scramble for more and those political and economic gains contributed to the stock of imperialism on one hand it also paved the way for the emergence of counteragitations from the side of the weak and exploited people. This assumed the character of new nationalism which came to be christened as nationalism in the East. The exploitation by the imperialist powers of the colonial people inflamed the minds of the oppressed people. The principles of Western Nationalism, liberalism and democracy had a great effect on the minds of the people of the East. Soon these factors aroused the people of the colonial countries and consequently gave rise to freedom movement in those countries who were living under subjugation of colonial powers. This "colonial nationalism" was the result of economic exploitation, denial of adequate opportunities to the native people in high public services, racial bitterness shown to dependent people, suppression of national resurgence by brutal methods and the main policy of divide and rule by the colonial masters.

As a consequence of the rise of colonial nationalism many countries of Asia and Africa attained their freedom and became independent nations.

3.3 Questions of National Self-determination

It may be recalled that the principle of national self-determination was popularised by President Woodrow Wilson of U.S.A. on the eve of the outbreak of First World War in 1914. This principle stood "for the right of the individuals to determine the sovereign state which they would belong to and the form of government under which they would live." It raised question whether every nationality has the right to be self-governing or sovereign state. We have seen that imperialism exploits of Europe. Thus, after the Battle of Waterloo, the Congress of Vienna (1815) gave recognition to this principle. Since then the principle of "one-nation, one state" dominated the political scene. President Wilson of United States stressed it in his Fourteen Points (1917) and consequently it became the accepted norm at the time of Peace Settlement the Austria-Hungarian empire was liquidated.

- (1) Austria and Hungary became two separate sovereign states.
- (2) So came into being the new states of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.
- (3) Poland was recognised as a state about years after. The Poles had lost their statehood.

- (4) The Baltic Nationalities secured the new states of Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- (5) Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia were freed from the capitalist control of Turkey.

The Covenant of League of Nations recognised this principle of self-determination together of people of different nationalities into a single statewise lead to lack of patriotic feelings and internal dissension. It was also believed that a nationality spread over several states can never be happy, contented and stable like a dismembered social organism. So political boundary line should be drawn where national lines exist.

While the principle of self-determination gratified the pride of the hitherto oppressed nationalities, it ignored realities, Buoyant nationalities were found wanting they full-fledged nationhood. National pride in the newly created countries like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia could not solve the thorny problem of German minorities scattered over different national states like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and other causes led to the out-break of the World War II.

The termination of the II World War (1939-1945) added new dimension to the principles of self-determination of the nationalities. The United Nations Charter has accepted it as one of the underlying principle for creating healthy conditions for creating a peaceful world order. Even the supporters of Marxist Leninism school of thought subscribe to the view that nationalities have the right of self-determination. It was on this account that the earlier Soviet constitution of USSR recognised that right of a nationality to separate from the Soviet Union.

However, the modern multi-national period in the contemporary states are facing a serious challenge to their stability if the people of a particular nationality is given the national right to demand self-determination, there would be chaos in many states of the world. The French world demand the same in the Province of Quabec in Canada, the kurds in Iraq, the karans in Burma, the Scots in Britain, the pashtus in Pakistan. The Tamils in Sri Lanka etc. It is owing to the rise of such sentiments that the state of Congo saw its disintegration in 1960 as a result of rebellion of the Katangs, so happened the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 when the people of then East Pakistan revolted and founded the state of Bangladesh. If the right of every group, however small, may happen to the ethnically and linguistically distinct from the rest of the population, to separate and organise itself into a new state, were admitted and exercised in practice, it would lead to chaos and anarchy.

3.4 Factors creating and promoting Nationalism

(i) Common Land

Without a common motherland clearly marked out by geographical boundaries, people cannot have a basis for their national feeling. A common land created a

clear image in the minds of the people and a strong feeling of attachment is fostered. No factor, Perhaps can strengthen the bonds of nationalism as the common land and the love for it. patriotism can be a very firm bed-rock on which the structure of nationalism can be built. In India, the Himalayas, great rivers like Ganges and beautiful plains have created very strongly partriotic feelings. Sometimes group of people living in different states develop common emotions, but they remain a nationality and do not become a Nation till they attain a common land of their own. Before World War I, the Poles and Yogoslavs were nationalities and not nations. The Jews could not claim nationhood till they got Israel in 1948.

(ii) Common Historical Background

A historical background presenting great triumphs and achievements, common joys and sorrows, common sufferings and other records of past glory serve as good basis for promoting nationalism. In the 19th century, Indians were made conscious of their glorious history by their great national leaders.

(iii) Common Race

People are easily tied to each other by the factor of common race of kinship. In the early modern times, this factor has a special appeal. In 1930s, Hitler exploited this factor to exalt the German nation as community of the Nordis with pure Argon blood in their veins. He denounced Jews as people of low blood. However; all modern nations have been formed out of tribal groups. No race now has remained pure owing to race movements and other factors. The races have become mixed. One may note how Englishmen, Germans and Czechs joined bonds to become a nation in the U.S.A. Latin, Teatonic and Cletic races blended into French nation. In Canada and Switzerland also racial differences did not hinder national unification.

(iv) Common Religion

Religion has played a very important part in uniting the people. Even today, it is very powerful force particularly in many Muslim countries of the world. The Jews ate tied to each other by the force of their religion. The kind of religion kept the Jews emotionally together and they ultimately got the state of Israel in 1948. The hold of religion has been softened in view of the emergence of secular beliefs and the spirit of toleration among the people of diverse nationalities. The fueds between the two sects of Roman Catholic and Protestant & Christians played a part in separating Irish people from the English and thereby led to the emergence of Irish Free Republic in 1922. So in India, the rise of Muslim communalism led to the partition of the country in 1947. But today, the factor of religion has lost its significance in building of a nationality.

(v) Common Language

A common language or a medium of learning and expression is a great asset in the evolution of nationalism, though this cannot be regarded as indispensable.

The community of language is decidedly more important than the factor of race. Mazzini and Fichte regarded language as the most important factor in the growth of nationalism. A common language can bring together various groups of people and weld them into a nation as no other force can. A common medium of expression creates sympathy, understanding and sense of belonging among the people.

However, language can also become a dividing force. In India, linguistic fanaticism raised its ugly head after the release of State Reorganisation Commission Report in 1955 and made it clear that language can make people crazy about their regional and local language. However, linguistic differences do not retard national unification in every country. In Europe, Nationalism rose in spite of linguistic divisions, the Swiss became a nation by developing common consciousness though people spoke different languages like French, German and Italian.

(vi) Common Political Aspiration

Common political aspirations are quite essential to forge national unity. A country may have cultural, religious, linguistic and other types of unity but unless the people have common political aims and objectives nationhood cannot be achieved. Sometimes differences arising from linguistic or religious bickerings are patched up by common political aspirations, nationalities aim at achieving. The Indian National Congress in India expressed common political aspirations of the Indians for achieving Swaraj for the Indians. One may note how the efforts of Napoleon Bonaparte to bring Europe under his domination, aroused passionate popular resistance and the spirit of nationalism was appealed by Statesmen, orators and poets in Germany, Italy, Russia and Spain. The growth of democratic ideas gave an impetus to the ideal of nationality by transferring allegiance from the king to the nation. The first and second World Wars re-awakened nationalism among the people and consequently attempts to redraw the map of Europe more in accordance with national desires.

(vii) Common Economic Interests

Common economic interests in a country are also conducive to the rise of nationalism. This factor has been one of the strongest factors in the maintenance of the Japanese and Australian nationalities. The economic motive, among other factors, undoubtedly welds a people together and creates in them "a consciousness of kind". Behind "White Australian Policy" which was strenuously advocated even in the midst of II World War by Australian politicians, there was a fear, real or imaginary, that Australia will be flooded by Manogians and Indians who might imperil the economic life of the Australian, if the immigration bars were removed or lowered.

But economic interests alone are not capable of creating the sentiments of nationality. However, one cannot at the same time overlook the fact that economic

interests constitute a major factor in strengthening the bonds of unity and nurses the feeling of nationalism. One may note that how European countries are conducting their trade and commerce despite the fact of having formed the European Common Markets.

(viii) Geographical Contiguity

There can be no doubt that a normally defined territory or geographical unity, often described by the name of 'homeland' is a powerful tie in the formation and continuance of nationality. In case the people live in parts that are far away from each other it would obstruct the process of national integration. One of the reasons of dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 may be traced here. Her two wings remained apart and in the wake of Bengali nationalism East Pakistan became Bangladesh. For ages, the Jews had no national home of their own, yet the hope that some day Palastine would be restored to them kept alive and gave strength to the Jewish nationality.

(ix) Actual Feeling

The most important factor towering above all the aforesaid factors in the actual national feeling. It is essentially psychological, emotional, spiritual and subjective. No factor or group of factors can make a people a nation until the people themselves actually feel the spirit of national oneness. Nationalism, like love or affection, can never be superimposed on a people from outside, it has to be born within. It has to rise spontaneously and express itself with cease. Neither cultural nor anything else can make a nation if people do not want to be a nation.

3.5 Critical Assessment

Nationalism in its good form has great merits :

- (i) Nationalism can mobilise and unite people as nothing else can do such a job. It has led to the rise of powerful nation-states. It made people free from the undesirable yoke of Papacy and other forms of subjection.
- (ii) The triumph of nationalism has significant astonishing progress of the people of different nationalities. After having their existence in the form of separate political entities, the people could make astonishing progress in various directions, particularly social and economic. This may be seen in the growth of capitalism in many countries of the world. Element of nationalism now requires to remodernise these nations in the wake of the challenges of globalization, open market and free economy.
- (iii) Nationalism spreads legitimate pride and self respect in a country, it makes no compromise with slavery or foreign domination. The nationalists in America, Italy, Germany, India, Turkey and other countries created national pride and prepared their countries for full nationhood.
- (iv) Nationalism has an emotional effect on the human mind. There is no

sacrifice which true nationalists in a country will not make. The history of freedom movement in every land is replete with instances of men and women sacrificing their lives at the alter of national salvation. The stories of some of these martyrs remain an enduring source of inspiration to mankind.

- (v) Particularly in the countries of the Third World, nationalism has proved blessing in disguise increasing powerful political consciousness as result of which the people could overthrow imperialistic hold of the advanced nations of the West. The emancipation of the people of the countries of Asia and Africa from centuries of political subjugation and economic exploitation could occur only due to rise of nationalism in the East.

On the other hand, nationalism has sinister dimensions. Perverted nationalism indeed is a curse and has been responsible for spreading chaos and anarchy.

The future well-being of the world requires that the nations must be made aware of their responsibilities for making the world safe for future living. Aggressive nationalism must not be allowed to endanger world peace as the outbreak of any future war will spell disaster for the mankind. The United Nations as a collective world body is now the only hope for ensuring peace in the world. The hands of this body should further be strengthened so that it could be able to achieve its lefty goals for bringing peace, happiness and prosperity for all nations.

3.6 Question : Discuss evolution and growth of Nationalism.