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13. Changing Nature of Indian Nationalism

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Abstract

There are many different issues in the thought of western and Indian Nationalism. But major is in the western country that it doesn't consider itself as a nation based on religion, but a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values enshrined in the Constitution. The growth of nationalism in India can be found back to the period of ancient India. It can be marked out through different stages. Mahatma Gandhi's concept of independent India that is, "Free India will not be a Hindu Raj it will be an Indian Raj, based not on the majority of any religious section or community". Tagore's perception of nationalism has mainly relied on ancient Indian philosophy, where the world was accepted as a single nest. In this way, Tagore was striving to dissociate himself from the general belief of nationalism and trying to associate it with ideas such as peace, harmony and welfare.

Key Words - Nationalism, India, Gandhi, Tagore, Changing nature

Meaning of nationalism

Nationalism is a sense of loyalty towards one's own nation. It creates a sense of psychological bond with the nation. A state of mind in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is due to the nation-state. It connotes the identification of the state or nation with people. Here, the characteristics of the people are – homogenous culture, living together in a close association or territory, sharing the belief of common destiny and mentality, tradition, history, culture, language, etc.

The British quit India in 1947. A blood-soaked partition had torn the subcontinent into two states that became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India, the latter comprising many faiths but secular. Or attempting to be: India was left with not so much a separation of state and religion as an intention to hold all traditions evenly.

Changing Nature of Nationalism in India

The article on Nationalism in India share by Pooja Mandal criticise the growth of Indian nationalism. According to her the growth of nationalism in India can be found back to the period of ancient India. It can be mark out through different stages. Following are the some important stages out of that and on the basis of this period or stages the nature of Indian nationalism observed different in different period that is the changing nature of Indian Nationalism

1. Nationalism under Ancient India

The origin of nationalism can be traced back to ancient India. People of ancient India had a sense of loyalty towards their motherland. The Rigvedic mantras refer to India as “Bharata Varsha the feeling of nationalism was strengthened in the age of Mauryas and Guptas. Samudra Gupta was the most powerful king among the Guptas and extended his empire by his remarkable missions. Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya succeeded Samudra Gupta. During the supremacy of Guptas, the Gupta Empire crossed the rivers of Punjab and Indus and carried arms beyond the Hindukush. The Gupta Empire was known for its supremacy in the north-western boundary. In southern India there were powerful kingdoms like Satavahanas, Chalukyas, Pallavas and Cholas. The idea of nationalism did not receive concrete shape during ancient India; nationalism was almost equated with Regionalism. Since there were a number of small provinces. Loyalty towards a province itself was considered as nationalism. In ancient India regionalism dominated the concept of nationalism. The supreme power loyalty towards the king itself was considered as nationalism. Mauryan administration was based on the guidelines of Arthashastra. The Maurayan Empire was divided into a number of provinces headed by governors. Such governors had to report to the king. The contribution of Mauryans to “nationalism” is considered as significant since they followed “imperial policy and brought a major part of north India under their control.

2. Nationalism in the Medieval Period

Medieval India was mainly dominated by the Muslim Rule. Among the Muslim rulers Mughal rulers made some contribution to the idea of nationalism. Akbar was the most powerful king among the Mughal kings. A larger part of north India was brought under the control of the Mughals. The form of government was autocratic monarchy. The king was the highest temporal authority. He was the source of the entire administrative law. During the Mughal rule the imperial authority of the king was respected and loyalty towards the king was treated as nationalism. Aggression towards the emperor was punished. During Medieval India the idea of

nationalism gained momentum. There was a significant increase in the Muslim population. The Muslims occupied significant positions in the government and they were loyal to the king.

3. Nationalism in the Pre-Independence Period

During the British rule the idea of nationalism was further strengthened. The British came to India for the purpose of trading and occupied the whole of India. The freedom struggle which took place in India marked concrete idea of nationalism. There are certain important phases of freedom struggle which led to the growth of nationalism in India: the Great revolt of 1857 or the First War of independence, Indian national congress in 1885. It held its first meeting in Bombay. Year after year the Indian National Congress gained strength and played a vital role in creating awareness among people. In the year 1921 Gandhiji launched the civil disobedience movement, quit India Movement was launched in the year 1942. The whole of India joined the freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Apart from the above stated instances of freedom struggle, national leaders also contributed to the growth of nationalism.

4. Nationalism in the Post Independent Period

The Constitution of India is considered as a supreme law of the land. The preamble to the Constitution clearly declares India as a sovereign, socialist republic nation.

The nature of Indian Nationalism

There are many different issues in the thought of western and Indian Nationalism. But major is in the western country that it doesn't consider itself as a nation based on religion, but a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values enshrined in the Constitution. Now we try to understand the nature of Indian Nationalism in views of some Nationalist personality.

Mahatma Gandhi's concept of independent India that is, "Free India will not be a Hindu Raj it will be an Indian Raj, based not on the majority of any religious section or community". The Khilafat Movement in India, which was a key appearance of India's brand of secularism. Khilafat was a platform and a nationalist strategy for much more than a Muslim cause, as it brought to consciousness how the welfare of the peasantry and tolerance was essential to any future id of the Constituent Assembly gave India the basis of its civic nationalism that prevailed for many decades. Civic nationalism is a form of nationalism that emphasizes political allegiance based on a vision of a community of equal citizens, allowing for significant levels of ethnic and cultural diversity.

Bankim Chandra had understood that since one of the fundamental issues of Indian legislative issues was the need of social attachment, it was this that should have been given more attention than maybe patriotism itself

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), popularly known as Gurudev, expressed his views on Indian nationalism on various occasions. A collection of his speeches on nationalism was published in 1917 with the same title and one of the speeches in it denotes Tagore's unconventional, integrated views on Indian nationalism. A researcher, writer Dr. Durgesh Ravande criticised the thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore with reference to the Nationalism in his research article. According to him, a substance of his deliberation is that the true spirit of nationalism lies in its broad humanistic concern rather constrained political strategy. The spread of fanatic nationalism during the First World War might have forced him to interpret and blame it as an evil epidemic. He was trying to subvert the popular idea of nationalism which was more a political justification that encouraged grabbing other nations and their resources.

Gurudev Tagore's perception of nationalism has mainly relied on ancient Indian philosophy, where the world was accepted as a single nest. In this way, gurudev Tagore was striving to dissociate himself from the general belief of nationalism and trying to associate it with ideas such as peace, harmony and welfare. He argues further that if anyway India decides to contribute the world; it should be only in the form of humanity.

Humanity, world over does not require a narrow but broad sense of nationalism. Therefore, it should be formulated through various means of life. Tagore's idea of humanism goes beyond any boundaries or barriers and seeks at large a common place where humanity comes before any other kind of identity. He adds further that the saints such as Nanak, Kabir, and other ignited the flame of humanism in Indian minds. But unfortunately, it was distressed over time with an aggressive rise of racism and caste-based disintegration of our society. The ideas like purity and impurity of race have massacred millions over centuries. Even two World Wars and other racial conflicts were provoked based on the false notions of superiority. Nothing as such has really existed in this world where men and women can be straightway divided and disintegrated. Therefore, his belief 'Only those peoples have survived and achieved civilisation that have this spirit of co-operation strong in them' receives a cardinal significance. At large, human beings all over the world should be glanced only through the mirror of co-operation and humanity.

Gurudev Tagore considered that apart from political freedom, the freedom of mind is more important. The Euro-centric notions of freedom have forced us to consider political freedom as an ultimate destination in the journey of the freedom movement in our country. Blind faith in Europe will instead increase our greed for possession. Hence, we should give up this narrowness and be more comprehensive in our inward and outward expressions that extend freedom of mind. Ultimately, this freedom of mind finds harmony with the human soul and at large human life. He also believed that there is only one history, i.e. history of man and other histories are mere chapters in the larger one. Nations with spiritual integration, love, and sympathy for others may find a permanent place in any age. Thus, Indian nationalism or nationalism of any kind is nothing but a mixture of integrated ideals of humanity and human welfare. It should be a tenable progression that outsets within.

Dr. APJ Kalam former president of India as a multi-religious, nationalist, spiritual Muslim, who said his best friend was "Vajpayee ji", Two years after his death, his statue that depicted him playing the veena came under fundamentalist fire because it had a Gita carving beside it.

There are two qualities in Kalam's personality which must be understood.

First, while he was born in a Muslim family, much of his schooling and childhood were spent in the shadow of Hindu scholarly teachers, Lakshmana Sastry and Sivasubramania Iyer. Dr. Kalam warmly remembered both of them as his foundation pillars. Much of his late education happened in Christian missionary schools and, all the while, his parents remained devout Muslims. Dr. Kalam might have been born in one religion, but he absorbed and reflected colours from all religions of the civilisation, in the true sense.

Second, Dr. Kalam was a scientific saint. For him, the best of knowledge and wisdom could exist across many books and religions. That is why the Gita found the most prominent place in his spiritual reading and reflected in his speeches. That is why he wrote books with a revered Jain muni, Acharya Mahapragya (The Family And The Nation) and about a Hindu saint, Pramukh Swami (Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji) of the Swaminarayan society, both of whom he regarded as gurus. In spirit, Dr. Kalam was that multi-religious personality, who is an inspiration for every Indian, especially the young. He remains an inspiration to embrace from multiple religions and also putting national interest above all of them.

Threat to the Idea of Nationalism Which May be Discussed as Follows

Robert I. (1986) explained his thoughts in the book "Problems in Development of Nationalism in India. They explained about the Problems in Development of Nationalism in India that, political leaders often fail the task of unifying and building nations. Fostering national unity requires action along several lines creating a broadly based sense of common cultural heritage, strengthening agreement on shared, national goals, and increasing national, as opposed to regional, loyalty. These tasks require rigorous leadership and commitment, as well as the curbing of divisive elements in structure and other areas. Some of these elements are of long standing and may reflect basic features of the societies in question.

Division of states on linguistic basis has created an extreme sense of regionalism. Provincialism has resulted in narrow thinking which has side lined nationalism. Inter-state water disputes and such other problems are coming in the way of nationalism.

In India there are a number of political parties with different ideologies. Political leaders are self-centred and opposition parties tend to oppose even the policies made by the ruling party in the interest of nation.

There are various factors which are forcing the youngsters to migrate to foreign countries. Lack of opportunities is one of that; People who have migrated to foreign countries quite often lose their bond and identity with the motherland.

People are often unwilling to express affinity and reverence towards the motherland. The national festivals of India are gradually losing their significance and they are more often enjoyed as holidays.

Out of these inhibitions India has survived as a nation because of a strong sense of patriotism. But unless these inhibitions are overcome a strong sense of nationalism cannot survive.

Conclusion

Humanity, world over does not require a narrow but broad sense of nationalism. Therefore, it should be formulated through various means of life. Tagore's idea of humanism goes beyond any boundaries or barriers and seeks at large a common place where humanity comes before any other kind of identity. The origin of nationalism can be traced back to ancient India. People of ancient India had a sense of loyalty towards their motherland. In modern India Inter-state water disputes and such other problems are coming in the way of nationalism.

Provincialism has resulted in narrow thinking which has side lined nationalism. The national festivals of India are gradually losing their significance and they are more often enjoyed as holidays. Political leaders often fail the task of unifying and building nations. The Constitution of India is considered as a supreme law of the land. The preamble to the Constitution clearly declares India as a sovereign, socialist republic nation. Fostering national unity requires action along several lines creating a broadly based sense of common cultural heritage, strengthening agreement on shared, national goals, and increasing national, as opposed to regional, loyalty.

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