



The ideas of Nation and Nationalism

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- **Abstract :**

Nationalism has been the biggest issue since 1789. Nation and nationalism, These are two different concepts, but there has been a link between Nation and Nationalism. This research paper will introduce and discuss the ideas of nation and nationalism. What are the concepts of nation and nationalism? What is the basic understanding of nation and nationalism?

- **Keywords:**

Nation, Nationalism, Nation-state and Democracy.

1. Introduction of nation and nationalism:

A Nation is a belief, which is constituted by a group of people, who share language, religion or ethnicity with a positive attitude.

Nationalism is a collective power of the people, which expresses the nation through its activities with a positive tendency.

There are many phases of nation and nationalism, Especially nationalism has evolved in many phases. Nationalism was a basic element for unification of a small kingdoms into a larger nation in nineteenth century Europe.

In the context of Asia and India, nationalism was the best weapon in the freedom struggle against colonial power. But what is a nation and what are the basic elements of a nation ?

● **Shared beliefs and Respect:**

Shared beliefs are one of the first element of a nation. When the people of a particular land live together and respect each other, that is called a nation. A nation can't survive without the shared beliefs of its people.

● **History and Memories:**

History is the second element of a nation. When people of a particular land have a historical background and vital memories, that is the continuous process of nation-building. History always plays an important role in nation-building.

"Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance, wrote in his book *The Discovery of India*, " Though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among the people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which held all of us together in ages past, whatever political fate of misfortune had befallen us." (Political Theory, NCERT, Page no.102) ●

● **Territory and Area:**

Territory is the third element of a nation. Territory means geographical boundaries. A nation must have a territory. Territory gives us a sense of collective identity, which is shared by a group of people , who see themselves as a nation.

● **Political Ideals and Values:**

Political ideals mean the vision of the nation. A nation cannot be built without a vision. A nation must have a vision. In the present context many nations have formed their ideals and principles which are democracy, secularism and liberalism. These are the basic ideals, which help a group of people to live together.

● Common Political Identity:

Common Political identity means that people are committed to the constitution because the constitution gives us fundamental rights, Right to life with dignity and freedom of speech. A constitution is the best document of a nation and democracy because it expresses a clear vision and a common identity of the nation.

"Nation means the people. People are the nation. There are three main conditions for people to constitute a nation. (1) Their sentiment for the land in which they live. Those who believe that this land is their motherland, constitutes a nation. (2) The other condition is the sharing of common history. After all what is history except certain events happened in the past. Some of them may give a feeling of pride and others may cause shame. Those who have the same feeling of joy or grief about the events in their history constitute a nation. (3) And the third and the most important is their adherence to certain value-system, i.e. culture. In all nations of the world, these three conditions prevail."

(Sinha, Rakesh, Understanding RSS, page no. 8-9)

2. Nationalism, Democracy and Pluralism:

Nationalism is a continuous process. Nationalism is a collective power of the people, which expresses the nation through its activities with a positive tendency. A nation has a shared history, symbols, culture, civilization and languages. When the people of nation respect these ideals, it is called nationalism.

In the context of India, nationalism has emerged from the freedom struggle against colonial power.

"Nation building is a very important challenge for a great Civilization like India which has been humiliated, defeated, fractured and fragmented by 200 years of Imperial rule and which is trying to pick up the pieces through the process of democracy and through the wisdom of its people." **(The JNU Nationalism Lectures, Edited by Rohit Azad, Janaki Nair, Page no.308)**

Nationalism, built a nation in a great manner and a way. There are lots of impact of nationalism either positive or negative but nationalism is an inclusive way of life in india.

Dr. Hedgewar, believed that "nationalism was not merely a war-time spirit but an essential ingredient for the survival and progress of the Nation." **(Sinha, Rakesh, Understanding RSS, page no. 196)**

During the freedom struggle, we fought together against colonial power and made a great constitution, which gives equal opportunities to all the people. We accepted democracy, pluralism, secularism and liberty. This is the best example of inclusive and civilisational nationalism.

"The RSS concept of the Hindu rashtra defines India's nationalism in civilizational and cultural contexts. Our nationalism is not political, it is based on the progressive continuation of Civilisation, and therefore is a civilisational nation-state. Progressive continuation embraces new elements, discard outdated customs." **(Sinha, Rakesh, Understanding RSS, page no. 118)**

There is a difference between Indian nationalism and western nationalism. Western nationalism came with one nation, one culture , one religion and one ethnicity. On the other hand, Indian nationalism is diversified, multilingual, and multicultural.

Nationalism drew and rebuilt new nations and played a role in the unifications or breakup of large empires but in the context of India , nationalism gave a positive direction to the unification of princely states and to build solidarity among the people.

Our democracy, pluralism, multiculturalism and multilingual society are the result of inclusive nationalism.

● **Conclusion:**

We can say that a nation is based on shared beliefs, history, territory and a common political identity and nationalism is a continuous process to build a better nation. Indian nationalism came with a diverse, multilingual and multicultural approach.

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