

Changing Nationalism and Understanding Dr. Ambedkar's Importance for National Integration in Present India



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ABSTRACT

Integration is a constellation of different values, idioms, norms, and a network of social and moral institutions. At the individual level, integration may imply the development of individual perceptions, attitudes and orientations so as to make him aware of the over arching national identity and national goals. Individual at this level, as a result of processes of socialization, would acquire a political culture which would enable him to opt for national loyalties as and when such a loyalty /is in conflict with his loyalty to caste, language, religion and other identities at different levels. It also involves the social and psychological aspects of integration. The unity and integrity is considered as the greatest strength of any country. If a country is not nationally integrated and the people residing there are only concerned in their own interests, then that country can never be happy and neither can progress.

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Introduction

In a country like India, where geographical and cultural diversity is seen on a large scale, it becomes even more important. In the context of India, the most unique and wonderful thing is that despite the wide diversity of all levels, there is a unity a special presence can be seen which gives this country a different place in the large democratic and diverse countries of the world. It is not that there are no challenges in front of unity and integrity in the country. Dr Ambedkar was a great nationalist and true leader of national integration. Though, a group of scholar tried to characterized him as only leader of Dalits which quite irrelevant as his legacy cannot be limited to certain identity pro intelligentsia. He strongly believed in multicultural identity of India and throughout his life fought for freedom, justice, liberty, equality and integrity of every individual irrespective of their caste, social class, gender or any other identity. To find out how concept of true nationalism is losing its soul, forces involve in propagating false nationalism on basis of some identity and how ideas of Dr. Ambedkar on nationalism and national integration is relevant today is the central objective of this article.

Concept of Nationalism and National Integration: - **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** defines that national integration cannot be made by bricks and mortar, mould and hammer, but it quietly grows in people's minds through education. The great ideologist and author **Myron Weiner**, defines "National integration implies the avoidance of divisive movements that will balance the presence of attitudes in the nation and society that distinguish national and public interest from parochial interest". **Similarly Gani** defines, "National integration is a socio-psychological and educational process through which a feeling of unity and harmony develops in the hearts of the people and a sense of common citizenship or feeling of loyalty to the nation is fostered among them". To sum up, the concept of national integration includes political, economic, social, cultural and psychological dimensions and the interrelationships between them. The importance of national integration is certainly can be understood as it helps to stabilize democracy, improve economic growth, develop the nation and provide all the important rights and duties to the people

The term "nationalism" is generally used to describe two phenomena: (1) the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and (2) the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination. First, raises questions about the concept of a nation (or national identity), which is often defined in terms of common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties, and specifically about whether an individual's membership in a nation should be regarded as non-voluntary or voluntary. While second, raises questions about whether self-determination must be understood as involving having full statehood with complete authority over domestic and international affairs, or whether something less is required. Nationalism is an ideology based on devotion to love of one's country either by birth or by choice which focuses upon the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity and actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve some form of political sovereignty. Nationalism, in a wider sense, is any complex of attitudes, claims and directives for action ascribing a fundamental political, moral, cultural value to nations and nationality and deriving special obligations and permissions from this ascribed value.

Multiculturalism vs Rise of Aggressive Nationalism:

Though India is constitutionally a Socialist, Democratic, Secular and Multicultural country but there is continual occurrence of anti social, anti democratic, anti secular insurgent (cast related violence, communal violence etc.) in different part of this country. In the past few years, especially after the landslide victory of Right wing political party, the nationalism debate in India has been colored by Hindutva politics. The essence of secularism is being lost, with the recent Dadri lynching episode revealing the obnoxious side of communalism in India. What we are witnessing now is the emergence of aggressive nationalism in India, which is baseless and very deluding. It endows greater voice and strength to people who have a mob mentality, ready to harass others. Dalits are the main victims of such agitated tensions. In Gujarat, Gau Rakshaks attacked seven Dalit youths with rods and knives on July 11 ,2016 where they were stripped and beaten for almost two hours. The father of the youth intervened and he was beaten up, too. Further, they were tied to an SUV vehicle and paraded. Their crime – they were skinning a cow. The National Crime

Records Bureau (NCRB) reports a 44 per cent increase in violence against Dalits rises 32,712 in 2010 to 47,064 crimes in 2014. Similarly on 5 May 2017 in Shabbirpur in which at least 12 Dalits were seriously injured and up to 55 houses were set on fire, ransacked, and looted after attack by the dominant —Rajput community. Attack on nation's best academic institutions such JNU, Delhi and Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi in the name of false nationalism, communal unrest in Delhi and death of more than 100 innocent people etc. are may such example which is showing that how hate politics and identity base communal violence are increasing day by day.

Dr. Ambedkar Vision on Nationalism and National Integration:

Ambedkar elaborated upon the idea of Nationality and Nationalism in his book 'Pakistan or the Partition of India'. He describes nationality as a, "consciousness of kind, awareness of the existence of that tie of kinship" and nationalism as "the desire for a separate national existence for those who are bound by this tie of kinship." Ambedkar had immense faith in the bright future and evolution of this country. Even when he spoke of attaining freedom for India, his ultimate goal was to unite the people. Ambedkar was not against the idea of nationalism but against the Congress's version of it, which entailed freedom of India from British colonialism but not from Brahmanical imperialism under which millions of Scheduled Castes had been yoked for hundreds of years. It was Ambedkar's political challenge which compelled the Congress to appreciate the national significance of the problem of castes and to adopt measures which significantly contributed towards strengthening the social base of Indian nationalism.

Indian nationalism in its initial stages, by the very nature of its historical development, was an upper class (upper castes) phenomenon, reflecting the interests and aspirations of its members. Naturally when nationalists spoke in terms of national interest they certainly meant their own (class) interests. The evocation of 'nation' was a necessary ritual to ensure the much needed popular support for an essentially partisan cause. This sectarian approach to nationalism could be seen in the writings of none other than Pt. Nehru in his seminal work *Discovery of India*, "That mixture of religion and philosophy, history and tradition, custom and social structure, which in its wide fold included almost every aspect of the life of India, and which might be called Brahminism or Hinduism, became the symbol of nationalism. It was indeed a national religion."

The sectarian character of Indian nationalism persisted even after the nascent upper castes' movement developed into a truly mass-supported anti-imperialist national liberation movement. And, it is because of this failure to change its basically pro-upper class/castes orientation that the Indian national movement in due course helped the rise of new parallel sectarian socio-political currents. Ambedkar's emergence on the Indian political scene in 1920s, commencing the advent of Dalit (the scheduled castes) politics, was simply the manifestation of the same process. At that time, Ambedkar's Dalit politics posed no really significant threat to the overall domination of the traditional ruling class, yet it exposed the hollowness of the Congress's claim to represent the whole nation. The nationalist leadership remained unwilling to attack long unresolved social contradictions at the base of the Hindu social order and propelled people like Ambedkar to contest the INC's claim that it represented the whole society. It was in the backdrop of this escapism of the Congress brand of

nationalism that an alternative subaltern nationalism was born through Ambedkar. Ambedkar took up this question from the 'social below' and brought it to a political high by linking the question of caste with that of democracy and nationalism. Such an effort to prioritise society over polity and then linking them together was unprecedented in India before Ambedkar. Gandhi can be said to have made such an effort but his approach was obscure and primitive.

Conclusion:

India is a complex synthesis of many cultures and multicultural identities is the beauty of this country, but since long time deeply associated sentiments of this multicultural society was misused for several purposes especially in politics. Secularism has always been the central philosophy of national building in independent India. It is globally being said that 21st century is going to be the century of Asia and India will be the most influential country in the world. But after independence continuously there have been instances of large-scale communal violence in the country. There is no doubt that Ambedkar was vehemently opposed to unjust social stratification in India, but to say that he was against the nation is wrong. He was definitely against the Congress version of Nationalism. Ambedkar was neither an anti-national nor just a leader of the Scheduled Castes. He was a national leader who understood the problems of the most exploited communities and tried to bring them into the main stream. He expanded the social base of Indian nationalism which helped first to attain freedom and later to put the country on path of progress. Today, when all thought converges around inclusive politics, Ambedkar has become more relevant than ever.

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