

NATIONAL INTEGRATION (A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK)

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Abstract

The objective of integration is the achievement of 'agreed upon goals'. It involves some degree of reciprocity avoiding conflict between different customary groupings, which rules out homogeneity. From this angle integration does not 'incorporation', by adjustment and accommodation, of different elements by 'agreed upon objective goal of oneness'. This sociological meaning may be contrary to popular opinion, slogans, and appeals made by so-called national chauvinists on public platforms. As it is, we have to accept this bitter truth, as Merton has pointed out "scientific opinion is paradoxical in the sense that it runs against popular opinion. However, the term national integration has come into popular use through popular demand of achieving integration of diverse elements existing within the nation-society to make it a functioning whole as an integrated nation.

Keywords

Customary, Homogeneity, Chauvinists, Community, Nationality, Mankind, Legitimacy, Sovereignty, Ethnic, Religious, Lingual, Segments.

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Nation

Nation about natives it has been accepted that nation means community of people mainly of common descent history, language, etc., inhabiting a territory or forming a state. Nativity generated the idea of nationality. John Stuart Mill wrote about nationality that a portion of mankind may be said to constitute a nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies, which make them cooperate with each other more willingly, desire to be under the same government by themselves, or a portion of themselves, exclusively.

State

The governing machinery has the power of political control with legitimacy and sovereignty on the one hand, and as an association, persons occupying positions have reins of political control over the others. Both are recognized and accepted as such and function from a specified and declared place encircled by state boundaries. The state indicates primacy to the governing aspect from the top, even by outsiders, with the power of ruling the people. Nation on the other hand signifies primacy to the involvement of national citizens in the governing of their affairs.

Component of Nation

The expansion of group life has transformed simple group life into tribal, rural, religious, lingual, regional, civilization, and cultural) in a complex national life, therefore, social life today is expressed in terms of 'national life'. The nation is a reality of the twentieth century, therefore, the nation is bound to shape and direct the life of its national citizens who may be living in various ethnic categories, religious groupings, lingual compositions, regional segments, and social hierarchy of caste, class and gender.

Elements of Nation

Geographical	Geographic area under the coverage
Geo-political	Geographic area: the Homeland proclaimed under the control of political power attained through self-rule.
The political	power of self-governance formed and accepted by the inhabitants as their own, own government to run its polity recognized as legitimate and sovereign.
Ideological	adopted ideals and standards to guide self-rule initiating the process of nationhood thereby becoming a nation.
Historical	history of efforts, movements and struggles, forming a government of their own by the inhabitants or a portion of them.

Legal	Legitimate recognition of self-rule, running of political power and governance of its people.
Cultural:	Ideals, Values and Norms of Governance.
1. Symbolic:	Territorial map to show the national boundary Declared charter to follow A flag to identify A seal to authority An anthem to mobilize people
2. Language:	A common language
3. Sentimental loyalty:	Existing in-group sentimental loyalties to be adjusted And directed towards elements declared as national e.g. Land, charter, flag, seal, anthem, etc.
Socio-psychological:	Consciousness of and consensus for ideals and charter, The primacy of allegiance to national things.
Economic:	Economic resources and economy

It is in the process of interlinkage of the above components in which (in the interlinkage a nation grows, sustains, maintains, and continues to exist.

Inter-linkage of Elements

Above elements in conjunction with each other i.e. in their interlinkage make the phenomenon of 'nation'. Nation emerges through a historical process, exists in a politically carved land, resides among its citizens, perpetuates through consciousness, survives through loyalty, proclaims through self-rule, sustains through its political sovereignty, maintains through adherence to ideals of being a nation, and is recognized by its legitimacy.

Meaning of National

The meaning of the term national was derived from natal/native inhabitants related to a particular religion, language, region, civilizational heritage, or culture that have been branded as nationals. This derived meaning takes into consideration the people/populace/natives only.

It is to be noted that when a religious community, lingual group, regional inhabitants, or civilization followers begin to unite to attain political supremacy, to have self-rule and its recognition legitimately, only then do the idea of the nation, imagery of nationhood and reality of being nation, come into existence Thereafter the concept of nationality and being ethnicity as nationality which has created more bloodshed and still creating confronting cleavages between diverse communities within a nation.

Meaning of Integration

“The result of assimilation and its associated cultural processes, if carried through, without hindrance, is social and cultural integration, sometimes called social unity” (Gillin and Gillin, 1948.) Every society or social group in function enjoys some degree of integration otherwise it would lose its entity as a functioning group. Integration of a social group implies organization, organization of customary behavior, attitudes, interests and sentiments.

Assimilation does not mean elimination rather it means the incorporation of co-existing elements into a configuration in which parts of components while maintaining their separate entity, combine to make an integrative whole. Integration is not equivalent to homogeneity. Would we expect to find that the ‘most integrated society’ shows no internal differentiation? The answer is negative. If such was the criterion of integration no society or group could be said to be integrated.

Integration is an organization rather than homogeneity. A group is said to be integrated into the degree to which its members, its social categories, status and role performance, and its culture are organized for the achievement of common purposes or goals. In an organized group all the individuals identify themselves and their subjective considerations are ‘identified with the objective goals of the groups.

Meaning of National Integration

In our foregoing discussion, we have outlined the meaning of national and of integration separately. Now we can combine two terms to form the concept of ‘national integration. It’s the simplest form of national integration means that all the components as material and social things, irrespective of their individualized patterns, are formed out of racial, religious, lingual, regional, customary and other parochial considerations within a geo-political area of legitimate and sovereign self-rule, are functioning to assimilate with the pattern designed as a national pattern/ All the heterogeneous collectivities, as communities. Groups, associations in particular, and national citizens, in general, are made to function by adjusting together to the sovereign ideals and corresponding political power of self-rule. In this process, they adjust their internal differentiation by ideas and norms which are declared and agreed upon as national ideals.

(Processual national integration is a process of assimilation of socio-cultural diversities into a ‘national pattern of oneness’; a national pattern which is to be adhered to by re-adjusting, sometimes even sacrificing, customary social patterns. Once attained national integration is a state of being in which things’ material as well as social and people are so interwoven as they express cohesion with national things.

Problematically it is a challenging problem as to how to motivate the nation-citizens to regulate their personalized interests, sentiments, and loyalty in terms of national integration. Sociologically national integration is an integrative pattern evolved purposefully by national consideration in which pluralities and their socio-cultural diversities are to be subsumed. People are the 'members' of their socio-cultural systems. They interact with each other under socio-cultural habituation inherited from their respective bio-social heritage. There may be inconsistencies between them. At the same time, people become national citizens' of a national system. It requires a re-adjustment of mental dispositions, in the thinking, feeling and acting, in a manner so that nation - citizens may feel alienated and resort to the deviant practices to harm the national cohesiveness, oneness and national unity.

In nation-society social interactions and interpersonal relationships of the pluralities are to be viewed from three perspectives:

i. People of a plurality interact with their fellow members of the same socio-cultural system and maintain inter-personal relationships within the group in allegiance to customs of their own.

ii. Second, they interact with other fellow beings of different socio-cultural systems. In doing so they negotiate contractual relationships with them while strictly adhering to their customary practices sustaining their separate existence.

iii. Thirdly, they interact with their fellow members as well as with other members of different socio-cultural systems, as members of their separate socio-cultural systems but as 'national-citizens' sharing a national pattern of living. A pattern that 'demands and forces them to adjust' their day-to-day interaction following the national system, to adhere to obligatory rights and duties granted by the national system, frequently referred to as national culture, national consciousness and national character.

If this third type of interactional pattern is emerging, if such adjustment is taking place to assimilate in the national stream, and if its resultant cohesiveness is maintained, only then we can visualize the national integration pattern and thereby national integration. The separate existence is manifested in their religious beliefs and practices, ethnocentric sentiments and emotions, attachment with prejudices and stereotypes of inter-personal living, in-group loyalties and out-group hostilities. All these things are to be adjusted following beliefs and practices of collective national life and sentiments of national oneness, detachment from personal prejudices and stereotypes in the light of rationality of collective national survival, expression of loyalty to national standards, ideals and norms, removal of hostilities by expanding in-group loyalties toward the loyalty to national existence as a whole. The end product of these would be expressed in national integration.

The Problem of National Integration in India and its Sociological Background

Since independence much has been said about the nature of Indian society and its problematic composition on the one hand and problems of national integration on the other. Conferences and seminars have discussed this issue. Newspapers have outlined the challenging tasks of national integration and doubts have been raised about an integrated India. Various terms have been used to explain the nature of Indian society and the nature of unity in India. Unity in diversity, co-existence, accommodation and assimilation of diversities, melting pot, fusion, synthesis, the multiplicity of civilization co-existing since time immemorial, composite cultural living pluralities with diverse bio-social heritage amalgamation of antagonistic separate identities within India nation, all have been issued of constant debate.

It is the very diversity of our national composition that poses a fundamental threat to the process of our national stability. Double thinking and double talk of the kind have come to be accepted as the way of life of our politicians. They have neither time nor the inclination to sense what is going on. Present leaders are not capable of visualizing that their political statements and deeds have disastrous implications on national cohesiveness generating separatists' trends and tendencies among the people.

The achievement of the Independence of India was a great landmark in the history of the Indian society transforming it into a nation-society. However, how Independence was granted, the shape that free India acquired, and the problems with which the Indian Union was confronted were unique. Politically, ethnologically, religiously, linguistically, and socially, India presented a spectacle of a museum. The constitution was framed, and the government directed its effort to the political unification of princely states in the Indian Union. This brought forward the problem of political integration on the surface. Development schemes were framed and the problem of political integration was on the surface. Development schemes were framed and launched to meet the Constitutional Declarations of Welfare state to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens. The government of India started facing tremendous problems, not only in harnessing natural national resources for economic development but also in mobilizing human resources for harmonious social interaction.

Between the fellow citizens. The latter was ignored in the beginning and quiet for a long time. This neglect became the most serious and threatening to the very existence of national life. Another sociological implication of the socio-cultural heritage, inherited from the past expressing indifference to 'imposed' pressure, is the persistence of 'backward loyalties' Blind reliance upon groups

with strong religious, kinship, caste, and other localities became detrimental to the growth of rational constitutional national consciousness. This mental framework is being constantly exhibited by the inhabitants of the Indian nation-society as well as by the leaders.

The expansion of group life into national life in India and be visualized by rational interpretation of long popular records which are unilaterally quoted. The society in India has expanded from the simple group life to the complex and interwoven national life of today. When India launched a national movement to attain nationhood, the national struggle for self-rule and attained Independence in 1947, she faced many vital problems of political, economic, and social re-organization. The political division of the country had left numerous tangled questions unsolved, causing considerable rioting, violence and bloodshed, generating religious segregation and communal hatred. The people with all background diversities gathered under the banner of a nation called Independent India. The partition was a severe strain, on the efforts to create and develop a national life which also brought into the country a large number of uprooted people. Since then, it has become a trying period of re-organization and re-integration, to make aware the heterogeneous masses conscious of India as a nation, undermining their factional, sectional and local consciousness. To ring them into the national stream, generate consciousness for national survival, and build national character to foster national unity, all have been challenging tasks.

There are hundreds of social problems, big and small. Volumes have been written on the diagnosis and treatment of each of these problems. However, “the central problem is that of adjusting our social life and our social institutions so that, as individual national-citizens and as communities, we may promote a more harmonious living following the national objectives, ideals and goals, irrespective of our underlying diversities of culture, civilization, ideology, religion, language and region.”

Key Obstacles in National Integration

If we take the “process and problems of integration in India nation” we may trace it that among various obstacles perpetuated by various ‘Isms’ the “Ideological and Institutional framework, values and beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes inherited from past and sustained through the process of socialization among various ethnic, religious, lingual and regional groups, resulting in mutual hatred constitute the most important as well as generally pervaded obstacle. Besides, to my mind, certain follies are operating in the minds of sectarian leaders and their followers creating ‘barriers’ to national integration. They are as follows:

The Folly of Self-styled Preserver of own Cultural Heritage

Certain people in each community feel that their cultural heritage can be saved only by their efforts otherwise it will be eliminated or destroyed. It perpetuates fanaticism.

The Folly of Misplaced Historical Superiority

Certain sections in each community consider and hence advocate their historical superiority over others. Hindus glorify ancient Bharat and Gupta periods while Muslims glorify medieval Mughal conquest. It perpetuates orthodox and backward loyalties to the dead past which has no relevance to contemporary national co-existence.

The Folly of Misplaced Identity

Certain sections of people identify themselves with superiority. The conception of pre-Aryan, Aryan, non-Aryan, savanna, dwij, antyaj, etc., is full of ambiguous explanations. But they have become reference-group to identify. Not only that the 'insiders and outsiders' are divided by their illusionary origin forgetting their constant inter-mixture and mutual co-existence. It sustains national cleavages.

The Folly of Future Apprehension

Certain people are apprehensive about the future Indian nation 'to be'. They are constantly apprehensive about (a) conversion and (b) multiplication in numbers. (c) repetition of atrocities of the past.

When these certain sections of people get hold of leadership, they spread these follies through their speeches on public platforms and deeds through their political followers. It is essential for national integration, to focus on the realities of mutual understanding and harmonious living for national co-existence. These realities are to be communicated, cherished and sustained to overcome the above follies.

Suggestion

- 1) The Constitution must be strictly followed.
- 2) There should be one language to connect all. It could be Hindi. Large-scale programs should be organized for the promotion and propagation of Hindi as The National language.
- 3) The education system and syllabus for every class should be uniform but may be in regional language in all the states.
- 4) The economic development of all the states of India should be even and balanced.
- 5) The political & Religious leaders should strictly follow the Code of Conduct and constitution of India.

6) Freedom of speech should not be used to perpetuate fanaticism, It harms national integration.

7) Rather than pretending to be a nationalist, the nation should be paramount.

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