

## **National Integration In India: Need and Importance**

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### **Abstract**

*The concept of national integration is very important for third world countries because of their heterogeneous societies. In the context of developing countries, the main issues which have been significant are: national integration, establishment of a democratic political system, economic development and social justice. The resolution of the last three problems is indeed the way toward resolving the first problem. National unity is the essential condition to the very survival of any nation. Unity is the foundation stone on which all round progress of an individual, society, state and nation depends. The prosperity of country that is indicative of happiness and prosperity of its people is embedded in its unity. National integration depends on the unity of nation. There for an attempt has been made in this article to highlight the need of national integration in India.*

**Keywords :** *National, Integration, Need, Important, Unity, Problem, Development*

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

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*National Integration In  
India:*

*Need and Importance*

*RJPP 2018, Vol. 16,  
No. 2, pp. 9-15  
Article No. 2*

**Online available at :**  
[http://anubooks.com/  
?page\\_id=2004](http://anubooks.com/?page_id=2004)

The term 'National Integration' combines two words: 'National' and 'Integration'. Etymologically speaking, national stands for characteristic feature of a nation. The word nation denotes a group of people inhabiting a definite territory and which has accomplished great things in the common in past and wishes to accomplish them in future. A nation needs not to have a common origin, language, religion or race. We may appreciate the view of Earnest Barker, "A nation is a body of men inhabiting a definite territory who normally are drawn from different races but possess a common stock of thoughts and feelings acquired and transmitted during the course of a common history who on the whole and in the main, though more in past than in the present, include in the common stock a common religious belief, who generally as a vehicle of their thoughts and feelings, also cherish a common will and accordingly form, or tend to form a separate state for the expression of that will".

The term integration in common parlance, constitutes a process of coming together of various segments of society into a unified cohesive whole. J.A. Cutlat has defined integration as "a process of becoming a whole, of acquiring consciousness, of having a goal which makes it possible to rally round a pole of convergence". Hence the word integration meaning combining parts into a whole or bringing them together. But it does not necessarily mean that all the ingredients of an integrated whole be similar to each other. It is a condition in which people share values and have a consensus.

Thus, national integration can be described as a process of uniting and organizing the people of the country into a well-knit nation, a team, emotionally united and committed to securing national interests through national efforts. The term national integration has been defined by different scholars in their own ways.

Rasheeduddin Khan has described national integration in Indian context. For him, "National Integration means cohesion but not fusion, unity but not regimentation of many segments of people constituting our continental diverse polity". According to Myron Weiner, National Integration implies absence of divisive movements that would balkanize the nation and presence of attitudes throughout the society that give preference to national and public interests and distinct from parochial interests.

National Integration Conference of 1968 described national integration as "a psychological and educational process involving the development of feeling of unity, solidarity and cohesion in the hearts of the people, a sense of common citizenship and a feeling of loyalty to the nation".

Hence National Integration means combining all the people of the nation

into a single whole. It is psychological and spiritual process by which a community attains unity and solidarity and behaves as strong and united nation committed to secure the national goals over and above its local goals and loyalties.

The concept of national integration refers to the territorial integration of the country. The goal of national integrity cannot be achieved until the people have a strong territorial unit of their own called state. The economic dimension of it requires that the gap between the haves and have-nots must be minimized if not totally abolished or eradicated that keep the downtrodden people away from national mainstream.

The social aspect of national integration asserts on the presence of social justice, liberty and equality on the reasonable basis in the dealings of state with its population. The cultural aspect demands that the communities living in a country should have complete freedom to preserve and promote their respective distinct cultures. The goal of national integration cannot be secured by suppressing the distinct cultures of various communities inhabiting in the country.

The psychological dimension of it deals with the emotional attachment of people with their country, national flag, national anthem etc. unless the people have national emotions, there can be no national integration in the real sense of term. Keeping this in view, it can be said that a harmonious and willing integration of the majority and minority communities, a rational and objective view of national problems, a consensus in respect of the shared objective of democracy, secularism, socialism and development, a commitment to rise above narrow minded bigotry, communalism and regionalism while dealing with the national issues and crises and the development of the ability to act as a united and dedicated nation, together constitute the central theme of national integration in India.

The problem, which has largely influenced the contemporary political systems, is that of a national integration. Almost all the major countries of the world like United States, Russia, China and even smaller countries have diverse nature of national character. Due to the heterogeneous societies, the problem national integration has emerged all over the world though varying in its nature and intensity from country to country. But the question of national integration has acquired the central place in developing countries where socio-economic and political reconstruction became a primary objective after attaining independence from colonial powers due to pluralistic nature of societies. That is why the maintenance of unity in diversity has been major plank of these nations in the endeavors at national growth. Similarly India has also been striving for seeking unity in diversity. In India, the problem of national integration

has assumed tremendous significance in post-independence period. Today the integrity of nation is threatened by the divisive forces of regionalism, linguism and communalism and gaining ascendancy to destroy national integrity. We tend to forget that India is a one nation and we are all Indian first and the Indians last.

Although the problem of national integration in India emerged with the attainment of independence, the roots of the problem lie in her history. Because of land of heterogeneous races and cultures, the western thinkers asserted that India had never existed as unified nation in the past. Sir John Seely has emphatically stated that India was not a political name but only a geographical expression like Europe and Africa. It does not make the territory of a nation and a language but the territory of many nations and languages. In the same vein, in 1888, Sir John Strachey wrote, "This is the first and most essential thing to learn about India and there is not and never was an India or even any country of India possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unit, physical, political, social or religious. No Indian nation, no people of India of which were hear so much." In 1930, the Simon Commission referred to India as a "conglomeration of races and religions". This was the view of many English thinkers of those days. But above mentioned thinking of foreigners is baseless.

Though political unity was never found in ancient India. The vastness of the country, extreme diversities made difficult to establish an all India empire. This resulted in the division of country into many principalities, dynasties and kingdoms flourished from time to time. But they were brought under subjection and integrated into an extensive empire by powerful rulers. Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Samudragupta and Harsha attempted at the unification of the country. Chandragupta Maurya raised the old and ever new cry of nationalism and roused the people against foreign invaders. Thus, the attempts have been made to unify the country from time to time. During the Hindu period, 'Pali' and 'Sanskrit' languages played a significant role in promoting emotional integration. Jagat Guru Shankaracharya established his four monasteries at Puri, Shrinagri, KanchipeethandBadrinath-Kedarnath for promoting national unity. In the Kumarsambhavam, Kalidas had described the Himalayas southern sea shores as the guards of the nation in this regard. The feeling of national integration was propagated by the Bhakti movement reforms such as Kabir, Nanak, Ramdev, Chaitnya, Tukaram and so on. Akbar emerged with the first conscious attempt to formulate the concept of secular state in India. He abolished the Jazialevied upon non-Muslims and to please Hindu subjects he often adopted their customs and practices and shared their beliefs. Akbar was the great proponent of Hindu-Muslim amity. Akbar became the great representative of the old Indian ideal of a synthesis of differing elements

and their fusion into a common nationality. He identified himself with India, and India took to him although he was a newcomer.

Besides, for promoting the emotional unity Swami Dayanand Saraswati gave call to the people of India “Back to Vedas” and “India for Indians”. He described disunity as “Dreadful as the wicked path of Duryodhanas robbing as of all or happiness and plunging us in the depth of misery”. Indirectly he gave call for national unity under the banner of one religion to fight against the British rule. Likewise, Swami Vivekananda gave the message of the process of spiritual integration of Indians and this integration gave the much-needed impetus to the emergence of the national liberation movement.

This movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi became a massive mass movement for the national liberation which became successful in 15 August, 1947 securing the independence of India. It was solely the feeling of oneness amongst Indians which was responsible for gathering the whole nation against British rule. But at the same time the British Policy of divide and rule promoted the fissiparous and separatist tendencies among Indians and sowed the seeds of communal dissensions and animosity between Hindus and Muslims.

Keeping this in view, the leadership of the country started making attempts to integrate the country. The princely states were integrated by the concrete efforts of Sardar Patel and various regional groups were integrated by establishing federal system in the country. This integration was political one. National integration emerged as great force in 1962, when China invaded our country and it was further strengthened during our wars with Pakistan and our victory in 1971. Being aware of diverse elements in the country, the Government took adequate measures to secure national integration such as the preamble of the constitution have been amended in 1976 by adding three words: Socialist, Secular, Unity and Integrity. The feeling of brotherhood has been promoted among various sections of society to strengthen the unity of nation. The National Integration Council have been reconstituted from time to time to examine the various aspects of the problem of national integration.

Despite above mentioned efforts, communal forces of regionalism, Casteism, linguism etc. have tried to destabilize the country every now and then. The continued Maoist-Naxalite violence and terrorism in Andhra, increased role of violence in Assam particular after the emergence of Bodo movement and continued activities of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). The violence resulted during the Gorkhaland agitation, continued operation of some militant out-fits in North-East and presence of

terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir all are putting serious strains on the efforts towards national integration.

Under above cited circumstances, no one can deny the importance of achieving a high ideal of national integration in India without which we can never realize the goals of nation building and socio-economic development. National integration alone can give solid foundation to India's struggle to becoming a superpower of the world. There is a need of hour for fresh approach to the problems and review the philosophy of national integration. National integration is not a house which could be built by mortar and bricks. It is not an industrial plan too which could be discussed and implemented by experts. Integration, on the contrary, is a thought which must go into the hearts of all the people. It is consciousness which must awaken the people at large.

The problem of national integration in India acquires importance due to wider spread diversities and plural society. Broadly speaking the diversity of India runs through religion, language, cast, race, tribes etc. India is land of religion pluralism. The major religions in India are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. There are some of 1652 languages and dialects are spoken in India beside linguistic diversity, Indian society is divided into numerous castes and sub-caste.

Keeping these diversities in mind it can be says that there is a great need of national integration. The existence of number of religions, cast, races, languages, communities in India is bound to create some tensions and communal clashes. The only gift that the politics has given in the 70 years of independence is profound despair, disbelief, mistrust and insecurity. The reason behind this phenomenon is that the politics of this period is not protecting the welfare of common man but some individuals and groups. That is why these diversities are the obstacles in the path of national integration.

At present, national unity is facing challenges of politics of power, opportunism, corruption, communism and casteism on one hand and on the other side a number of fissiparous tendencies like internal rebellion, separatism, regionalism, Maoism, naxalism, fanaticism and terrorism are bent on weakening the very fabric of our national unity.

The importance of national integrity is also needed for economic development. Today, India is counted among the powerful countries of the world. It is the second growing economy and has been able to maintain its growth rate between 8-9 %. India is dreaming to become a developed country and a world power by 2020. An integrated India will not only achieve the status of a developed nation but will be able to maintain its superiority with great vigor. When we work unitedly we shall be able

to march forward on the road to progress and development.

India has the proud of being the largest democracy in the world. National integration is most important need for the survival and success of democratic system in India. It can be ensured only by infusing a spirit of brotherhood among the heterogenous population which were belonging to different race, religion and cultures. Fragmented India can not maintain its political independence and sovereignty. Only united India can insure institutional and political freedom for the people and also can strength forces of freedom throughout the world.

So long as poverty, unemployment, exploitation, illiteracy, economic disparities, corruption, drug abuse and drug trafficking, extremism separatism are not brought under control the concept of national integration will remain a distant dream in India. But this dream can be true if every responsible citizen of India will perform their duties truly and do their best in all possible ways to bring about national integration. At the end it can be said that national integration is fundamental to the very of our country. We shall not have our entity as a nation without genius national unity. It must be noted that national integration is not the task Government alone. It is a collective responsibility of all citizens, politician, educationists, students, businessmen, and so on and so forth. Everyone should do whatever is within his reach for the fulfillment of the idea of national integration.

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