

7. Nationalism

Q1. How is a nation different from other forms of collective belonging?

Answer: A nation is not only a collection of people and it differs from other groups found in society:

1. A state is different from a family which is based on direct personal interaction of people living together and having knowledge and characters of other also.
2. A nation is different from clans, tribes and kinship which ties of marriage and descent link members to each other so that even if we do not personally know all the members we can.
3. But as a member of a nation, we may never come face to face with most of our fellow nationals nor need we share ties of descent with them.

Q2. What do you understand by the right to national self-determination? How has this idea resulted in both formation of and challenges to nation-states?

Answer:

Right of self-determination implies that every nation in the world should enjoy a right to determine its destiny in all walks of life without any due interference from any other state.

- The basic right implies that each state has a right to exist independently without inference from other states and sovereignty of the state would be respected by all.
- Every state exercises the right to preserve what it considers worth-preserving. Each tradition has some historical background and represents the soul of the nation. To enjoy these rights, we may conclude the following reasons:

- (i) These rights are essential for the coexistence of a democracy in action.
- (ii) This right promotes national unity among the various states which belong to different races, castes, religion and cultures.
- (iii) This right guarantees that minorities should not be absorbed in the majority whereas they should also be given the right to determine their culture and civilization along with majority communities.
- (iv) This right provided more national security because the majority and minority both enjoy the right to determine their own affairs in the way they lined. But the right of self-determination results in the following challenges.

- (a) It may hinder the smooth functioning of administration in multi-national states like India, USSR because each section makes efforts to find out one's own way.
- (b) Sometimes, this right finds it difficult to frame a public opinion for the success of democracy because everyone would develop its own identity only. The right of self-determination resulted:

- (i) Disintegration of states, i.e. Russia, Austria, Hungary
- (ii) Resulted in the unification of states like Germany and Italy.
- (iii) Resulted in the formation of states like Czechoslovakia and Finland. Hence, it can be concluded that the right of self-determination can be also used for both purpose of national integration and disintegration.

Q3. "We have seen that nationalism can unite people as well as divide them, liberate



them as well generate bitterness and conflict". Illustrate your answer with examples.

Answer: Nationalism requires to be studied due to its important role in the world affairs.

(a) Nationalism has united the people and divided them also to liberate them from oppressive rule and has been the cause of conflict and wars.

(b) Nationalism has contributed to the drawing and re-drawing of the boundaries of states and empires.

(c) Nationalism has been a factor in the break of empires and states.

(d) Nationalism has gone through various processes/passes, i.e. it led to the unification of a number of small kingdoms into large nation states as Italy, Germany, etc.

(e) Even at present a large part of the world is divided into different nation-states and separatist struggles within existing states are common.

(f) Nationalism has also accompanied to the break up of empires like Austro-Hungarian (in the end of 1919 or 1920), break of colonial Britain, France, Dutch, and Portuguese in Asia and Africa.

Q4. Neither descent, nor language, nor religion or ethnicity can claim to be a common factor in nationalisms all over the world. Comment.

Answer:

- It is commonly believed that nations are constituted by a group who shares certain features as descent, or language or religion or ethnicity.
- But there is in fact no common set of characteristics to be present in all nations.
- Many nations do not have common language, i.e. Canada includes English speaking and French speaking people in India also has a large number of languages to be spoken in different religions.
- Many nations do not have common religion to unite them. And some is applicable to other characteristics, i.e. race or descent. Hence, a nation is to a great extent an imagined community held together by the collective beliefs, aspirations and imagination of its members.

Q5. Illustrate with suitable examples the factors that lead to the emergence of nationalist feelings.

Answer:

- A common motherland emerges the feeling of nationalism because people belonging to one place are mutually bound to love their motherland, i.e. the Jews stayed far away from motherland still it kept their nationalism alive.
- Common culture refers for customs and traditions, ideas, art and literature, dress, food, etc. through which people start understanding one another to live in harmony and cooperation. Hence, it emerges nationalism.
- Common language also emerges nationalism as people understand and come nearer to each other by their expressions together to bind them. Through language, the people develop some habits as well as adopt some ways of life.
- Common religion also contributes to the emergence of nationality as the people remain under the command of a religious leader and the spirit of oneness is developed among all followers of



religion.

- Lastly most important thing is, a nation is constituted by belief. Nations are not like mountains, rivers or buildings which we can see and feel. It is to refer to the collective identity and vision for the future of a group which aspires to have an independent political existence. A nation exists when its members believe that they belong together.

Q6. How is a democracy more effective than authoritarian governments in dealing with conflicting nationalist aspirations?

Answer:

Democratic government is more effective than authoritarian government in dealing with conflicting nationalist aspirations.

1. A democracy is the most acceptable form of government in the world. Authoritarian types of government are not liked and accepted nowadays.
2. In a democracy, it is shared commitment to a set of political values and ideals that is the most desirable basis of a political community or a nation state. Within it, members of political community are bound by a set of obligations. These obligations arise from the recognition of the rights of each other as citizens.
3. A nation is strengthened when its people acknowledge and accept their obligations to their fellow members. It is more easily possible in a democracy than in an authoritarian government. We might even say that recognition of democratic framework government provide enough chances and more favourable atmosphere that in an authoritarian government. Mutual respect and cooperation is the strongest test of loyalty to the nation.

Q7. What do you think are the limitations of nationalism?

Answer:

1. A territory creates a nation and inhabitants of that particular territory create nationalism but the world is divided into different nations and states, even though the process of re-ordering of state boundaries has not come to an end due to separatist struggles in the existing states.
2. The people of new states acquired a new political identity based on membership of nation along with the state loyalties and common languages.
3. It is quite difficult to arrive at a precise and widely accepted definition of nationalism.
4. The struggle for freedom from colonial rule by India and other former colonies were nationalist struggles with the desire to be independent of foreign control, i.e. Austro-Hungarian, Russian, French, Dutch, Portuguese empires, etc.
5. The process of drawing state boundaries have also been confronted by nationalist demands including separate statehood.
6. Even today, in many parts of the world, we witness nationalist struggles to threaten to divide the existing states, i.e. Tamils in Sri Lanka, Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, Basques in northern Spain, etc.
7. Nationalism has also passed through many phases, i.e. Germany and Italy's unification and consolidation.

