

In the name of the Land: Nationalism and the Roots of Hatred

The Westphalian system of the 17th century coupled with colonization of the British in the 18th century gave birth to the idea of Nation states and Nationalism. This idea entails the loyalty to the country where one is born and the consideration of its culture as the superior culture. It calls for the attachment to all that is related to the land in which one is born. It should be noted that this idea has nothing to do with one's natural affinity and love for his native land, but rather has to do with the pride arising out of one's geographical identity.

To understand the idea of Nationalism, some questions need to be raised and a deep thought given to these questions:

- 1) Does any geographical piece of land possess any culture inherently?
- 2) By virtue of being born in a land, does this obligate oneself to hold the land itself and the "original" culture of the land in high esteem and to defend it?
- 3) Do solutions for Humankind emanate from the idea of Nationalism?
- 4) If the government of the land is unjust and oppresses its people, should it be supported on the basis of Nationalism?

Territorial Nationalism vs Cultural Nationalism vs Ideological Bonding

Territorial Nationalism is the feeling of pride and superiority associated with the sense of belonging to a specific territory by birth or citizenship. Cultural Nationalism is the association of an additional component i.e. a specific culture to the territory and the feeling of pride that comes with this association. This type can be further divided into culture based on religion and culture based on language. In contrast to these two kinds of Nationalism, Ideological Bonding disregards any kind of territorial pride or superiority, but directs the feeling of pride towards the Ideology and its core foundations and concepts.

It may seem that these three types of associations are not much different in terms of any practical implications and may look like just directing the feeling of pride to different things. But with a deeper look into the concept of Nationalism and Ideology, the intellectual superiority of the latter compared with the former types of Nationalism can be well established. An Ideology, by definition, gives importance to an idea, its core concepts and principles. An ideology consists of a fundamental doctrine to which all its concepts and solutions are directed towards. This is because the essence of an ideology is the core idea and the essential characteristic of a foundational idea is to always be directed towards it similar to the centripetal force of an object moving in a circular motion. Any aspect of life discussed in the framework of an Ideology emanates from the core foundational idea. This is in contrast with the Nationalistic thought where the concept of a core idea to which all aspects of life are directed towards is completely absent. Rather, any aspect of life in the framework of Nationalism is simply directed towards the land or the culture associated with the land. For example, any discussion of the economic problem of wealth inequality in the framework of Hindu Nationalism is directed towards the land or the culture associated with the land. But since the land or the culture does not talk about this problem, this topic of wealth inequality is out of scope in the framework of Hindu Nationalism. On the contrary, the Ideology of Capitalism discusses the concept of wealth inequality as it is linked to its core foundational ideas of freedom, namely, the freedom of ownership. So the discussion of wealth inequality in society is within the scope of Capitalism. Hence, the Ideological bonding is superior in terms of Intellect and has a wider scope compared to the limited scope of Nationalism.

White Nationalism, Hindu Nationalism and Tamil Nationalism are examples of Cultural Nationalism while Capitalism, Communism and Islam are examples of Ideologies that exist in the world today. It should be noted that Ideologies disregard any kind of territorial identity inherently as the loyalty in an Ideology is to the Idea and not to any land or culture. This

entails that the former are symbolic in nature while the latter are intellectual in nature as any issue in an ideology works with some fundamental ideas whereas any issue in a Nationalistic framework only directs to the land or its culture.

One question needs to be addressed. If Nationalism is distinct and different to Ideology, then why do Ideological States like the European Capitalist countries adopt Nationalistic beliefs and values? By understanding the Capitalist ideology, the link between Nationalism and Capitalism can be well appreciated. Capitalism is fundamentally greedy and materialistic. This kind of utilitarian ideology saw in the rise of Nationalism a great benefit for themselves. From an economic standpoint, the rise of Nationalism would protect the native markets and enable the plundering of other countries. And from a political standpoint, Nationalism would prevent any unification between countries that would potentially become a super-power. And lastly from a political viewpoint, Nationalism helps create a vote bank based on a consolidated majoritarian identity.

Hatred of the 'other': A Characteristic of Nationalism and not Ideological Bonding

Nationalism is always tied to a nation state which is a demarcated territory or land albeit associating elements of language, religion, or culture to the territory. This necessitates the citizens of the territory to identify as a nation and subscribe to its defined elements. This subscription is implicitly enforced on the population irrespective of the philosophical differences in the concept of Nationalism or Nation.

Dr. Ambedkar wrongly perceived Nationalism to be of universal value which conforms to his work of the abolition of the caste system. His fundamental unquestioning adherence to the ideas of Nation state and Nationalism made him believe that there could be equality and national integrity only by subscribing to the idea of Nationalism. Hence ideology or a belief that rejects the idea of Nationalism needs to be rejected and should be considered a risk of endangering equality. Thus he fell into the paradox of "inequality" using the subjective idea of Nationalism which itself created another type of problematic divide i.e. Indian and non-Indian.[1]

Thinking distinguishes Humans from animals. A reasonable categorization of Humans must result from the ability of Man to possess ideas and concepts about life. The ideal categorization being the rational correctness of the fundamental doctrine which Man holds about himself, life and the universe. But such a categorization need not inherently result in the oppression, transgression and injustice against the "other". Such consequences are the hallmark of Nationalism that emanates purely from a sense of racial, ethnic and cultural superiority and pride. In contrast to this, Ideological bonding only results in an ideological categorization which does not obscure the ability to see the human inherently as a creature that possesses organic needs and instincts that require satisfaction. This doesn't mean absence of any clashes or conflicts in such ideological categorizations where the nature of the conflicts is related to the ideas and concepts, and not due to a sense of a blind racial pride. The difference, however, is in the latter being a cheap struggle, whereas the former being noble as it is based on principles and concepts that aim to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

The Indian Freedom Struggle and the birth of Nationalism

Nationalism was born in India during the period of British Colonialism post 1857 CE. This necessitated a local claim for ownership of the land, thereby resulting in a cultural geographical identity. This requirement was satisfied by the creation of the Hindu cultural identity connected with the Indian Subcontinent [2]. For the Muslim community, colonialism just meant an invasion by an enemy which required Jihad (war) to oust the enemy. In addition, this involved capitalizing on the existing global pan-Islamic political framework, namely, the Ottoman Caliphate.

It might be argued that without the idea of Nationalism, there won't be a motivation for fighting the oppressors and invaders. This argument is flawed because ultimately what needs to be fought against is oppression and injustice itself and not merely the ruling of a foreign

entity. If British were just and fulfilled the rights of the Indian people and gave them their due rights, then would there have been a “Freedom Struggle”? In other words, how appealing would the idea of Nationalism or a “Freedom Struggle” would be if the invaders or colonialists were just and implemented an Economical and Sociopolitical Framework that completely solved the problems of the people. Most of the Indians would accept such a rule albeit foreign if there was a successful economic model that eliminated poverty absolutely and enabled wealth distribution. The common man would be more concerned about his economic problems being solved rather than fighting an invader just for the sake of making someone native to the land a ruler.

Indian Nationalism, similar to all other Nationalist movements was born out of the colonial and discriminative policies of the British post 1857 CE. The Indian National Congress (INC) was established in 1885. It was during this period that the concept of “Bharat Mata” was defined which aimed at the deification of the Indian Subcontinent. Prominent Hindu personalities and Hindu organizations accelerated the consolidation of the ideas of Nationalism in the period between 1857 and 1900. However, among Muslims, it was pan-Islamism that gained traction in this period and during World War I, it emerged as popular movement among Indian Muslims in the anti-British struggle. Pan-Islamism is a default position of the Islamic ideology which was exhibited during this period. But after the abolition of the Caliphate in Turkey (1924 CE), this movement diffused owing to the dominance of a Muslim Nationalist movement under the guise of the Muslim League led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This movement came to the foreground, thus replacing the Khilafat Movement in the struggle against the British. The subtle difference between the two movements must be noted. The Muslim League was based on a kind of Religious Nationalism (Cultural Nationalism) whereas the Khilafat Movement was ideological in nature. The Religious Nationalism that led to the formation of Pakistan did not last long and within few decades caused a split in 1971 (Formation of Bangladesh) in the name of Language Nationalism (Cultural Nationalism). On the contrary, though India was declared a Secular country in 1947, the effects of Hindu Nationalism can be seen right from its formation [3].

Hindu Nationalism was in fact, a response to the pan-Islamism of the Muslims. The disregard for a National identity and a unification based on a global ideological brotherhood created a sense of fear and inferiority complex among the Hindu Nationalists [4]. The creation of a Hindu Aryan identity tied to the geography was projected undertaken by the British to instill a sense of pride and confidence among the Hindu Nationalists. This would create a friction to the Muslim unified stance to oust the British and their objective to resume the authority as in the pre-colonial India. Hence, the British played a role in the creation of the Aryan narrative which the Hindu Nationalists thrived on to dilute the Islamic threat to the British locally and globally. Post destruction of the Caliphate in 1924, Jinnah’s proposal was in the limelight, a reaction to what he perceived as the threat faced by Hindu Nationalism.

The Controversy of Nationalism

The idea of Nationalism has been challenged by various Thinkers and Cultures. The idea was challenged by various personalities and thinkers like Albert Einstein, Leo Tolstoy, Arundhati Roy to name a few. Einstein famously remarked “Nationalism is the measles of Mankind”. It has also been challenged by various cultures and religions. The concept of “Global Family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam)” emanating from Hinduism conflicts the idea of Nationalism [5]. Similarly, the concept of Muslim Ummah(nation) emanating from Islam is pan-Islamic in nature and transcends the barriers of National boundaries into an ideological bonding. Moreover, the very concept of Nationalism has been severely criticized in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad [6]

Another example of Territorial Nationalism is the annexation of Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir to India. Operation Polo resulted in the annexation of Hyderabad, the plebiscite of 1948 conceded the princely state of Junagadh to India, whereas temporary provisions and promise to the people of Kashmir of a future plebiscite were used to annex Kashmir. Kashmir stands at odds with the former two as this was a Muslim majoritarian state ruled by a Hindu

prince but yet it was dealt with inconsistently unlike Hyderabad and Junagadh due to domination of India's territorial Nationalism and its support by the British. The support of the British has always been on the Hindu side which is clear from the projects undertaken by the British in India in the 18th and 19th centuries that aimed to classify Muslims as invaders [7]. The reason for this is the authority being in the hands of the Muslims when British arrived in India during the 17th century.

Another contrast to be made is the rejection of any kind of Muslim foreign intervention while allowing a Hindu foreign intervention as Muslims were considered as foreigners similar to the British (a narrative supported by the British). The suggestion of Hasrat Mohani, who was part of the Khilafat Movement, that demanded invitation to the ruler of Afghanistan (albeit considered part of Akhand Bharat by Hindu Nationalists) for military intervention to oust the British was meant with severe criticism from the Hindu Nationalists [8]. In direct contrast with this, the Hindus of Junagadh were allowed the privilege of demanding India to militarily intervene them for liberation from the Muslim rule. Also hypothetically, any form of a possible future Muslim power takeover in India would invite the Hindu Nepali Army by Hindu Nationalists, however, such a privilege was denied to the Muslims in the name of Cultural Nationalism during the anti-British struggle.

Negative Effects of Nationalism

Nationalism is the cause major cause of wars and bloodshed. According to Britannica, Nationalism not only induces wars, but it has inherent nature of prolonging and increasing the severity of wars [9]. The World Wars of the 20th century fundamentally revolve around the idea of Nationalism. Taking into account only the two World Wars, Nationalism has been the highest contributor of killings and bloodshed with the estimation crossing more than a 100 million casualties. The distribution of resources is one more aspect negatively affected by the idea of Nationalism. Dividing territories into nation states prevent the natural distribution of resources naturally and free of cost and can only happen at the cost of foreign trade and investment.

Currently there are 195 nation states in the world. With such demarcations and pride associated with these demarcations, the above problems of Nationalism are on the increase. This may not have been the case if world was divided into ideological divisions with an expansionist foreign policy prior to the Westphalian model. Though these positive effects would greatly depend on the ideology itself, history already provides us a successful model as stated by Adam Smith himself:

“...the empire of the Caliphs seems to have been the first state under which the world enjoyed that degree of tranquility which the cultivation of the sciences requires. It was under the protection of those generous and magnificent princes, that the ancient philosophy and astronomy of the Greeks were restored and established in the East; that tranquility, which their mild, just and religious government diffused over their vast empire, revived the curiosity of mankind, to inquire into the connecting principles of nature.” [10]

Conclusion

Nationalism has indeed been a curse upon Humankind. The alternative to this inhumane and weak bond is the ideological bond based on a correct rational doctrine for life. An expansionist foreign policy need not always be negative. Such Westphalian notions that gave rise to Nationalism needs to be challenged. The acceptance of a rule is not based on who was first present in the land originally, but it depends on the ideology implemented i.e. the correctness, justice and acceptance of the ideology among the people. This is what gives legitimacy to the rule and not based on who were the original inhabitants of a land. So the question of initial ownership or inhabitancy is irrelevant and in fact arises from a Nationalistic bias.

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