

Nation as a myth is
india a myth history
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The dictionary definition of Nation is: A group of people who share the same culture, ethnicity and language, often possessing or seeking its own independent government. When one looks at this definition and then re-thinks about it for the Indian prospective, The first thing that come to the mind is either there is something remarkably wrong with the definition, as India has is a combination of a plethora of cultures, ethnicities and languages or hence is a complete misfit for being termed as a Nation or there is something wrong in the way with the way the world understand what a Nation is.

Basically the whole concept of nation is an imaginary concept. It's never possible that people will be influenced by the same likes of culture or ethnicity. A human mind tends to deviate from what normal around it to explore new things, when a group of people live together by the will or by virtue its called a society. Each member of the society is unique, He might not be there purely because of his will to be there, But might be compelled to be there because of various factors. This might be financial, Social, And Family or lack of other options. We cannot interpret that the individuals staying in the society are part of the culture or adhere to the same ethnicity. The chances of them being there by choice is as good as for them being there by choice.

Now taking the concept of a society to a broader target, it gives us a few foundation pillars towards the concept of a Nation. Although people might be a part of it, but it's not necessary they want to be there. They mostly are there, because either the decision to be there was taken on their behalf by their Elders (in case of a partition or plebiscite), by their Leaders (Again a

leader is not one which represents everyone but a majority) or they belonged to the land from birth.

The concept of Nations is elaborated as expressed more much more complex than it was ever thought to be. As put in new literature by many writers, Nations is an imaginary concept and hence should be distinguished in the way they are imagined.

The fact is, the concept of a nation is more of an idea; it's an idea of people from a common culture and values, their desire and will towards freedom. We had been reading from the text books for ages that Unity in Diversity is what India stands for as a nation. But the whole idea of India as a nation is been criticized much because of its failure to become a single unified Nation state in the likes of Germany (after the East Germany and West Germany) and Japan. One can also claim that India has done much better in terms of keeping the minor states together, unlike the rest of Europe or the far gone USSR which are now divided into various small states. The Indian nation reflects the counter of the Europe small countries that were homogeneous when considered in terms of population and culture, England, Germany and France to name a few. Even Islamic nations like Iran, Iraq or Saudi Arabia were let down when it came to a concept of Nations and ended up in military dictatorship or medieval style monarchies.

India as a Nation:

The nation state idea never worked for India, because of its size and diversity. For others like Europe, they had to work hard to suppress their divisions and prejudice the idea of nationhood. India also fails to stand as a nation unlike

other Nations is because India set out for a democratic model, whereas the other nations were on imperialistic rule and not an integrated culture encompassing the subcontinent.

Diversity in India adds to the failure of idea of the Indian Nation:

India with its diversity has failed as a nation right from the formation of India as an independent country. Firstly the formation of the Islamic nation of Pakistan, Then the Issue of Kashmir, The North-East, The khalistan Movement, The recent show downs from Telangana, Gorkhanland etc. India had been suffering at the hands of the minor states, and in order to maintain a nationwide feel, has been dealing with them by avoiding the issue till the very last stage when any further push will result in a crack in the complete National structure and then bending down to the demands. Not to mention after a heavy disrupt and unnecessary bloodshed.

The idea of the Nation of India chronologically speaking has never been a single State. History has its records that all those who tried to keep India as unified states failed in their endeavours whether it may be the King Ashoka or Alexander. What these great rulers identified in this land was that the diversity of its origin and existence is not only trivial to capture but to keep united in public interest is a herculean task. Yet, India emerged as a golden bird in the early 16th Century and attracted a lot of unwanted attention from other Nations. The British came to India for trade and sighted an opportunity to take charge as the nation was spread in forms of small princely states rather than as a Nation. It took our leader decades in the struggle for freedom, And the first thing that was set to harbinge the lack of National

interests post independence was the partition of Pakistan and the formation of East and West Pakistan. The Indian political leaders had sleepless nights trying to put a map in place for the unified princely states in India.

Pivotal role of India's Freedom:

When the labour party in England won the elections, their chief agenda of decision of discontinuation of the British Empire in India, Different communities in India started demanding of India as a free state or as a State of States. It was for the United National Congress will that they 562 princely states became a part of India. But not all the states were happy for this, As a result of this political decision, there were riots between Hindus and Sikhs and Hindus and Muslims. The demand for Hindu State from the Hindu Mahasabha, The demand for Sikh State in Punjab, The Dravidians in South India, The Tamil State and the issue with Hyderabad and Kashmir who cited independence.

All the demands for separate states were demands from the political parties as they saw an opportunity to have the power of the land and also to gain maximum benefits for themselves and their followers from the same. The formation of Pakistan, Added fuel to the already heated demands for separate States, and the feeling of discontent with India as a Nation started to fade even before it was established. India then was ruled by Indian National Congress and Pakistan was governed by The Muslim League. Whereas the other stated were pleased by giving them individual power in their own regions. A total of 25 states were created post independence to feed the political hunger of those regions.

This set out the lifeless frame of the Indian Nation which was more of a compromise of State wise governing rather than a nationwide government. The other discontent states in the likes of Telengana, Gorkhaland, Kashmir and others were still left unanswered. And since then the issues have been kept avoiding till the time when avoidance resulted in further blows to the so called nationalism in the country.

India has never been in a nationalistic phase, the fragmentation in India occurs due to the political will. Where a particular political party keeps fragmentation or demand for a separate ruling state as an agenda to come to power. And it's not related to some minority areas which have a low impact on India, But India faces the pull from all directions and every corner with a demand for a separate state. In 2002 the then in power political party had to make way for three more states in order to fulfil the political appetite of the political parties of the concerned regions. But the government always fails to find a solution to the problem; In 2002 the government took the steps to avoid any more drama on the topic but indirectly ignited the sentiments of the political parties from other regions who have been fighting for a separate state. The Gorkhas with their issue for Gorkhaland, The Telangana issue which has been hot for a long time now, the demand for Bundelkhand, The demand for Saurashtra etc. Were reignited and the political parties got afresh agenda to create havoc.

History and Social Issues of India as a Nation:

This political view is not just challenged on the basis of Region, But also on the basis of Religion, Caste, Race and Language. With the political drama in Maharastra for the Marathi Manus has been a nuisance. Which is nothing

<https://assignbuster.com/nation-as-a-myth-is-india-a-myth-history-essay/>

more than a agenda to capture vote bank in the political parties there. The essence being, the parties capitalize of the fact that the people there have a lack of view of nationality and have a clearer picture and identification in their own culture and language. And believe that they first are Marathis, (or Tamils or Gorkhas for that sake) then Indians.

Apart from the political views clash on basis on Regionalism and Language, issues which shake the will of India as a nation have been as pity as Interstate disputed over Water and Territorial boundaries, Caste Related violence, Naxalism are a few to name.

Partition of Pakistan:

Taking the case of The Myth of India as a nation has been punctured right from the formation of India post independence, ending up with two different countries, India and Pakistan (East and West). Till date it remains to be a major issue and the scars of which continue to haunt us in the form of the battle for Kashmir which started in 1947 and continues till date with no solution in site. Both the involved parties believe it's a part of their territory because they believe that its more closer to their culture and hence should be a part of their territory. But what they fail to see is that the case of plebiscite never came to discussion. India and Pakistan both have been having a hard nut with their own internal issues, Pakistan with the disputes and killing between the Shia and Sunni tries in the name of superior race, On the other hand India with the issues like Marathis and Bihari's, Hindu's and Muslims , Hindu's and Sikhs etc. Both are not able to handle either existing states and wish to take another disputed state to their bag. The idea for India and Pakistan was not from the people of the respective groups but <https://assignbuster.com/nation-as-a-myth-is-india-a-myth-history-essay/>

were driven by the political leaders of the groups. These leaders made the people believe that the only way of growth and progress of their community is via a separate nation only. A decision which they all repented later in life.

At the time of partition when Indians started the quest for India to have a separate nationality was more than a requirement, and ended up being a matter of pride. This was the time when the Hindus and Muslims started having a desire for a nation. The sense of nationality could have existed without the desire for having a separate nation.

North East:

The North Eastern states face a similar issue when it comes to the sense of Nationality. They are a part of India, But how often have there been uprisings from the North East fronts in demand for a separate land, The ULFA in Assam, The Gorkhas in the regions around Darjelling etc. The reasons why these states have always been a trouble for the centre is because of the lack of importance that the North Western Indian front is given over the decades. The political parties in order to control the vote bank gave citizenship to immigrants from Bangladesh, Which further boiled the anger of the region. These regions have never thought of India as a country but as a power at Centre which is to be followed. Hence to the North East the concept of nation comes from chance and not by choice.

The mudslinging continues as the nation says that these states don't tend to treat them as part of India and the states believe that they are treated as foreigners in India, So why not be a separate nation. Rest of India they don't believe in North Eastern as Indians:

They are often referred as Chini or Chinkis and are treated as foreigners.

The Nagas in Nagaland believe they are a separate nation and consider rest of India's as foreigners and always believed they were included in India against their will.

Arunachal Pradesh has been confused which country they do belong to India or China. And as both the countries have been fighting on this front, Arunachal Pradesh believe they need a solution to their long standing problem now. This is just as big as the Kashmir issue but is never addressed.

Khalistan Movement:

The Sikhs wanted a land of their own right from the India freedom struggle. These unmet demands were outburst in the form of the state of Punjab during the Khalistan movement. The demand for a separate state by Bhindranwala, the ironic leader who demanded a separate land for Sikhs lead to further shows of why the concept of Indian nation is a political will rather than a cross culture believe.

Telangana:

Again when the case of Telangana was addressed, the issue that the political leaders brought up to the surface was the suffering and they believe they had nothing to lose in the battle. But a battle? With their own country, their own motherland, well this is because of the fact that for them the mother land in Telangana and not India. The leaders and the followers believe that since their issues are not addressed by the Indian government, it's better to be on their own.

The factor that the political parties capitalise to come to power is that they assure the formation of a new state in case they come to power. They capitalise on the vote bank, and then to gain more direct power and control follow their promises to ask for a separate state. This is negotiated till the time the elasticity permits.

With the regionalism of politics, race and language, there are other sectors also that get affected. The long standing delusion of patriotism is now being replaced by the new found jingoism. This is not only evident from the uproars of the states but can easily be read even from the number of TV channels for specific states.

Various Incidences in recent times:

Attacks as the one triggered by MNS and Shiv Sena on the North Indian candidates for the All India Railway recruitment board entrance in West region in Mumbai shows how much politics goes into everything. The plot was to dent the feeling of India as a nation to Marathis, and to reinforce the power of Marathis in the state of Maharashtra over the feeling on India as a nation.

The anti Tamil riots in Karnataka in 1991, the attacks which mainly took place in Bangalore and Mysore was to show the disrespect against the orders of the Cauvery Water Tribunal appointed by the Government of India. Again a matter where Region over Nation.

The various other cited examples include The attack on North Indians in Maharashtra and the referring on Bihari's as outsiders in Delhi by the Chief

Minister of Delhi are clear depictions that the integrity is more towards regions rather than nations.

So what is the point then of being in the essence of a nation? The answer is simple, To keep a central authority. Which also comes from a combined political view, But as we have seen from time to time, This tends to dilute and the comfort of regionalism overpowers the feel of nationalism. The being of India as a nation is more of a will from the political fronts, where the views of nationalism are intact only till the point when it does not clashes with any other major interest. The interest may be related to religion, region, caste or other social issues. As soon as a political agenda is created out of the same, the skeleton of India is ruptured. These ruptures not only make a mark at the time of the impact but also leave significant scars which are exploited time and time again based on the political requirements of the regional or nationalist parties

The Failure of the State:

The idea of India as a nation is clashes with the regional identity, Any political demand for statehood, or sub-statehood, when demonstrates identifiable support from masses clearly state the lack of Indian nationalism. The emergence of the various ethnic nations in India e. g. Bengali, Sikh, Gujarati, Manipuri, or Tamil have taken shape and protect their ideology with stronger support for their regions rather than the nation. The support is derived from the followers who put their region first to their Nation. And for them being a part of India is just a mere way of recognition till the point they get a identity of their own. The regional and sub regional accommodation of identity in India have served to weaken the bases of political secessionism

<https://assignbuster.com/nation-as-a-myth-is-india-a-myth-history-essay/>

and secessionism and separatism while not defeating the principle of internal self determination of nation.

The concept of India as nation was never there in the essence of purity; It lacked the vigour and desire, and came into being as a way out of the then impossible structure of princely states structure. But, the political figures try to hold it together, and time and again, are faced by the protest when people decide that their individual or community interest is superior to that of the nation. This individualistic feeling of superiority than the nation has always been into India, right from when the states were asked to join in the Union of India.

The existence of India as a nation in itself a myth, If given a chance, there will be a handful who will not be willing to have a state or sub state like the Europe or former USSR. Europe failed through history in uniting as a subcontinent, though some attempts in this direction were made (for example, Napoleon). The only country of comparable size that has better succeeded than India through history in maintaining its unity as a country is China. But even China never had so much diversity as India.

But still India is better off from the modern Europe with their nationalistic phase, when every Indian state will start functioning as different countries or starts regarding them as different nations all together. The foreign ruler ship prevented this from happening. Hopefully Indian political will would keep the Indian national interest at priority for a more stable time to come and help India avoid the European nationalistic phase.