

Political science



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Nationalism and the Concept of Nation Nationalism is the core value cherished at level. It imparts loyalty and allegiance which can be channelized to build a strong state. Despite, a clear distinction between the terms nation and state, more often than not these are used interchangeably. However, political science deals with these terms quite distinguishably where each has its own well defined meaning and boundary. “ The term state is a legal concept that refers to a population administered by a government (or other administrative authority) on a given territory with a claim of sovereignty recognized by other sovereign states. When a particular state is composed of a single nation or people with common identity, we call it a nation-state” (Viotti 464).

However, the dynamics of nationalism may be a little complex and tricky where more than one groups, may be on the basis of religion, race etc, exist and interacts to formulate the national interest of the state. This may result in sort of interest clashes if not dealt tactfully at state level. Ethnic and racial groups are conservative and traditionalist in their loyalty and allegiance towards their religion and race. These groups possess their own specific and rigid identities and like to maintain themselves as unit while sticking firm to these identities. The unity on the basis of religious or racial grouping gives birth to the problem of contentious autonomy within the state. The intricacies are purely the subject of politics and have to be address with political will while safeguarding the interest of state.

The unity and identity on the basis of religion and race is a challenging issue for the state level unity and identity as a nation-state. People tend to retain their religious and racial identity while “ Nationality involves a significant degree of self-definition and refers to a people with sense of common

identity, if not destiny” (Viotti 464). Nationality demands subjugation of religious and ethnic interests by the sovereignty, integrity and solidarity of the state. If the group level identities and interests are dominated and governed by the state interests, the concept of nation-state persists and flourishes otherwise it spoils and destroys.

Nationalism manifest itself in several different colors and shapes but one major attribute of the nationalism is its conformity to the history and myth. Every state despite existence of multicultural religious and racial groups and unities share some common exhibits of historical and mythical events which promote nationalism. Among these are the National Days celebrated by the state, which may be the independence or liberation days, anniversaries or birthdays of national heroes, memorial days for national achievements or some other day or event that underlines the unity of all groups, communities and races living within a state. These days can be employed as tool for renaissance of nationalism and reassurance of nationhood. However, there are some contemporary world events which are considered a source of national disintegration and disharmony. There may be days celebrated by some religious, racial or ethnic group to establish autonomous authority or a separation movement day or commemoration day for a revolution against the authority of the state.

The twentieth century has witnessed many successful liberation and other movements fueled by nationalism. Most of them were owned and controlled by religious and ethnic groups and identities. The century has witness the downfall of colonialism, emergence of China and Bangladesh, disintegration of USSR, fall of Berlin Wall and many other event of global impact. These events were attributed to nationalism in a way or other. However, in two

World Wars of the twentieth century has also provided the basis for the bloodshed in the name of nationalism. Therefore nationalism like other sentiments of human can be a blessing or curse, it has to be channelized and tamed for the prosperity of humanity.

Works Cited

Viotti Paul R. and Mark V. Kauppi. International Relations and World Politics: Security, Economy, Identity. India: Pearson, 2007. Print