
Chapter 7

Nationalism

❖ Nationalism

- Nationalism has emerged as one of the **most** compelling of political creeds that has helped to shape history.
- Nationalist struggles have contributed to the drawing and redrawing of the boundaries of states and empires.
- Nationalism also contributed to the disintegration of large empires such as the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires in the early twentieth century in Europe as well as the disintegration of the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese empires in Asia and Africa.

❖ Nation

- A nation is to a great extent an ‘imagined’ community, held together by the collective beliefs, aspirations and imaginations of its members.
- A nation is built upon:
 - Shared beliefs— This includes the belief of collectiveness or belonging together.
 - Common history— A continuing historical identity stretching from the past into the future lays the ground for national feeling.
 - Same territory— Shared territory also gives a feeling of collective identity.
 - Shared political ideals— A belief in common political ideals defining the form of governance is a crucial component of national feeling. This includes shared beliefs like democracy, secularism, etc.
 - Common political identity—It is denoted by Constitutional values and overrides other cultural, ethnic and linguistic identities to ensure homogeneity at the **highest** level.

❖ **National Self-Determination**

- The right to national self-determination has often been understood to include the right to independent statehood for nationalities.
- Not only would it be impossible to grant independent statehood to every group that sees itself as a distinct cultural group, or nation, it would probably be undesirable as well.
- It might lead to the formation of a number of states, too small to be economically and politically viable and it could multiply the problems of minorities.
- The right has now been reinterpreted to mean granting certain democratic rights for a nationality within a state.

❖ **Nationalism and Pluralism**

- Once we abandon the idea of one-culture-one-state, it becomes necessary to consider ways by which different cultures and communities can survive and flourish within a country.
- The Indian Constitution has an elaborate set of provisions for the protection of religious, linguistic and cultural minorities.
- The kinds of group rights that have been granted in different countries include constitutional protection for the language, cultures and religion of minorities and their members.
- Different groups need to be granted recognition as a part of the national community.
- This means that the national identity has to be defined in an inclusive manner, which can recognise the importance and unique contribution of all the cultural communities within the state.