Understanding National Integration and Challenges in Its Way

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Abstract

In the era of liberalization, globalization and of information and communication technology, the curriculum framers of our nation mostly emphasizing on these dimensions but hardly any effort is being made for the provision of moral, spiritual and on national building education. As there is a dire requirement to take up these dimensions of education on which premise the whole of our student's growth and development rests. In the competitive world of 21st entury, because all are energies our motivated towards more and more economic gains and the centuries old traditional joint family system is dying its own death; as it was the responsibility of the parents and grandparents to inculcate the values of morality, truthfulness, respect, solidarity, spirituality, cohesiveness, nationalism via the medium of the stories, folklores and folktales to its younger generation has no relevance in today's competitive world. Because the students are lacking in these values that's why they are resorting to petty conflicts in/outside the school/college premises and sometimes these quarrels take a violent form by harming one another. In order to teach the students about the practices which we were following since times immemorial we need to teach the related subjects to our rising future generations by taking moral, spiritual and concept of nationalism in view. The present research paper will be emphasizing the value of national integration and solidarity, which is must to teach our future generations. Education has to play a major role in inculcating the values of solidarity, integrity, knowledge about literature and culture through moral science, spiritual/secular education and value education.

Introduction

The Preamble of the Constitution of India states: We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice- social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation. In our Constituent Assembly this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution. With the inclusion of the word 'integriy' in the Preamble of the Constitution by 42nd Amendment Act, 1976, Indian nation stressed upon the dire need of the integration of the masses. In addition to this certain fundamental duties had been incorporated in Part IVA Article-51A. It shall be the duty of every citizen of India—

1- To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

2- To cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom.

3- To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

5- To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

6- To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.

7- To safeguard public property and to abjure violence.

8- To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

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Meaning and Dimensions of National Integration-

The dictionary meaning of 'integrity' is the state of being whole and undivided: upholding territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Origin of this word from French intégrité or Latin integritas, meaning integral, and integrate. Indian nation is composed of the people by many religious and cultural beliefs but are unified by certain emotional forces. This is the process of national integration. The main objective of national integration is to encounter all fissiparous forces/tendencies, which is posing threat to the Indian nation. National integration is a complex concept. It has social, political, religious, regional and economic dimensions. The basic factors of national integration; Ideological unity and awareness about 'national objectives' should be created among the people who hold divergent views on political and religious and similar other fields. India observes 19th November, the birthday of former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, as National Integration Day. Its main aim is to promote among the peoples unity, peace, affection and brotherhood.

Toward National Integration

National integration is the creation of a feeling of oneness where the diversities are recognized and respected by imbibing a sense of nationhood. There is a certain degree of consistency in the various attempts to conceptualize the notion of national integration**.** In the words of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru 'the Indian state is based on the principle of unity in diversity'. The American born, sister Nivedita (1867-1911) the ardent disciple of Swami Vivekananda had aptly said, "Each Indian for ten minutes in the evening should think that we Indians are one and we will not renounce the spirit of unity." Etzioni (1965) believes that a community is integrated when it has:

□ □ An effective control over the means of violence;

□ □ A centre of decision-making that significantly affected the allocation of resources and rewards; and

□ □ A dominant focus of political identification for a large majority of national citizens who are politically aware.

National integration refers to 'a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties'. Together, these definitions suggest that for national integration to occur in a nation, a significant number of citizens must develop identification with the nation that supersede identification with ethnic, cultural or religious group, acquire political awareness, share common norms and values and develop attitudes favorable to the display of integrative behaviour among people of different groups. The renowned African political scientist Mazrui (1972) identifies five interrelated aspects of national integration:

- The fusion of norms and cultures (including the sharing of values, mode of expression. Lifestyles and a common language);
- The promotion of economic interdependence;
- The narrowing of the gap between the elites and the masses, the urban and rural areas, rich and poor, etc (social integration);
- The resolution of emergent conflicts; and
- The sharing of mutual experiences so that people can discover that they have undergone some important experiences together.

National identification requires the willingness to perceive oneself as a member of a national community, or to feel a sense of belonging to a country. This occurs at three levels; the

verbal, the symbolic (as with the flag, national leaders, national icons, etc.) and the affective (or emotional attachment to the country and its leaders). National integration is a multi-dimensional concept, with many inter-locking elements that operate independently to some degree but yet are also interactive, cumulative and generally complementary. It is also holistic in the sense that an integrated community is often more viable than each of its constituent parts. It is a highly complex phenomenon in the sense that what is integrative on the one hand may be disintegrative on another; and it is a dynamic construct in the sense that 'once integrated does not mean always integrated'.

Challenges In The Way Of National Integration

1. **Variation in Language:** There are several obstacles in the way of national integration of our country. The most formidable obstacles are language variation, communalism and regionalism. India is a multi-lingual country. We have seen that the Indian constitution recognizes 22 languages. Hindi is the official language and English is the link language. About 2000 languages are being spoken by various sections of the Indian society. When India became free the decision to make Hindi the national language was opposed by people of any other languages. There was an anti- Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu. The language controversy started with Hindi being given the place of official language of India. In South India people revolted against this and demanded secession from India. The constitution has been amended to meet the demand of these people. In the Indian Union the states have been organized on he linguistic basis. The question of language is a sensitive one. People get very easily provoked over this issue. The linguistic fanaticism has got to be fought with love, understanding and accommodation. Another problem faced by India was the linguistic re-organization of the states. In 1956 the states were reorganized on linguistic basis. Agitations are going on in many parts of India demanding state reorganization. Linguistic jingoism has become an important factor hinders national integration. Solution to tackle the problem; the three language formula was put forward for promoting national integration and exchange among states. The formula was that in Hindi speaking areas Hindi, English and any one of the mother tongues shall be included in the school curriculum. In non-Hindi speaking areas the mother tongue, Hindi and English shall be used.

2.**Communalism**: Communalism is not believing in any particular religion or observing its rites. Excessive affinity to one's own religion transforms into hatred towards other religions. Thus religious fanaticism arises. When religion, caste and race are used to make social and political gains, it is called communalism. The real cause of communalism lies in political and economic factors. The partition of India is an instance for the intervention of religion in politics. There have been communal riots in the country before and even after the partition. This is a poison deeply rooted in our polity. India cannot succeed in forging any unity, if communalism continues Nobel Laureate, Dr. Amartya Sen, mentioned about the two different interpretations of secularism. One sees secularism as neutrality of the state towards religions. The other views, Secularism as distancing the state from any religious symbolism. While the latter is a Western concept, our country has followed the former view. The state, while being neutral, allows coexistence of all religions. Secularism is not a political ideology. It is a social and cultural philosophy of live and let live, and the non-interference of the State in the personal faith of an individual.

- What are your suggestions for improving Indian secularism?

- Find out the factors in our daily life that hinder national integration. Eg: Dress, language etc.
- Organize a seminar on the factors that hamper national integration.
- Design and organize programmes that promote national integration.
- National flag, Asoka Chakra etc are our important national symbols. Prepare an album of national symbols.
- Several literary works have been produced on the theme of nationalism. Prepare an edition of such works.

3. The Politics of Caste: Casteism is a divisive force. One section considers another section as inferior. They are exploited. Positions and opportunities are monopolized by a particular section. It creates enmity among the other castes. Caste organizations interfere in politics. They function as pressure groups and obtain benefits undeservedly. These factors prevent national integration.

4. Regionalism: The Politics of Deprivation, Regionalism gives more importance to one's own region than to one's nation. When regionalism is linked with language and religion it creates regional interests rather than national interests. This creates parochialism among the people. Another fissiparous tendency is regionalism. Aggressive regionalism has gravely undermined the feeling that the whole of India is the homeland of her inhabitants. egionalism creates parochial outlook and narrow mindedness.

5. Extremism: Extremism is the act of spreading fear by threatening the people through illegal means to obtain selfish interests. It ignores human values. The feeling that they do not get what they deserved, unemployment, lack of proper education and inadequate means of livelihood lead to extremism. National integration fosters nationalism. It is opposed to communalism, linguistic jingoism, regionalism and similar fissiparous forces. Certain questions may come up when we think of national integration.

- Can we achieve national integration by attaining economic equality?
- Aren't there anti-national feelings among economically well off people?
- Can it be achieved only by propagating the ideas of religious cooperation and harmony?
- Can socio-economic changes and national integration be achieved through right planning?

Education is that aspect of human being's phenomenal existence having the capacity to lift his mind to transcendental heights, above the humdrum of narrow self-perception of everyday life. This has indeed been the central message of the evolving educational policy of India that has opted for herself a uniform system of school education that emphasizes on the need to sensitize the country's young through the knowledge of our common cultural heritage. If anything, there is a greater need of its augmentation, which can propel the country's future citizens to work for enduring peace and harmony with reassurance.

Role of the Government of India in Promoting Education for National Integration and Communal Harmony

The Report of the Secondary Education Commission 1952-53 emphasizes the role of the educational system and observes that "the educational system must make its contribution to the development of habits, attitudes and qualities of charter, which will enable its citizens to bear worthily the responsibilities of democratic citizenship and to face all those fissiparous tendencies which hinder the emergence of a broad, national and secular outlook". The Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) in evolving the educational system, identified the "social

and national integration" as one of the major problems of national development and called for different means through which these themes can be taught in schools and colleges. The National Policy on Education 1986 points out the need for establishing the national system of education and institutions to promote national integration and different components of the Constitution. In 1999, a committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Justice J.S. Verma to implemnet the suggestions to teach Fundamental Duties to the Citizens of the country. The report popularly known as Justice J.S. Verma Committee Report, provides conceptual definition of "Duty", Preamble of the Constitution and all the Fundamental Duties. The Reports lists out the Schemes/Programmes related to National Integration and Communal Harmony, culture and Values and Environment. The report also contains an analysis of curriculum at various levels of education and teacher education from the point of view of various Fundamental Duties including National Integration and Communal Harmony.

National Council for Educational Research and Training's efforts at promoting National Integration and Communal Harmony: From its inception, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has made efforts to improve the quality of school education as directed by educational policies. Development of instructional materials is one of the major tasks of the Council. These materials, besides including the pedagogical principles are also supposed to include content materials to foster Core components of national educational policies and Indian Constitution. These instructional materials which include, curricular frameworks, syllabi, textbooks, supplementary reading materials etc. have also been valuated time and again on whether the instructional materials incorporated core components such as "National Integration", "Communal Harmony" or not. For instance, in the early 1970s, under the project entitled, National Integration Project, the Council has produced many books meant for children to foster National Integration. Following the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) to review the National Curriculum Framework for School Education after every five years, NCERT has initiated the process of the review of the 'National Curriculum Framework of School Education. A National steering Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of Prof Yash Pal, an eminent scientist and a scholar, to deliberate on all aspects of school curriculum. In addition, 21 National Focus Groups have been formed on significant areas of the curriculum as well as concerns national importance to bring out research based position papers, providing a comprehensive review of existing knowledge and awareness of the field realities that will be part of the curriculum package. Concerns of communal harmony and national integration are inherent in the goals for- peace education.

Conclusion

There cannot be national integration without understanding the character of the nation and there cannot be communal harmony unless we intrinsically believe in the validity of different beliefs and approaches. When these factors are taken into consideration, it can be seen that national integration is a complex problem and political integration is only one part of it. It is beyond doubt that the threats of disintegration are staring us in the face. If we keep on remaining disunited in the name of religion, community or language, the country will be in trouble. If we do not sink petty differences our freedom is in peril. Divisions on the basis of language or community will have serious repercussions. In short, there is urgent need to rethink about our basic political and cultural concepts, reinterpret them, and be bold to emphasize them through educational system, political behaviour and social environment. At the same time

socio-economic and cultural differences are to be avoided also. Caste discriminations should be eradicated. We must realize that we have the strong bond of same cultural heritage and must not let ourselves fall apart and disintegrate. We must show to the world that a country with as old a tradition as ours can holds back personal differences for the sake of higher interest of the country. Toleration, co-operation and feeling of brotherhood should guide us in maintaining the national unity of our country. Let us echo what Pandit Nehru said, "There is no division between North and South, East and West of India. There is only one India of which all us are inheritors, it belongs to all of us."

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