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NATION AND STATE

The evolution of modern nation state as a political organization took a long period of time. In ancient times human beings lived in communities. The obvious fact is that human beings are social animals and they cannot live in isolation. They belong to society. The collective life that they need assumes certain rules and regulations and gradually such a group life has led to the formation of political communities and the emergence of State. In its earlier form, the State was very simple in its organisation. From that simple organisation it has evolved and grown into the modern complex organization. Over the years it has acquired different forms and has become a reality found everywhere. In this lesson you will read about the concepts of nation, nationality and state. You will also learn about the elements of State.



Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to

- explain the concept of nation and nationality;
- make a distinction between nation and nationality;
- describe the elements of nationality;
- identify the State as a political entity with sovereign power;
- explain elements of the State.

2.1 Nation And Nationality

The term nationality is derived from the Latin word *natus*, which means ‘to be born’. Therefore in its derivative term, nationality means belonging to the same racial stock or being related by birth or having blood relationship. This understanding of nationality is however misleading. There is today not a single nation in the world whose people belong to the same racial stock. Every nation has people of mixed racial background. It is very difficult to find racial purity because of increased racial combinations due to immigrations, inter-caste and inter-racial marriages. The development of nationality is definitely more of

a psychological phenomenon neither political nor racial. In the words of J.W. Garner, nationality is a culturally homogeneous group that is at once conscious of its unity.

According to Ramsay Muir, a nation may be defined as a body of people who feel themselves to be naturally linked together by certain affinities, which are so strong for them to live together, they are dissatisfied when disunited and cannot tolerate subjection to people who do not share the same ties. The development of nationality is definitely psychological phenomenon or as Hayes says, it is primarily cultural, conscious of unity.



Notes

2.2 Distinction between Nation and Nationality

The distinction between the nation and nationality is a thin one. This is more so because both the terms are derived from the same word. Some even consider them as interchangeable. But certainly there are differences between the two, which can be summed up as follows:

1. Nationality is a cultural term. It is a psychological, which is generated in a group of people having geographical unity and who belong to a common race, common history, religion, customs and traditions, economic interests and common hopes and aspirations. The people of a nationality must have a sense of unity. They must feel that they have something in common which differentiates them from other people. But nation is a people organised; a people united. What unites people in a nation are feelings of oneness. Nation gives an idea of an organisation; nationality gives an idea of sentiment.
2. Nationality is basically a cultural term; it is 'political' only incidentally as Hayes tells us. Nation is basically a political term, cultural only incidentally. This, however, does not mean that nationality is not political and nation is not cultural/concepts.
3. The evolution of the state has shown that there may be states with more than one nationalities and there may be nationalities spread over more than one states. The former USSR, as a state, had a considerable number of nationalities; the Korean nationality, to take another example, is spread over two states. Thus a state may or may not co-exist with nationality.
4. Nation and nationality are distinct terms in yet another sense. Some use the term 'nationality' to signify the principle or characteristic that creates a nation. This means that nationality precedes nation. In terms of origin, therefore, they are not at par. The Jewish nationality created the Jewish nation.
5. If we use the term 'nation' to mean a population of the same race, language and tradition, inhabiting the same territory and constituting the larger part of its population, we may, and in fact, have the Britishers as the nation. If on the other hand, we use the term 'nationality' to mean one of the several distinct ethnic groups scattered over an area and forming but a comparatively a smaller part of its population, we may, and in fact, have the Welsh nationality; the latter as a nationality becomes a part of the British nation.



Intext Question 2.1

Fill in the blanks:

1. In its derivative term nationality means belonging to the _____ racial stock

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2. It is very difficult to find _____ because of increased fusion of blood due to immigrations, inter-caste and _____ inter-racial marriages.
3. The development of nationality is definitely a _____ and _____ phenomenon.
4. Nationality is derived from the Latin word _____.

2.3 Elements of Nationality

It is very difficult to define nationality in terms of its elements. It is a psychological concept or a subjective idea and therefore it is impossible to find out any common quality or definite interest, which is everywhere associated with nationality. We cannot say with certainty that this particular element makes for a separate nationality. We can at best list out some factors, which are as follows:

2.3.1 Common Geography

People living in a common territory constitute one of the major elements of nationality. This is because such a people are likely to develop a common culture. This is also the reason why the countries are called as motherland or fatherland. We also see an identity of people with their country. Thus people of Denmark are called the Danes, France as the French, India as the Indians, America as the Americans and so on. But this point should not be stretched too far. Common territory is not an absolutely essential element of nationality. The Jews were scattered all over the world before the creation of Israel. They had no common territory, yet they constituted a strong nationality. Similarly, the Poles were denied their homeland for a long time before 1919 but they were a nationality.

2.3.2 Common Race

Common race denotes the idea that a people belonging to a particular nationality belong to one group or they have a social unity. Some people suggest that purity of race makes a nationality. This is scientifically wrong. As pointed above, today due to immigrations and intercaste marriages, purity of race has become almost an impossibility. Today this phenomenon has become a myth. But certainly the belief that one belongs to the same race, real or fictitious, has contributed to the idea of nationality. The idea of a common race is also important because it strengthens common language, common traditions and common culture.

2.3.3 Common language

A common language is a medium of communication, which enables the people to express their ideas. It is the basis of all the other elements of nationality. A common language not only means a common literature but also a common heritage of historical traditions. Common historical experiences and common traditions as reflected in the literature bind together members of a nationality by certain bonds. A common language creates a cohesive society. Most of the European nations developed out of a common language as England from the English language, France from the French language or Spain from the Spanish language. But this factor is not a necessary one. Today we find many bi-lingual or multi-lingual nationalities. Further, the English language is a global language which is spoken in all parts of the world and it cannot be associated only with England.



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2.3.4 Common religion

Religion is also an important element of nationality. A common religion is a strong incentive to national feeling. England fought against the Spanish Armada largely due to her determination to defend Protestantism. However this factor is also not a necessary one. In fact in modern times, nationalities tend to become multi-religious and under such circumstances religion is regarded as a private affair of individual and secularism prevails in the collective life. Further religion cannot always be a cementing factor. The two wings of Pakistan fell apart and Bangladesh was created despite the common religious affinity. Religion, rather, works negatively as a divisive factor in the Indian Sub-Continent, when Pakistan came into existence due to the partition of India.

2.3.5 Common political framework

The existence of a common political framework or a State, whether in the past or present, is another element of nationality. People living in a State are knit together through the laws. Living under one common state creates a sense of unity. Various crises like wars further develop the feelings of patriotism. In fact the government also encourages this idea through various methods. As Gilchrist aptly observes that “a nationality lives either because it has been a nation, with its own territory and State or, because it wishes to become a nation with its own territory and State.”

2.3.6 Economic factor

The economic activities bring people closer. It has been argued that historically, nationality emerged as a result of fusion of various tribes and clans. One cannot think of nationality in a primitive society. The Marxists also believe that nationality emerged due to economic factors. According to them nationality had no place in a slave owning or a feudal society and it emerged due to the emergence of capitalist mode of production. Undoubtedly economic factor is an important element of nationality. It is also an important factor in the maintenance of nationality. But on its own single-handedly, it cannot create a nationality.

2.3.7 Common subjugation

Common subjugation has been a dominant factor in the rise of national movements in the Afro-Asian countries. They were invaded by the various European imperialist powers. The feelings of nationality arose due to common subjugation as it created a feeling of oneness among the people. In India, a common Indian nationality arose due to the common colonial exploitation.

2.3.8 Common political aspirations

The will to be a nation is regarded by some as the principal factor of nationality. Before the First World War, the Poles always wanted Poland. Similarly there were many minorities living in Europe, which desired a separate nationhood. In 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference, this was accepted in the principle of self-determination.

While all the factors mentioned above help in the growth of nationality, none of them is absolutely essential. In fact nationality is a subjective sentiment which cannot be defined in terms of any objective factor. The presence or absence of any one or more of these factors does not imply the presence or absence of the spirit of nationality.



Intext Questions 2.2

Fill in the blanks:

1. People living in a common territory are likely to develop a common _____.
2. Purity of race is _____ a wrong idea.
3. Most of the European nations developed out of a common _____.
4. The common order fosters the sense of _____.
5. Historically, nationality emerged as a result of _____ the various tribes and clans.
6. In India, a common Indian nationality arose due to the common _____.



Notes

2.4 The State

The term ‘State’ is central to the study of Political Science. But it is wrongly used as synonym for nation, society, government etc. The term ‘state’ is also used as State management, State aid and so on. Also as the States of Indian union or the fifty States that make the United States of America. But in Political Science, we use this term differently; it has a more specific meaning.

Some of the definitions of the concept of State are as follows:

“The State is the politically organized people of a definite territory”

-Bluntschli

State is “a community of persons, more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent, or nearly so, of external control, and possessing an organized government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience.”

-Garner

State is “a territorial society divided into governments and subjects, whether individuals or associations of individuals, whose relationships are determined by the exercise of this supreme coercive power.”

-Laski

State “is a people organized for law within a definite territory”.

-Woodrow Wilson

“The State is a concept of political science, and a moral reality which exists where a number of people, living on a definite territory, are unified under a government which in internal matters is the organ of expressing their sovereignty, and in external matters is independent of other governments.”

-Gilchrist

Human beings are social animals and cannot live alone. When people live together, they fulfill their social needs. But everybody is not good and kind. There are all sorts of men and women, who exhibit various emotions such as pride, jealousy, greed, selfishness and so on. According to Burke, “Society requires not only the passions of individuals should be



subjected, but that even in the mass and body as in the individuals the inclination of men should be thwarted, their will controlled and their passions brought into subjection.” The best is to control human perversity through means of political authority. Therefore people are bound by rules of common behaviour. If these are broken then they can be punished. Society fulfills people’s need for companionship; the state solves the problem created by this companionship.

The state exists for the sake of good life. It is an essential and natural institution and as Aristotle said, “The State comes into existence originating in the bare needs of life and continues its existence for the sake of good life.”

It is only within a state that an individual can rise to his or her ability. If there is no authority, no organisation and no rules, then society cannot be held together. The state has existed where human beings have lived in an organized society. The structure of the state has evolved gradually over a long period of time, from a simple to a complex organisation that we have today.

The essence of state is in its monopoly of coercive power. It has a right to demand obedience from the people.

However, the Marxists believe that state is a class organisation, which has been created by the propertied class to oppress and exploit the poor. They refuse to believe that the state is a natural institution. To them the propertied class created the state and it has always belonged to them only. Thus, the state is just a means of exploitation. Therefore, they visualize a situation of classless society or communism in which there will not be any need of the state. State will, thus, wither away.



Intext Questions 2.3

Fill in the blanks:

1. The State exists for the sake of _____ life.
2. The essence of State is in its monopoly of _____.
3. The State has a right to demand _____ from the people.
4. According to the Marxists, State is a _____.
5. In a classless society, there is no _____.

2.5 Elements of The State

As pointed above, the state possesses four essential elements. These are:

2.5.1 Population

The State is a human institution. It is the people who make a State. Antarctica is not a State as it is without any human population. The population must be able to sustain a state. But the question is; how much should be the population?

Plato’s and Aristotle’s ideals were the Greek City – States of Athens and Sparta. Plato fixed the number of people in an ideal state at 5040. Aristotle laid down a general principle

Individual and the State**Notes**

that the state should neither be large nor small; it should be large enough to be self-sufficing and small enough to be well-governed. Rousseau put the number at 10,000. But it is difficult to fix the size of the people of a state. In modern times we have India and China which have huge population and countries like San Marino with a very small population. Countries like former Soviet Union gave incentives to mother of large families. In India, over-population is a big problem while China has enforced a one-child norm. Dictators like Mussolini had openly encouraged large population of the state.

So no limit-either theoretical or practical-can be put on population. But it must be enough to constitute governing and governed classes, sufficient to support a political organization. The population should be in proportion to the available land and resources. It should be remembered that the differences in the size of population, other things remaining the same, does not make any difference in the nature of State.

The quality of the population is also important. A state requires healthy, intelligent and disciplined citizens. They should be possessed with qualities of vitality. The composition of population is also very important. A state with a homogenous people can be governed easily.

2.5.2 Territory

Just as every person belongs to a state, so does every square yard of earth. There is no state without a fixed territory. Living together on a common land binds people together. Love for the territory inculcates the spirit of patriotism. Some call their countries as fatherland and some call it motherland. But there is a definite attachment with one's territory.

The territory has to be definite because it ensures exercise of political authority. Mobile tribals had some sort of political authority but they did not constitute a State because they lacked a fixed land. The Jews were living in different countries and they became State only with the creation of Israel, which had a definite territory. Without a fixed territory it would be difficult to conduct external relations. It is essential for the identification if one state attempts to conquer the territory of another.

The territory may be small or large. But the state has to have a definite land. It may be as small as San Marino, which has an area of 62 Square kilometers, or it may be as large as India, USA, Russia or China. The size of a state influences the form of government. For example, smaller states can have a unitary form of government but for the large states like India and the USA, the federal system is relatively suitable.

The quality of land is also very important. If the land is rich in minerals and natural resources, it will make the state economically powerful. It should be able to provide enough food for its people. The States of West Asia were insignificant but they acquired prominence after the discovery of oil. Large territory of a State gives it strategic and military advantage during the times of war. Mostly the territory of a state is contiguous and compact though there are exceptions also. Before the creation of Bangladesh, the two wings of Pakistan were miles apart. Hawaii and Alaska are far away from the main territory of USA.

Land, water and airspace comprise the territory of the state. The sovereignty of a state is exercised over its land, its rivers, mountains and plains and airspace above the land. The sea up to a certain limit from the land border is also a part of the territory of a State.



Notes

2.5.3 Government

The purpose for which people live together cannot be realized unless they are properly organized and accept certain rules of conduct. The agency created to enforce rules of conduct and ensure obedience is called government. Government is also the focus of the common purpose of the people occupying the definite territory. It is through this medium that common policies are determined, common affairs regulated and common interests promoted. Without a government the people will lack cohesion and means of collective action. There would be groups, parties and warring associations and conditions of wars and chaos. So there is a need for common authority and order where people live. This is the pre-requisite of human life. The state cannot and does not exist without a government, no matter what form a government may assume. The government is a must, though it may take any form. It may have a monarchy like Bhutan or republic as in India. It may have a parliamentary form of government like India and Great Britain or a presidential form of government as in the United States of America.

2.5.4 Sovereignty

A people inhabiting a definite portion of territory and having a government do not constitute a state so long as they do not possess sovereignty. India before 15 August 1947 had all the other elements of the state but it lacked sovereignty and therefore it was not a State. Sovereignty is the supreme power by which the state commands and exerts political obedience from its people. A state must be internally supreme and free from external control. Thus sovereignty has two aspects, internal and external. Internal sovereignty is the state's monopoly of authority inside its boundaries. This authority cannot be shared with any other state. The state is independent and its will is unaffected by the will of any other external authority.

Therefore every state must have a population, a definite territory, a duly established government and sovereignty. The absence of any of these elements deprives it the status of statehood. So the term generally used for the 28 provinces of Indian Republic at times creates confusion and as is the case of '50 States' in the United States of America.



Intext Questions 2.4

Fill in the blanks:

1. The four elements of State are _____, _____, _____ and _____.
2. Plato fixed the number of persons of the State at _____ and Rousseau at _____.
3. Love for the country inculcates the spirit of _____.
4. _____, _____ and _____ comprises the territory of the State.
5. A unitary form of government is good for a small State and a _____ is ideal for big States.
6. The agency created to enforce rules of conduct is called _____.
7. Sovereignty has two aspects _____ and _____.

Individual and the State**What You Have Learnt**

You have understood the meaning of nation, nationality and the state. You also know that the terms nation and nationality are derivative of Latin word *natus* and in its derivative term nationality means belonging to the same racial stock or being related by birth or having blood relationship. You have understood the differences between nation and nationality. You know now there are many elements of nationality but no single element or a combination of elements is indispensable. The presence or absence of any one or more of the elements does not imply the presence or absence of a spirit of nationality. You also know that state is a political organisation. It establishes order in the society. But the Marxists believe that state is a class organisation. You have also understood the four elements of State-population, territory, government and sovereignty.

**Terminal Exercises**

Define the following terms:

1. (a) Nation (b) State (c) Government
2. Name the elements which help the formation of nationality and explain any two of them?
3. What is the State? Briefly explain the elements of the State.
4. Are the following States? Give reasons for your answer in a single line.
(a) India (b) United Nations
(c) Bihar (d) United States of America

**Answers To Intext Questions****2.1**

1. Same
2. racial purity
3. psychological
4. Natus

2.2

1. Culture
2. Scientifically
3. language
4. unity
5. fusion
6. colonial exploitation

**Notes**



Notes

2.3

1. good
2. coercive power
3. obedience
4. Class organisation
5. state

2.4

1. Territory, population, government and sovereignty.
2. 5040,10000
3. Patriotism
4. Land, water and airspace
5. federal system
6. government
7. internal, external

Hints of Terminal Exercises

1. (a) Refer to section 2.1
(b) Refer to section 2.4
(c) Refer to section 2.5.3
2. Refer to section 2.3
3. Refer to section 2.4
4. (a) Yes, because it has all the four elements of a State.
(b) No, because United Nations lacks two elements of a State-territory and sovereignty
(c) No, because it does not have sovereignty.
(d) Yes, because it has all the elements of a State.