

IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND COMMUNAL HARMONY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR COUNTRY

Neerja Asthana, Ph. D.

Associate Prof., Defence Studies Department, Bareilly College, Bareilly

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There is a famous phrase, 'together we stand: divided we fall'. This is the concept of the phrase and vision and voice of Sir Syed Ahmed; the founder of AMU, who believed that the National Integration was inevitable for the progress of the country and therefore declared repeatedly that all Indians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are one nation. In his famous Gurdaspur speech delivered on January 27th, 1884, he clearly spelled out the idea, "Oh hindus and Muslims ! do you belong to a country other than India ? Don't you live on this soil and are you not buried under it or cremated on its ghats ? If you live and die on this land then bear in mind, that 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' is but a religious word: all the hindus and Muslims and Christians who live in this country are one nation."

It is true, that great persons have great ideas which sparkle the entire society with its divinely light, so was Sir Syed Ad In his speeches particularly those delivered at Patna in 1883, and at Lahore in 1884; he argued very well that all religions should be respected. As an eminent scholar of comparative religion he writes, 'Tabin-ul-Kalam' which reflects the idea of basic duty among different religions, Sir Syed always advocated the concept of National Integration.

At the threshold of our discussion, I feel that it is desirable to have a clear idea of the National Integration because one can not jump into a stream without being able to swim in it.

The first National Integration Council that was set up in 1961, In its declaration of objectives defined National Integration in the following terms.

"The foundation of our National life is common citizenship unity and diversity. freedom of religion. secularism. equality, justice -social, economic

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olitical - and fraternity among all communities".

National Integration therefore recognizes that India is a country of different religions, languages and and cultures and the achievement of National Integration is not inconsistent with the existence of such differences.

To quote the Supreme Court

"The people inhabiting this vast land profess different religions and speak different religions. and its languages. Despite the diversity of religion and language there runs through the fabric of the nation, the golden thread of a basic innate unity. It is a mosaic of different religious languages and cultures. Each of them has made a man on the Indian policy and India today represents a synthesis of them all."

Therefore Integration means the process of bringing together parts into a whole. A nation is a body of persons associated with a particular territory, a government a culture and social way of life and often a common language. National Integration would mean the process of bringing together or unifying the various parts With which a nation IS associated i.e. territory, government, culture, language etc. If we conceive of a Nation as a organism, Integration becomes its life essence; without Integration a Nation is nothing more than a mere assemblage of often warring x elements. In actual terms National Integration stands for identification between the members of the various regions, castes, creeds and colours and the strength of National Integration is commensurate with the depth of feelings of identification among the citizens,

Once our late prime-minister Smt. Indira Gandhi stated in reference to secularism

"Secularism means. neither religion nor indifference of religion but equal respect for all religions. not mere tolerance but positive respect. That great truth is inscribed on rocks of Ashoka that no man reverses his own reliqion unless he reverses others, religion also. India has been great and has risen high in those periods when this truth was acknowledged by her rules."

What Nehru explained in words Mahatma practised by including prayers of all religions in his daily public prayer. Now I quote Gandhiji's extremely, Illuminating words, "I do not want my house to be closed on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want cultures of all lands to be blown out and about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off roy feet by any of them. Mine is not the religion of prison house. It has room for the least among God's creation."

It is insured by all means that only National Integration and communal harmony will enable us to face the callous monster of poverty, illiteracy and other factors effecting social structure. India is a garden where we find flowers of different types, colours and fragrance. It should be our earnest desire to permit them all to flourish in full bloom.

As far as the concept of the word 'Secularism' is concerned, the people should have the clear cut concept of the word secularism. According to Machiavelli when religion and politics are separated, rulers become neutral and ruler is not concerned with anything else. This is the real state of being secular. Though apparently he may show that he has got religious instincts but, he should not be inclined towards any religious group or organization. In fact as far as secularism in India is concerned, it had no roots here. Indians did not know, what secularism is. Problem started with the debate, between the members of constituent assembly otherwise India is a socialistic democratic republic. In 1976 - word 'Secularism' was added in the constitution. It is evident that Secularism indicates towards tolerance. Because Machiavelli has pointed out that the tree of secularism indicates towards two branches (1) Religion, which reflects value system in personal capacity and (2) Politics, non-religious public sphere. So basically they point towards the different directions. Therefore for the maintenance of peaceful state having its own systematic law and order and religious freedom of expression, integrated approach of Machiavelli is very suitable.

Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi also from the beginning gave serious consideration to the question of communal harmony. It was on the invitation of a Muslim, Dada Abdullah, that he went to South Africa where in effect he began his profession and public career, and when he began his movement fighting for the grievances of Indians in South Africa, the majority of Indians were Muslims and of course there were Hindu's and Christians too. Therefore South Africa was a veritable microcosm of the religions and cultural diversity of the Indian homeland. Even earlier than this, as a school boy at Rajkot Gandhi ji got an early grounding in tolerance for all branches of Hinduism and sister religions; once he writes "These many things combined to inculcate in me a toleration for all faiths. Only Christianity was at the same time an exception. I developed a sort of dislike for it and for a reason."

Apart from Gandhiji Swami Vivekanand is the most unambiguous religious leader I know who combined positive secularism with adherence to this own religion of vedantic hinduism. He accepted the validity of all faiths and the authority of their founders. because he was certain that they all identical in their essence. However much they may differ in form or

presentation or details. To him, all religions provide the same sense of realisation, validating the ancient Rigvedic saying, EKAM SAT. VIPRA BAHUDHAH VADANTI god is one but wise men describe 'HIM' in several ways.

Therefore it should be taken into account that National Integration involves the basic oneness of the country. It is the cause of identity and solidarity among all citizens of the nation. Emotional Integration is an important and major component of National integration and has been considered as complete unification or merging of all diversities into a compact whole. In other words it has been nourished as a feeling of oneness which transcends and groups or cultural differences and synthesises different religions, caste and communities with varying languages into a compact whole. Speaking in October 1955 at Bangalore Pandit Nehru said - "We should not become provincial narrow minded provincial communal and caste minded because we have **great mission to perform. Let us** be the citizens of Republic of India stand straight with straight backs and look up at skies, keep in our feet firmly planted on the ground and bring about this synthesis'. this integration of Indian people. Political Integration has already taken place to some extent but what I am after is something much deeper than that we at an emotional integration might be welded into one and made into one strong National Unit maintaining at the same time all our wonderful diversity."

In the process of National Integration the concept of Multiculturalism and pluralism is also present which means the existence of different cultures and religions, under the protection and shelter of one word 'tolerance' for the identity of different religions and different viewpoints in society, that is the reason we have been talking about pluralism, where unity stands in diversity and this diversity has to be resistant and resistant diversity is the unique character of India. Therefore it is true to say that India stands for its tolerance and tolerance for diversity is pluralism. It has owned multiculturalism, an idea of not tolerating differences only but celebrating the differences. We have to celebrate the distinctive identities in our many societies. There are very serious dangers to multi-culturalism in society because cultures are anti woman, which contradict the modern concept of cultural life.

In fact in India we hardly know much about multiculturalism because of ignorance. We have communal and linguistic riots in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat and U.P. as well; who is responsible for it? Yet it is to be believed that this is a new problem and this is the problem for which probably in history, at least Indians are not responsible, rather foreigners and politicians etc encouraged it and to some extent religion and religious leaders are responsible for it. It was

for the imperialistic interests of the British rulers, that seeds of division were planted for their vested interests. May be the representation of violence by eminent scholars is not true to some extent. Perhaps there is no threat for further division of the country. No question of its being divided once more. Therefore National Integration way related to the another division of the country. India's progress is depending upon each section of society, may be rich or poor; hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christians or any other community existing in the country. U.S.A. inspite of being the super power, the strongest country in world has rejected 'POT-MELTING THEORY' and replaced it through 'SALAD BALL' THEORY as in Salad each item should be clear and identified, so should be the situation of each community in society. It must be given proper recognition and importance for the progress of the Nation. But the unfortunate part of the country is that the progress of the individual is taken differently from the progress of the Nation. British colonizers tried to develop the seeds of National disintegration because they realised that if they have to rule India, they have to divide India communally. Here in reference to National Integration one point has to be kept in mind that faults of the individual in a community should not be attributed to the other members of that community. (There is the example of Babri Masjid demolition). Even the history should not be exaggerated and distorted keeping in view the fact that it may cause communal violence and social interest because in no way the entire community could be held responsible for the misdeeds of the ancestors. It would be a preposition which no civilised community would appreciate and indulge En It would also be wise that state should not play any role in writing the history of the community, if it happens so, state reduces the interest of the common people in history.

After independence in 1947 when Pakistan came in existance, it was the religions basis of division as Md. Ali Jinnah demanded, a separate state for Muslim community, but it was a flop show, because once again Pakistan was divided into Bangladesh. So religious demand of division was not intelligent move. India too, at the time of framing of constitution has the opportunity to become 'HINDU STATE' but India made a right choice for the sake of its religious, neutral and scientific development and declared all religions are equal in constitution, instead of being called a theocratic state. Though India lost the opportunity for ever. As a matter of fact, India is committed to Integration, pluralism, culturalism and preservat'on of traditions at large India feels that the progress of the country largely depends on the progress of the distinctive communities. Diversity of India is an asset and it should be preserved. Of course media too can play a very important role by focusing positive points to common persons to

create harmony in society, because politicians do the jobs to divide the country in communities, religious groups etc, leaving aside the principle of tolerance, while ignorance become harmful to paralyse the social structure of the country. Therefore the concept of tolerance shall always be great Indian value. India will always remain united without a question mark on Integration, and no threat to National Integration shall be there.

Concluding Part

So it is wiser to know if we don't stand together we fall, and when we fall, hardly there remains full strength to regain the original strength. Where there is lack of strength, stamina and energy of the progress blocks, and when progress blocks on the basis of the caste, community, religion and spiritual thoughts, then nation can survive very long at its own, as the result conspiracies from the external forces begin to destabilize the peace and security of the nation. So for the progress and development of the country each countrymen should have the thought of 'Sir Syed Ahmed that we are one Nation'.