Chapter-1

Conceptualizing Nation and Nationalism

Fundamental Principles of Nation and Nationalism

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In common parlance, ‘Country’/ ‘State’\(^1\) is a populated, politically defined, geographical entity which has a government and a sovereign system; it is extensively recognized at international level. On the other hand, ‘Nation’ is a tightly knit large group of people who are psychologically united with one another through some homogeneity of their culture. ‘Country’ comes from Latin ‘contrata’, which implies ‘the landscape in front of one, the landscape lying opposite to the view’. The word ‘Nation’ is derived from Latin ‘Nation-/Natio’, which means ‘race, class of person’. In other words, nation is a culturally homogeneous group of people who share a common language, institutions, religion, and historical experience. The size of such a group is larger than a single tribe or community. A country significantly incorporates population, demarcated land, government, and sovereignty. Syed Ahmed Khan’s ‘One Country, Two Nations’ theory is based on the idea\(^2\) that a country may consist of more than one nation. When a nation of people has a State\(^3\) or country of their own, it is called a Nation-State\(^4\).

\(^1\) According to the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of the State (1933), a State must conform to the following criteria in order to exist: a permanent population, a defined territory, and a government capable of maintaining effective control over its territory and of conducting international relations with other States. This definition is given from an international perspective. The term ‘State’ is usually used interchangeably with country. “Country denotes a geographical territory, whereas State expresses a legitimized administrative and decision-making institution” (Chandra, Shailesh 30).

\(^2\) Before the partition of India, Syed Ahmed Khan in his famous speech “One Country, Two Nations” asserted that India had two nations- the Mohammedans and the Hindus. Because of their opposing cultures, they couldn’t be united, and formed two nations in one country. “It is worth notice how, when an agitation was started against cow-killing, the sacrifice of cows increased enormously, and religious animosity grew on both sides” (Khan 21).

\(^3\) A ‘State’ (with capital "S") is a self-governing political entity. A “state” (with a small "s") is usually a division of a federal State (such as the states of the United States of America).

\(^4\) It is usually said that the roots of Nation-State lie in the Treaty of Westphalia which was actually a pair of treaties negotiated in the Westphalian towns of Münster and Osnabrück and concluded on October 24, 1648. The Treaty of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648). Westphalian sovereignty is the concept of nation-state sovereignty based on two things: territoriality and the absence of a role for external agents in domestic structures.
To define ‘Nation’ with all its dimensions is problematic because “the very idea of a nation is never fixed/static, it is perpetually in the process of making or becoming” (Baral 66). There are a number of elements that promote the “collective self-consciousness” (Grosby 10) in the process of ‘making’ or ‘becoming’ of a nation, such as common race, common language, geographical unity, common religion, common history, common political aspirations, common interests, and common culture. In academic arena, various scholars have explored different aspects of the concept of nation from cultural, psychological, political, and ethnic points of view. According to Pradier-Fodere, “Affinity of race, community of language, of habits, of customs and religion are the elements which constitute the nation” (qtd. in Garner 46). Along the same lines, John William Burgess opines, “A nation is a population of ethnic unity, inhabiting a territory of geographical unity” (3). Johann Kaspar Bluntschli says, “Nation is a union of masses of men….bound together, especially by language and customs in a common civilization which gives them a sense of unity and distinction from all foreigners” (qtd. in Jaffrelot 53).

Being aware of the fluid nature of the concept of nation, Eric Hobsbawm says that it is problematic to tell the observer how to differentiate a nation from other entities a priori, “as we can tell him or her how to recognize a bird or to distinguish a mouse from a lizard. Nation watching could be simple if it could be like bird watching” (Nations and Nationalism 5). The elements that characterize a nation are varied – “ranging from mutual traditions and collective political awareness, common antecedents, affiliation to a tribe or people, joint territory, customs and language, culture and religion. Objections can be made to all these factors” (Karlsson 2). Within a nation, there may be differing views about its character; thus, for any nation there will be different and conflicting beliefs about it which become evident as political differences (Grosby 5). Grosby gives example of “disputes today in India”:

Some members of that nation have a narrow, intolerant view of their country by insisting that it should have only one religion, Hinduism; while others think that there should be freedom of religion such that Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians are rightly members of the nation. (5)
The formation of the nation is a highly subjective process. Nation is an ideological imaginative construction of a people that undoubtedly has its source in the elements which promote “collective self-consciousness” (10). For example, “The social bases of nationhood have included culture and history in France, language in Germany, ethnicity in Japan, and religion in Pakistan and Israel” (Parashar 5).

Under different circumstances, a nation may change its basic criteria of homogeneity. At one point of time, people “confronted with a given problematic situation” (Haldar 174) may form a nation, but they may constitute a different nation in another situation. No nation fit in to the ideal type “till the people are constrained and manipulated to conform to the nation…feeling of nationhood is a matter of degree, no rigid line can be drawn across the continuous spectrum specifying that those who are above the line belong to a nation and those below do not belong to that nation” (174). For example, at one time a Sikh resident of Punjab (India) may think himself to be a part of Indian nation during India’s confrontation with another country over territories, and under some other circumstances, the same resident may feel affinity for a ‘prospective’ Sikh nation.

There is no perfect benchmark for setting the contours of the term ‘nation’. The elements which promote ‘collective self-consciousness’ only outline the basic spirit of the concept and lead to a mere abstract idea. Every nation in the world is different from another nation because of its peculiarities prevalent among people and their ideological beliefs and views. So each nation thrives on its own description. It becomes difficult to confine the kaleidoscopic and panoramic scope of the nation within the confined walls of general definitions. Hugh Seton-Waston rightly concludes that “no scientific definition” of nation can be devised (5).

Nation presupposes some conditions. Without people, there will be no nation; nation is an example of collectivism. In the field of political philosophy, collectivism, according to Moyra Grant, is referred to as any philosophy or system that considers any kind of group (such as a class, nation, race, society, state, etc.) as more important than the individual (Chandra, Shailesh 44). The general objective of nationalism is that ‘a
people” be in the charge of their collective destiny. Being in charge involves the protection of “their identity and dignity of the group and the maintenance of its units” (Harris 4-5). The fact that a sense of collective identity is a precondition to a sense of nation is supported by expressions such as Fichte’s ‘an inseparable whole,’ Renan’s ‘common glories’ and ‘common will,’ Stalin’s ‘stable community of people,’ and Anderson’s ‘community’. Size is also a considerably significant aspect in this context. Category of any size cannot fulfil the demands of nation making. Nation is a group that “extends in numbers far beyond a single kinship community and in expanse far beyond a single locality” (Akzin 32-33).

The identification of ‘feeling of togetherness’ or ‘collective self-consciousness’ among people larger than a community outlines the psycho-spiritual concept of nation. The realization of ‘us’ which differs from ‘them’ makes the basis for the existence of a nation (Grosby 10). Thus, the very concept of nation works at psychological level and it finds its manifestation in nationalism. To be a nation, it is not mandatory for a people to be entirely homogeneous; they should be majorly homogeneous in those aspects which are ‘national’ according to them. Most importantly, they must have the feeling/realization of sameness on account of some homogeneity among ‘their’ people and separateness from ‘other’ people. In other words, the people of a nation feel ‘similarities’ among themselves and ‘dissimilarities’ from others. A people’s will of being a part of nation is the core component of the entity of a nation. It can be said that the constructive ideological imagination of being a nation works at psychological and emotional level of a people, who might be different in a number of ways and aspects. If those people think, believe, and feel that they are a nation, they are a nation. “In principle national being is defined by a homogeneity which encompasses diversity: however individual members of the nation may differ, they share essential attributes that constitute their national identity; sameness overrides difference” (Handler 6).

The significance of the faith in “territorial self-determination for the group” (Barrington 712) remains at the centre of most of the definitions of nation. Nations are unique and different from other social groups as “they are collectives united by shared cultural features (myths, values, etc.) and the belief in the right to territorial self-
determination” (713). There are a number of social groups such as religious groups, ethnic groups, or even professional associations that hold common myths, values, and symbols. “But nations are not just unified by culture; they are unified by a sense of purpose: controlling the territory that the members of the group believe to be theirs” (713). Smith also says, “A nation must occupy a homeland of its own, at least for a long period of time, in order to constitute itself as a nation” (Key Concepts 12).

The roots of the concept of nation lie in “tendency of humanity to divide itself into distinct, and often conflicting, groups” (Grosby 1) and also in unifying tendency when human beings “engage in activities in which it seems not to matter who were their parents, where they were born, or what language they speak” (4). Nations are a result of numerous historical processes; they have historical antecedents. Such antecedents are not merely facts but memories that may not be factually accurate and “that are shared among each of those many individuals who are members of the nation about the past of their nation, including about those earlier societies” (8). Every nation views its own past distinctively, which makes it different from other nations. Grosby uses the term “temporal depth” for the component of time “when an understanding of the past forms part of the present” (8). Besides, “central to the existence of the nation is the tendency of humanity to form territorially distinct societies, each of which is formed around its own cultural traditions of continuity” (11). Therefore, nation is formed around shared traditions about a “spatially situated past” (10).

Feeling of belonging to a nation is not innate. It develops in the society through a continuous process of learning and habit forming based on social communication (Haldar 175). Jana Balázová says that national identity seems to be the basic human identity for most people. She adds that identification with a particular nation serves as the basis for a fulfilled human existence, providing security, possibilities for personal development, and defense against real or imagined dangers and enemies. The concept of nation lies in self-determination. And, the rhetoric of nationalism is based upon the idea that the peace and security of the world is the outcome of the freedom and security of every nation as a member of the world’s great family of nations (Balázová).
Nation finds its manifestation in nationalism. Nationalism is not an entity; it cannot be seen, but felt. It finds its manifestation in national activities. In other words, nationalism is the spirit of a nationality. It is a kind of political consciousness of belonging to a group. “Nationalism in its broader meaning refers to the attitude which ascribes to national individuality a high place in the hierarchy of values” (Seligman 231). J.S. Mill also says:

It is, in general, a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of government should coincide in the main with those of nationality…Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force, there is a prima facie case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart. (qtd. in Smith Theories 9)

To match national and political borders acts as the basic motif behind the phenomenon of nationalism and it is considered that the nation-state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organisation.

Nationalism is considered both a negative and positive concept in the political and philosophical debates. If it became the inspiring factor for the struggle of independence in many countries, it was also responsible for the disastrous wars and international fallouts in the world history. Nationalism, which is a sentiment often based on some ideology, is a mark of identity for many people.

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5 “Nationalism refers to a set of beliefs about the nation” (Grosby 5).
6 “Love that one has for one’s nation is designated by the term patriotism… It (Patriotism) need not reject differing conceptions of the nation held by members of the nation, as nationalism often does. For e.g. - when one divides the world into two irreconcilable and warring camps- one’s own nation in opposition to all other nations- where the latter are viewed as one’s implacable enemies, then, in contrast to patriotism, there is the ideology of the nationalism. Nationalism repudiates civility and the differences that it tolerates by attempting to eliminate all differing views and interests for the sake of one vision of what the nation has been and should be. For example, a French nationalism might consist of the belief that to be a good member of the French nation, one must hate everything English and German; and anyone who does not, isn’t ‘truly’ French” (Grosby 16-17).

According to Ashis Nandy, patriotism does not define any specific territoriality (sort of a naturalism) whereas nationalism is “more specific, ideologically tinged, ardent form of ‘love of one’s kind’ that is essentially ego-defensive and overlies some degree of fearful dislike or positive hostility to ‘outsiders.’ It is ego-defensive because it is often a reaction to the inner, unacknowledged fears of atomization or psychological homelessness induced by the weakening or dissolution of primordial ties and growing individuation, alienating work and the death of vocations, in turn brought about by technocratic capitalism, urbanization and industrialization” (“Nationalism, Genuine and Spurious” 3502).
Gellner says, “Nationalism is a political principle that holds that national (Nation) and political units (State) should be congruent” (1). He says that neither nations nor States exist at all times and in all circumstances. Moreover, nations and States are not the same contingency. For this coming together of State and nation, there are clearly three pre-conditions—there should be a state; there should be a nation; and finally, there should be nationalism to tell the other two that they are meant for each other and cannot live without each other. Pre-modern world may have occasionally thrown up nation-like formations (Kurds, Somalis or even Marathas and Rajputs in medieval India), but they were rare and did not always fulfill all the conditions of forming a nation.

Various scholars have explored the different aspects of the concept of nationalism. David Miller in “Defence of Nationality” sums up nationalism in three claims: “that a national identity is a defensible source of personal identity, that nations are ethical communities imposing reciprocal obligations on members which are not vowed to outsiders, and that nations have a good claim to be politically self-determining” (6). Kellas in The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity speaks of three general approaches that define nationalism: ethnic nationalism, civic or social nationalism, and state or official nationalism. He knows that “these categories are in practice not always mutually exclusive” (65-66). Ethnic nationalism refers to ideology or movement of ethnic groups who perceive sameness through common history, language, race, territory, or other elements of culture or in other words the tradition they inherit and who have nation-state as one of their main goals. These people with same ethnicity struggle to preserve their ethnic identity, which is mainly based on common descent and language. Membership of ethnicity is hereditary and in this case, homeland is politically projected to be State. Ethnic nationalism is influenced by the views of Herder and Fichte. Civic or social nationalism has social ties and culture at its centre. Represented by the will of people, it is democratic in spirit as it vests sovereignty in all citizens. It is influenced by the ideas of Rousseau in The Social Contract. Outsiders such as immigrants and diasporas can also join this kind of nationalism by adopting and following the ways of culture and society. Official nationalism covers the nationalism of state; it includes all those who are legally entitled to be citizens, irrespective of their
ethnic group, national identity and culture. Official nationalism is promoted by the state (through an official language and other state-sanctioned symbols) to cultivate and maintain the dominance of a specific nation (Kellas) and (Cruz Fernández). Hans Kohn in *The Idea of Nationalism, A Study in its Origins and Background* suggests a classification of nationalism: Western and Non-western nationalism. With the spirit of democracy and individualism, Western or Liberal nationalism developed in France and Britain. On the other hand, Non-Western and more-chauvinistic type is traced outside of Western Europe, especially in Germany. It gave importance to collective and the primordial characteristics of the nation (330-342).

Guichard says that in nationalism four elements- movement, feeling, ideology, and discourse- are linked. She says, “A political movement defends an ideology with the help of a discourse, which can be used to arouse certain sentiments” (14). She writes about Brubaker’s terms of ‘state seeking’ and ‘nation shaping’ nationalism. In ‘state seeking’ sociopolitical phenomenon, members of a nation try to attain “a certain amount of sovereignty” or “political autonomy” (15). ‘Nation shaping’ nationalism hopes “to establish an identity between the existing state and their idea of a nation to which they believe, this state corresponds only imperfectly”. She says, “In countries that have been colonized, nationalist movements started as ‘state seeking’ and became ‘nation shaping’ after decolonization”.

Nation and Nationalism are abstract concepts; they loosely depend upon the criteria by which culturally homogeneous people locate themselves among other non-nations and by what they perceive as national. “There are as many as definitions of nation, nationality, nationalism because there are fundamentally different attitudes towards their real bases. Their explanation remains a matter of dispute, with no end foreseeable in the near future (Balázová)” No definition of nation and nationalism is universally accepted and absolute that can be applied to a literary text without raising doubts and debates. Therefore, it is important to formulate a working definition of nation and nationalism. It is proposed that Nation and nationalism, to conclude, may have one or more of the following important components at centre- Will (Renan), Culture (Stalin), Ideology (Gellner), Imagination (Anderson), and ethnies (Smith).
In the complex and contested field of the study of nationalism, the following are the main schools of thought: the Primordialists, the Perennialists, the Modernists, and the Ethnosymbolists.

The Primordialists favour the antiquity and naturalness of nations. They believe that nationality is an integral ‘natural’ part of human life; it is “as natural as speech, sight or smell, and that nations have existed from time immemorial” (Ozkirimli 49). The Perennialists also believe in the presence of nations since time immemorial, but they differentiate themselves from the Primordialists by asserting that nations do not constitute natural phenomenon but historical and social phenomenon (Guichard 9).

Anthony D. Smith coined the term ‘ethnosymbolism’ to advocate his views on the subject. He said that there is too much gap between premodern and modern communities to claim that modern nations are the result of incremental changes that took place in the former. He adds, “there is considerable evidence that modern nations are connected with earlier ethnic categories and communities and created out of pre-existing origin myths, ethnic cultures and shared memories” (Smith “Memory and Modernity” 385). The basic idea is that even if nationalism is a modern phenomenon connected to the emergence of the Enlightenment and the political ideas of the French Revolution, nations themselves are not modern but are the continuation of earlier forms of cultural identity- ethnies. “Modernity created the structural conditions in which nationalism could become an ideology of modern nations built round this ancient ethnic core” (Harris 49). Smith focuses on nations’ origin in pre-modern forms of ethnies (the French word to refer to ethnic groups), a kind of “socio-cultural organization”. He says, ethnies are “named human populations with shared ancestry mythys, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity” (Smith “Structure and Persistence of Ethnie” 27).

Modernists posit that nations and nationalisms are the outcome of modernity and have been created as means to political and economic ends. Modernist theorists

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7 Smith was a student of Ernest Gellner (Harris 52).
generally focus on the constructed realities of nations and consider nationalism to be the ideological structure used to invent nations. Or, as Ernest Gellner says, “It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round” (Gellner 55). According to Anderson’s ‘modernist’ view, the roots of the notion of ‘nation’ originated in the end of the 18th century. Gellner sees nationalism’s relation with industrialism in Western Europe. And, Elie Kedourie relates nationalism with the ideas of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the birth of the centralized French state.

Even before the age of nationalism, we find individuals who profess sentiments akin to nationalism. But these sentiments are confined to individuals. These masses never feel their own life-culturally, politically, or economically- to depend upon the fate of the national body. Danger from the outside may arouse a passing feeling of national cohesion, as it happened in Greece during the Persian Wars or in France in the Hundred Years Wars. But as a rule, wars before the French Revolution didn’t arouse deep national emotions. In the Peloponnesian War, Greeks bitterly fought Greeks. In religious and dynastic wars of early modern times, Germans fought against Germans, and Italians against Italians, without any realization of the ‘fratricidal’ nature of the act. Even as late as the eighteenth century, soldiers and civilians in Europe entered the service of ‘foreign’ rulers and served them often with a loyalty and faithfulness which proved the absence of any national sentiment. (Kohn The Idea of Nationalism 16-17)

Ernest Gellner, who leads the modernist school, in his book Nations and Nationalism (1983) writes that nations are best understood in the spirit of nationalism. Contrary to the popular belief, it is not nations that lead to nationalism, but that nations are created by nationalism. Nations are not the product of some antiquity or the working of some distant historical forces but they are the creation of nationalism, “in alliance with certain other factors”. In the words of Gellner, “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” (qtd. in Harris 52). If nationalism “engenders nations” (Gellner 55) and nationalism is a modern ideology that can be dated only as far back as the French Revolution, then nations are
novel and not the culmination of the existence of ethnie (“the working of some distant historical forces”).

What came to life first – Nation or Nationalism? This query is almost like the hen-and-egg riddle. The dichotomy has become a sterile framework for explaining nationalism. Both the positions that once triggered and further inspired discourse on nation and nationalism have increasingly become entrenched and poles apart. So major academia would like to move beyond (Hearn 7).

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It is usually said that the theory of nation and nationalism does not have its own grand thinkers. “Unlike other ‘isms’, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers” (Anderson 5). The idea of the nation is rooted in the Enlightenment8 and based on the ideas of the French political thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1772-78) (Harris 22). Rousseau in Discourse on Inequality (1755) wrote that human beings, having evolved from a state of nature into communal living based on shared customs and a single way of life, could be expected to feel affection only for members of their own societies, not for the whole human race (Parashar 15). In The Social Contract (1762), Rousseau wrote that men faced the danger of “the possible tyranny of will by his fellowmen” while living in society. In order to cope with it, it was important for men to exchange their selfish will for “the general will” by becoming “citizens” and ceasing to be natural men. Natural men were self-centered, whereas citizens depended on the community of which they were a part. General will favoured general good over private interest (Ozkirimli 12). It was “the voice of all for the good of all” (Wayper 144).

Rousseau’s contribution is significant in the conceptualization of the early notion of democracy as a community of citizens with equal rights irrespective of their socio-economic position. This does not necessarily suggest a particular cultural community but could, in principle, be grouping based on some kind of shared interests,

8 “A 17th and 18th c. trend in philosophy and literature, rooted in faith in the power of human reason” (Shipley 100). It was developed in Western Europe.
such as class (Harris 22). Since humanity is organized along cultural lines, however ill-defined or artificial they may be, a united community of equal citizens became the basis of the national self-determination doctrine (22). Notably, Rousseau is one of the greatest thinkers whose views are said to have influenced\(^9\) the French Revolution (1789), a revolution which “created nationalism by inadvertence” (Thompson, David 51). According to the revolutionaries, “the people were sovereign and they owed no allegiance to any government that didn’t derive their sovereignty from the nation. This subversive doctrine helped to influence the rise of nationalism” (Choudhury, Nina Roy 3).

“The link between the Enlightenment and German Romanticism\(^10\) was provided by the German thinker Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803)” (Ozkirimli 13). Rousseau expressed his views as a Frenchman, whose country had witnessed a long history of political independence, whereas Herder wrote as a German, a people divided between over one hundred jurisdictions (Parashar 18).

Herder, repudiating the French assumption that they were the leaders and bearers of a civilization that had universal validity, believed that humanity had its roots in and derived its values from a member of national cultures, each of which had its own virtues and no one of which could rightly lay claims to universality. He said that each culture was influenced and shaped by the physical environment in which it developed, by language of its people, and by the forms of education through which customs, traditions, and values were passed on to younger generations. Herder used the term *Volk* to describe each community that had an identifiable culture and he was willing to apply this name liberally to communities of the most varied sizes and characteristics. Each *Volk* had its own specific traits that were to be understood and appreciated of their own rather than weighed in the balance of contemporary values and found wanting (Parashar 18-19). Yet there was no *Favorit-Volk* in Herder’s scheme of things. He said, “No

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9 Napoleon once said that The French Revolution could not take place without Rousseau. But, Historians like C.D. Hazen and Thompson believe that it was ‘revolutional situation’, which originated on account of the vices of political, social, economic, and religious aspects of national life, that led to the revolution. “The French revolution has been frequently ascribed to the influence of the philosophers or writers of the eighteen century. This is putting the cart before horse” (Hazen 88-89).

10 “The German romantic idea claimed that the identity of a distinctive cultural community can be explored, discovered and investigated, and that humanity was divided into nations with specific characteristics of which the language was the most important marker. It is the combination of Rousseau’s political nation with the romantic’s cultural one that contemporary nationalisms promote” (Harris 24).
nationality has been solely designated by God as the chosen people of the earth; above all we must seek the truth and cultivate the garden of the common good” (Ozkirimli 14).

Herder laid special emphasis on language as it “bears the stamp of the mind and character of a national group” (13).

Has a nationality anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In this language dwell its whole world of tradition, history, religion and principles of life, its whole heart and soul. To rob a nationality of its language or to degrade it, is to deprive it of its most precious possession. (qtd. in Ozkirimli 13)

Language made us human, according to Herder. “Crudely put, we know what we feel only when we know how to express it to ourselves” (Harris 25).

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1864), Kant’s disciple and a German romanticist, gave his most explicit ideas on nationalism in *Addresses to the German Nation*, delivered between 1807 and 1808. He tried to instil unity and the proud feeling of superiority in the Germans. He said:

I want to gather…from over the whole of our common soil men of similar sentiments and resolutions, to link them together, so that at this central point a single, continuous, and unceasing flame of patriotic disposition may be kindled, which will spread over the whole soil of the fatherland to its utmost boundaries.” (qtd. in Ozkirimli 14)

He believed that the Germans were the *Urvolk*, the original people who were capable of real and rational love for their nation and who had responsibility towards the rest of the world to create the perfect State. For him, culture and language of German people made them unique and special. Language was not important only in the case of the Germans. “Those who speak the same language”, Fichte said, “are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself, long before any human art begins” (14).

He added:

It is true beyond doubt that, wherever a separate language is found, there a separate nation exists, which has the right to take independent charge
of its affairs and to govern itself...where a people has ceased to govern itself, it is equally bound to give up its language and to coalesce with conquerors. (qtd. in Ozkirimli 15)

Apart from it, Fichte’s notion of self-recognition is linked with nations. According to him:

Just as persons are understood as unitary in prototypical modern thought, so are nations held to be integral. In general, each nation is understood as indivisible (literally, thus, individual) and as the bearer of a distinctive identity. Each nation had a distinct experience and character, something special to offer the world and something special to express for itself. ‘Nations are individualities with particular talents and the possibilities of exploiting those talents’. To be a ‘historical nation’, in Fichte’s phrase, was to succeed in this process of individuation and to achieve a distinctive character, mission, and destiny. Other nations lacked sufficient vigour or national character: they were destined to be failures and consigned to the backwaters of history. (Calhoun Nationalism 45)

With the views of Rousseau, Herder, and Fichte, the idea of nation and nationalism started acquiring a visible shape.

From Rousseau’s insistence that a free self-governing state could only be achieved if it were based on the consensus of a community, through Herder’s historicism and claim that each culture had its own virtues, to be nourished by the protection of political nationhood, we moved to Fichte’s extraordinary claims about the special virtues of German culture and his vision that the Germans of the future might impose these virtues on the entire world. (Parashar 24)

The essay “What is a Nation?” (1882) by Earnest Renan marked an innovative perception on the subject. First, Renan listed the elements that were not essential to nation making. According to him, race, language, and religion were not essential to a nation. Race, originally crucial, was gradually becoming less important. In addition, language, though it invited people to unite, did not force them to do so. Likewise,
religion, he said, couldn’t supply an adequate basis for the constitution of a modern nation either. He added that a nation was a spiritual principle and it was a spiritual family, not a group determined by the shape of the earth. Two things were necessary to constitute this spiritual principle— the past and the present. “One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present day consent, the desire to live together” (277).

In 1912, Joseph Stalin in his essay “Marxism and the National Colonial Question” defined nation as “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” (Stalin 20). He said that a nation essentially required all these characteristics to be present together.

Renan’s view of nation has been criticized because it involves various non-nations as well. According to it, any self-conscious group with some degree of living together (e.g. college friends who have been living together in hostel since school days) could be called a nation. On the other hand, Stalin’s definition, based on common language and territory, does not fit in the case of the Jews in the early 20th century (If considered as a nation!), who were scattered through Europe and America and had no territory they could call their own, despite the fact that they shared religious beliefs and sense of belongingness. If we consider the example of the Jews only an exception among others, Stalin’s definition of nation emerges as a correction of and extension to Renan’s idea of nation.

The most important book on nation/nationalism, in recent times, is Imagined Communities by Benedict Anderson, who suggests that nations were not the determinate products of sociological conditions; they had been ‘imagined’ into existence everywhere in the world. To quote Anderson, “It (Nation) is an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 6). It is imagined as “[t]he members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). It is ‘limited’ in the sense that it has a limit, beyond which lies other nations; it cannot incorporate the entire world. There must be another
nation/non-nation against which self-definition of one nation can be constructed. Nation is imagined as ‘sovereign’ because the concept of nation was developed in the late eighteenth century, “in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm…nations dream of being free…The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state”(7). Finally, it is imagined as a community because the nation is always “conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” regardless of “the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each” (7). Nations hold such power and imaginations that a lot of killing and sacrifice is also witnessed in the name of national duty. Further, in war, national citizens are equal and class boundaries are eroded in the communal struggle for national cause.

Anderson says that the rise of nationalism was intimately connected with the development of ‘print capitalism’ together with the development of a national language. Capitalist entrepreneurs printed their books and media in the vernacular (instead of exclusive script languages such as Latin) in order to maximize profits. As a result, readers speaking various local dialects were empowered to understand one another, and a common discourse emerged.

Anderson considered Asian and African nationalisms to be a modern phenomenon, inspired by European Enlightenment and Romanticism in an economic environment prospered by industrial capitalism. According to him, the post Enlightenment European phenomenon reached Asia and Africa through colonization and imperialism, and it provided platform for the ‘making’ of nation through western education and the introduction of print capitalism. It created an intelligentsia who selected their models from the ‘official nationalism’ of European or American histories, which ‘were copied, adopted, and improved upon’.

Scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and T. Mayer have criticized Anderson’s views in Imagined Communities. Mayer analyses the book from feminist perspective and remarks that expressions like ‘fraternity experienced by members of a nation’ and ‘comradeship’ bring with them connotations of masculine solidarity. It is argued that Anderson envisions ‘a hetero-male project…imagined as a brotherhood’ ignoring gender, class, and racial structures at inter and intra community levels (6).
Partha Chatterjee says that Anderson’s idea of nationalism “in the framework of universal history” is Euro-centric (Chatterjee “Whose Imagined Communities?” 4). “He (Anderson) argues that the historical experience of nationalism in Western Europe, in the Americas, and in Russia had supplied for all subsequent nationalisms a set of modular forms from which nationalists elites in Asia and Africa had chosen the ones they liked” (5). Chatterjee says that Anderson views the citizens of post-colonial world as “perpetual consumers of modernity”, and he leaves nothing for the colonies to imagine. “Even our imaginations must remain forever colonised” (6).

Chatterjee believes that nationalism is more complex and richer phenomenon than it is viewed by Anderson. According to him, Anderson is undermining the contribution of the colonized in the forming of modern nations. Moreover, anti-colonial nationalism in India and Africa is not modelled “on an identity but rather on a difference with the ‘modular’ forms of the national society propagated by the modern west” (5). He cites the example of India, where nationalism “proper began in 1885 with the formation of the Indian National Congress” (5). Prior to that, it was the period of “social reform” from the 1820s to the 1870s, when the colonial interference “with the customs and institutions of a traditional society” began in the name of modernization. A decade before 1885, it was a period of preparation when several political associations were formed.

Chatterjee asserts that anti-colonial nationalism created its own “spiritual”/“inner” domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it began its political battle with the imperial power. He refers to the second phase of social reform when, although the need for change was not disputed, there was “a strong resistance to allowing the colonial state to intervene in matters affecting ‘national culture’” (6). He says, “[T]he second phase, in my argument, was already the period of nationalism” (6). Then Chatterjee proceeds to give examples of the other ‘spiritual’ domain in Bengal. He adds that Bengali language had stronghold despite the imposition of English as the language of the state.

The Bilingual intelligentsia came to think of its own language as belonging to that inner domain of cultural identity, from which the
colonial intruder had to be kept out; language therefore became a zone over which the nation first had to declare its sovereignty and then had to transform in order to make it adequate for modern world. (7)

The cultural elite, who were bilingual, subsequently took steps to bring Bengali into modern usage. Chatterjee does not object to Anderson’s focus on language, but he says that in the case of Bengal, it is not the language of the state (English) that influenced nationalism, but Bengali, an indigenous language. This is a fundamental dissimilarity between Indian nationalism and European nationalism. Almost similar is the case with drama that continued to promote ‘national culture’ in the form of language and Sanskrit traditions and which “fail to meet the standards set by the modular literary form adopted from Europe” (8).

**Indian Nation and Nationalism**

(1)

Nation is a fluid term; it may change its scope and meaning with time, place, and point of view. The use of the word ‘Rashtra’ (means ‘Nation’ in Hindi/Sanskrit) has been defined differently in the old religious books. Dr C.P. Arya quotes such examples in Sanskrit, according to which nation is a particular land in which people interact through a particular language. Or, nation is a State with animals, wealth, minerals, etc. (Arya 3). At present, the term ‘nation’ is used in a different sense; it is clearly differentiated from the other terms such as ‘country’/ ‘State’, ‘Nation-State’, and ‘state’.

The question arises whether the idea of Indian nation is historical or modern. Let us have a glance at the historical acceptance of the concept in India. In India, the British imperialists acknowledged India not as a nation but as a sub-continent. In this regard, the statement of Sir John Strachey is very important:

This is the first and most essential thing to learn about India- that there is not and never was an India or even any country of India, possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social.
or religious: no Indian nation, no ‘people of India’, of which we hear so much. (qtd. in Kumar, Raj 57)

In addition, Sir John Seeley remarks, “…the notion that India is a nationality rests upon that vulgar error which political science principally aims at eradicating (254). He adds, “India is not a political name, but only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. It does not mark the territory of a nation and a language, but the territory of many nations and many languages” (257).

The imperialists do not believe that the foreign rule was exploitative; they rather view it as ‘the White man’s burden’ (Kipling). According to them, protest against colonialism was manipulated by the elite for their narrow interests or the interests of their like-minded groups. However, such views are criticized for their implicit political motives. The British imperialists needed a class of Indian intellectuals who were meek and docile in their attitude towards the British, but full of hatred towards their fellow citizens.¹¹ To fulfill their petty political motives, they understood that Indians were to be taught that they were a deeply conservative and fatalist people—genetically predisposed to irrational superstitions and mystic belief systems. Besides, Indians had no concept of nation, national feelings, or history (Mathur and Singh 20). They did not have knowledge.¹² Thus, the Imperialist view of Indian nation/nationalism has been viewed as a part of the larger political discourse which was meant for the conditioning of the Indian mind by the colonial power.¹³

This Imperialist view of India as a non-nation can be refuted on political grounds. However, it does not prove that India is/was a nation. Contrary to the imperialists, the followers of the Hindu Nationalist view believe that India has always been a nation since ancient times. To support their view, they claim that India is

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¹¹ “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern: a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Macaulay).

¹² “All the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England” (Macaulay).

¹³ Foucault says that one, who is in the possession of power, can create ‘knowledge’.
originally a land of Hindus. They go back to ‘the history’ of India. In the words of Jana Balázová, history is the most important factor in creating the nation itself. Real or invented, myths and historic sense of territory - all belonging to the psychological dimension of the phenomenon - are preserved, sheltered, discovered, revitalized, or even invented in the creation of strong, sound national feelings on the part of the members of each particular nation (Balázová).

The Hindu Nationalists explain that the name ‘India’ is derived from the river Indus, the valleys around which were the homes of early settlers. The Aryan worshippers referred to the river Indus as the Sindhu. The Persian invaders converted it into the Hindu. The name ‘Hindustan’ combines Sindhu and Hindu, and thus referring to the land of the Hindus. The Aryans who have inhabited India over the last 3000 or more years formed both a conception of Indian nationhood and a distinct civilizational continuity. Hindu Nationalists rely upon various scriptures to strengthen their view of India as an ancient Nation. They claim, “The British certainly contributed to the political re-unification of the land, just as the Mughals had done before that. But they unified politically an existing civilization entity. This entity had existed long before they came, had been politically re-united in the past, and will exist long after they have gone” (Sanu).

Hindu nationalism defines the nation’s boundaries by adopting reverence to a particular religion as criterion... This unification is seen as a necessity against ‘enemies’ threatening the Hindu nation: Muslims and Christians as well as the West or, rather, the Westernization of values and the western way of life... The Hindu nationalist discourse presents an ethnic view of nationality... Hindu nationalism is often called communalism... (Guichard 18)

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14 New Historicism amply epitomizes that meaning/idea keeps on changing with the passage of time. It emphasizes that there is no ‘history’ in the sense of a narrative of indisputable past events. Rather, the New Historicism claims that there is only our version - our narrative, our representation of the past. In this view, each age projects its own views on the past; historians may mistakenly think that they are revealing the past, but they reveal only their own historical situation and their personal preferences. Thus, there is no single authentic history.

15 The Vishnu Purana states that ‘To the north of the oceans and the south of the Himalayas lies the land of Bharata, inhabited by Bharatis.’ The entire land was therefore called Bharatavarsa and its inhabitants were collectively known as Bharati(ya)s from very ancient times, and this fact of being one nation and one people was always present in the consciousness of all Indians (Talageri 13).
Nationalist leaders associated with this theory were Lajpat Rai, Bankim Chandra, and Aurobindo Ghosh.

The authenticity of the Aryans as the real Indians, upon which the Hindu Nationalist view is primarily based, is questioned and challenged\(^\text{16}\); interestingly, the Aryan invasion theory is also used in support of the colonizer by Max Muller\(^\text{17}\). The gaps in the past cannot lead to absolute history. Thus, it is debatable to claim that India has been a nation since ancient times. In India, nation and nationalism, in terms of its collective consciousness, is not very old, says Khushwant Singh in *India: An Introduction*. He writes that the Persinas under Cyrus, followed by Darius I (521-485 BC.) were the first to take advantage of the weakened frontier of Indian sub-continent. “Darius overran the Indus Valley. He recruited Punjabi soldiers in his army” (137). In “Advent of Islam,” he adds:

> The most decisive cause of Hindu defeat was Hindu disunity. Hindus were always eager to see their own enemies destroyed even if they knew that their own destruction would follow as a matter of course. This led to the defeat of Prithvi Raj, and then of his rival, Raja Jai Chand. Even in the field of battle, the Hindus would not have a unified command and fought under their respective chieftains. Desertion by one chief became a rout. (160-161)

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\(^{16}\) The Aryan Invasion theory states that the Aryans were not the real and actual inhabitants of India. They invaded Dravidian India in ancient times. It means that ‘just as the British and the Muslim invaders came from outside, so also the Aryan Invaders came from outside. Hence, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are equally foreign to India; or, conversely, all three are equally Indian’ (Talageri 2-3). Apart from it, “As a sociological historian, Ambedkar did not accept the hypothesis of an Aryan invasion of India. ‘I don’t realize that in the ancient vedic and Sanskrit literature there is no explicit mention of an invasion of north-west India by foreigners round about the second millennium B.C. Nevertheless, on philosophic grounds, the views of the western scholars appear more appealing to me.’ Ambedkar had forcefully put forward the views that the Sudras were not dark-skinned aboriginals enslaved or subordinated by the Aryan invaders but they too were Aryans who belonged to Kshatriya solar dynasty.

> The subordinate status of the Sudras was brought about by a bloody battle between Sudras, the Shudra kind, and Vasishta. Due to social vicissitudes and changes of fortune, they became degraded from their Kshatriya status. The vedic king Sudras, son of Divodasa Atithigva, is regarded by Ambedkar as a Sudras on the basis of Mahabharata, Santiparva (Chapter LX). The Purusha Sukta, the Vedic charter for the subordinate status of the Shudras is regarded by Ambedkar as a ‘later interpolation’ ” (Bagulia 50).

\(^{17}\) “Max Muller used the narrative of Aryan invasion to argue that the modern day colonizing Europeans were actually Aryans returning to India for a second time to be united with their Hindu ‘Brethren’ who too had come as colonisers thousands of years ago” (Chattopadhyay 5). Muller believed that the English colonisers (the Aryans) had returned “to accomplish the glorious work of civilization, which had been left unfinished by their Aryan Brethren”. “This theory of racial unity between the white colonisers and the Hindu colonized was received with tremendous enthusiasm in Bengal and provided a strong fillip to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Hindu nationalism” (5).
If we look at the shaping of political lines of the Indian subcontinent in the past, we find that its territorial boundaries were defined partly by the colonial conquest and administration and partly by the strong dynastic states that ruled the place from time to time (Maurya, Gupta, and Mughal Empires). The Islamic culture flourished in the pockets of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab during the Mughal times. There was already Brahmaminical culture that has now various theories about its origin and dissemination. With the advent of the British, English language and new high culture first of all developed in three Presidencies (Madras, Bengal, and Bombay), and later in the provinces of U.P. and Punjab. The national movement in the 19th century onwards had a difficult time to reconcile the dividing lines of cultural pluralism of the sub-continent. Khushwant Singh says, “Indians had never been a nation: they had been divided by religion, race, caste and language; the vast mass of the people were indifferent and frequently hostile to the princes and the nobility who monopolised leadership” (207). He further adds that “The English conquered India with the help of the Indians; Madrasi militia against the Marathas, Bengalis and Biharis against the Sikhs, Sikhs and Punjabi Muslims against the rest” (207).

Bipan Chandra comes up with another ‘secular’ kind of view. In his words, the Indian Nation is the product of a historical process and has been therefore in the making for very long, at least some five centuries. The roots of India’s nationhood lie deep in its history and in its experience of the struggle for independence. Elements of political, administrative, and economic unity had developed especially under the Mughals. A feeling of Indianness, however vague, had come into being, as testified by the currency of the concepts of Bharat Varsha and Hindustan. After the independence, the linguistic reorganization of the states, integration of the tribals, and regionalism and regional inequality helped in the consolidation of India as a Nation (Chandra, Bipan India After Independence 83).

Lokmanya Tilak was the first to say that India was a nation in making. He said, “True, we are not, but we are becoming a nation” (qtd. in Chandra, Bipan Essays on Indian Nationalism 47). Nation in Making was the title of the autobiography by Surendranath Banerjee, one of the founders of the Indian national movement. Therefore, there was consciousness about the process of becoming a nation, during the freedom
struggle. “This notion of consolidation of Indian people into one people on the basis of the acceptance of the full flowering of this diversity- this was a very important part of the vision of Indian freedom struggle” (47).

To sum up, it is very complex to explore the idea of nation in the context of India. Nation, a psychological and spiritual abstraction, cannot be defined in absolute terms. The very concept is a construction, which simply alludes to a vortex of ideas given by various scholars and critics in the development of history.

The very discourse of nation-nationalism is western in its origin and development. Partha Chatterjee points out the imitative and at the same time hostile nature of Indian nationalism to the western models of nation/nationalism. He considers it contradictory when the third world nations such as India follow the theories of the western nationalism. Such postcolonial nations remain dominated by the very structure of power from which they seek to free themselves. In his essay “Nationalism as a Problem in the History of Political Ideas”, he states:

It is both imitative and hostile to the models it imitates… It is imitative in that it accepts the value of the standards set by the alien culture. But involves a rejection: -in fact, two rejections, both of them ambivalent-rejection of the alien intruder and dominator who is nevertheless to be imitated and surpassed by his own standards and rejection of ancestral ways which are seen as obstacles to progress and yet also cherished as marks of identity. (Chatterjee Omnibus 2)

For example, the Hindu College, which was established with the efforts of Raja Rammohun Roy and a Christian humanist David Hare in Bengal in 1817, promoted European science and literature through English language. Initially, it diminished all hopes for the revival of Vedic culture in the way Dayanand desired. Since European literature and outlook was liberal and passionate for ‘political liberty’, “the English education helped the cause of nationalism…first in Bengal, because it was at Plassey that British rule was established and Calcutta remained the first city of British India for more than one hundred years” (Gupta, Subodh Chandra Sen 14-15). Gupta particularly mentions the contribution of three English educated Indians who brought significant
changes in the mind and heart of Indian society; these men were Michael Madhusudan Datta, Rajnarayan Bose, and Bhudev Mukherji.

The beginnings of English education in Bengal, particularly in the Hindu College at Calcutta, saw the emergence of a group of intellectuals who were proud of the new learning which sharpened their intellect and broadened their outlook, but which also instilled into them a galling sense of slavery and made them dream of national freedom, for the attainment of which, however, they could prescribe no plan or programme. (15)

(2)

History is available to us in various debatable versions with varying points of view. There is no absolute history as such. It is difficult to grasp ‘the truth’ of the past. Foucault says that truth is an event, which takes place in history. It is something that ‘happens’ and is produced by various techniques (the ‘technology’ of truth) rather than something that already exists and is simply waiting to be discovered and unfolded. He adds that “the effect of truth” he wants to produce consists in showing that “the real is polemical” (qtd. in O'Farrell). He claims that he does not intend to find out any truth, but invites people to have a particular experience themselves. T. R. Sharma of the University of Hyderabad finds the post-modernist view of history in Jain philosophy of ‘anekantavada’, the theory of many-sidedness.

It (the theory) argues that all objects of the world are multiform and that they are endowed with infinite qualities and relations. This relative pluralism can be considered from different points of view or nayas that show all understanding and judgements as relative and probable. It is further exemplified in Syadavada (‘syad’ meaning ‘may be’) the theory of conditional prediction, which may be called ‘maybeism’ or ‘perhapsism’. The Jain dialectic is neither nihilistic nor metaphysical; it is realistic in sense it accepts the manifoldness of reality and postulates a ‘multiverse’ as opposed to the concept of a ‘universe’. (‘Preface’ VIII)
Partha Chatterjee in his paper *History and the Nationalisation of Hinduism*, writes about *Rajabali* (1808), a history book by Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, which was “the first such history in the Bengali language that we have in print” (233). He says, “In Mrityunjay’s scheme of history, the rulers on earth are, as it were, appointed by divine will. They enjoy that position to that extent, and as long as they acquire and retain the power of righteousness. By attaining the highest levels of Dharma, one could even become the ruler of the entire earth” (234). This narrative or rather this construction of history is ‘Puranic’. Under the Colonial rule, when the history was ‘constructed’ for the attainment of power, Kshetranath Bandyopadhay’s book (published in 1872) states, “The English committed such atrocities on the people of this country that all Bengalis hated the name of the English”(241). Chatterjee says that history was no longer a play of divine will or the fight of right against wrong; it had become merely the struggle for power (242). On the other hand, Chandrima Chakraborty, McMaster University, tells us that James Mill’s *The History of British India* illustrates Said’s point that the Orient is a “representation” and what is represented is not a real place, but “a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone’s work on the orient, or some bit of a previous imagining, or an amalgam of these” (177). He adds that though Mill had never been to India, he had written three volumes about it by the end of 1817. “His History, considered an “authoritative” work on Indian life and society, constructed a version of “Hindoo nature” as uncivilized, effeminate, and barbaric, culled from the translations of Orientalists such as Jones, Williams, Halhed, and Colebrook” (Chakraborty).

A textual history, moreover, cannot be the ultimate version of history. It is only those parts of ‘history’ which are chosen by the writer keeping in view space, targeted readership, availability of ‘authentic’ sources, etc. For example, Mohan Dharia in his famous book *India’s Glorious freedom struggle and the Post-Independence Era* laments the historians’ ignorance to Assam’s continuous and glorious contribution to the freedom struggle of India at large. He says, “Very few in India have recognized this

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long struggle of nearly 130 years, and no mention thereof is found in our history books” (29). Interestingly, he himself has not given even a passing reference to The Sanyasi Rebellion of Bengal in his book on India’s ‘glorious’ freedom struggle though he admits that his book is not ‘comprehensive’. Sometimes, history which is presented to the readers is primarily a matter of the writer’s choice in history.

In the academic discourse of Indian nation and nationalism, the scholars have traced some major tones or ideologies which have shaped historical narratives in India. The history of Indian nationalism has been constructed in several versions accordingly. We mainly study it under the four approaches: Cambridge or Imperialist approach, Marxist approach, Nationalist approach, and Subaltern approach.

The Cambridge or Imperialist approach was given by those who were either under the influence of the imperialists or the imperialists themselves. It is based on the imperial power’s defense and justification of imperialism. This justification when given on ‘scientific grounds’ by J.A.Hobson becomes more controversial. Hobson writes, “It is desirable that the earth should be peopled, governed, and developed, as far as possible, by the races which can do this work best, i.e. by the races of highest ‘social efficiency’” (qtd. in Mathur and Singh 2). The imperialist view of nationalism is further divided into two parts- liberal approach and conservative approach. Coopland and Percival were the followers of the liberal approach. They believed that it was the British colonialism, which made it possible for India to explore its potential and develop its nationalism, ultimately gave birth to the demand for self-rule. The generous and cooperative British Rule in India respected the feelings of the natives and introduced reforms in the various spheres of the Indian way of living. Percival has used the expression “the benevolence of an alien government and administrative measures” (285) for the British rule in India. According to the conservatives such as Anil Seal, it was not necessary to end the foreign rule in India for the economic and social development of India. According to them, India was never a nation or nation-in-making. They add that there was no exploitation during the British Rule. They also reject the notion that nationalism in India was a reaction against the anti-native policies of the British. Seal in his book The Emergence of Indian Nationalism asserts that the educated Indians supported and cooperated with the British Rule in the beginning.
desire of these Indians to get government job could not be fulfilled, they became anti-British. Both conservative and liberal groups are of the view that the English were responsible for the social and political awakening of Indians, who embraced modern institutions and thoughts.

The Marxist approach is based on the political philosophy of Karl Heinrich Marx and Friedrich Engles. Marxism focuses on exploitation, alienation, class-consciousness, base and superstructure, ideology, historical materialism, and political economy. It lays stress on the importance of human labour both in the evolution of society as well as in the realization of human potential. The economic factor, the factor that relates to production, is dominant. The mode of production is divided into means of production and relation to production; it determines the consciousness of men or the ideological superstructure of society. This approach is seen in the writings of Rajni Pam Dutt and A.R. Desai. Suniti Kumar Ghosh’s India and the Raj is also known for Marxist leanings. Bipan Chandra in his The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India: Economic Policies of Indian National Leadership, 1880-1905 has also explored the economic aspect of Indian national movement.

The Nationalist approach is influenced by national feelings. The followers of this approach include Ramesh Chander Majumdar, A.C. Pardhan, Sitabhipatta Ramiyay, B.R. Nanda, Tara Chand, and Surender Nath Benerjee, who are against the exploitative policy of the British imperialists. They understand that the British economy was intended to hegemonise and cripple the Indian economy. The British Rule was responsible for the grave state of affairs in India. Most of the scholars from this group believe that Indian nationalism was an outcome of the British colonialism, and the Indian freedom struggle gained momentum because of the nationalist ideology. Majumdar in Historiography in Modern India refers to K.P. Jayaswal who claimed the republican and oligarchical forms of Government in his Hindu Polity and propounded his theory of parliamentary form of government in ancient India against British historians’ assertion that there was absolute despotism in ancient India (47-8).

In the modern world, the word ‘subaltern’ has become quite popular among theorists. ‘Subaltern’ refers to the ostracized, the other, the inferior, or the outcast group
of the society, which was always ignored by the intellectual academia until the modern awareness spread its wings across the world. The section of the society whose plea was always unheard, is pushed towards the centre nowadays. The Subaltern approach is explored in the writings of Ranjit Guha, Gyanender Pandey, and Upender Bakshi. They reject the conventional history on the plea that it belongs to the ‘upper’ class. Gyanendra Pandey says that ‘national identity’ is too often constructed by the majority, while the minorities remain on the peripheries of the nation as ‘outsiders’ even when they are on the inside. Some of the subaltern theorists argue that there was nothing like the Indian national movement. Usually there were two types of movements: True and honest anti-imperialist movement led by the subaltern and Fake national movement of the elite, ‘upper’ class. The subaltern approach focuses on the role of the lower class in development of the Indian nationalism. T. R. Sharma writes, “The subaltern studies suffer from the same contradiction, which they levelled against the elite for writing self-history by self” (138).

**Indian Political Thought**

The idea of nation and nationalism was ‘Indianised’ to be easily accommodated in the Indian society; it was inspired by various scholars and leaders who mainly relied upon Indian religious philosophy, history, geography, and culture to lay its foundation in India. It is important to have an acquaintance with the political ideas of those leaders who directly or indirectly influenced the discourse of Indian nation and nationalism. These ideas are significant as they reflect Indian thought on the subject matter of the study. These views also help the reader to understand the individual approach of the socio-political stalwarts towards the Indian freedom struggle. Within the framework of this research project, this section is important as it helps the reader to understand the Indian political scenario during the freedom movement, and it also hints at the socio-political overtones which are carried by the works under study. Aurobindo was an ardent admirer of Bankim, who wrote *Anandamath*. His approach to nationalism conveys the militant and religious tones of *Anandamath*. Tagore originally told the story of *Gora* to Sister Nivedita, a zealous follower of Swami Vivekanand, on her demand. Gora, the protagonist, may be viewed in the light of Vivekanand’s Hinduism and Sister Nivedita’s dual identity. Meenakshi Mukherjee says that Gora’s ‘discovery of India’
visits to the rural areas, which are “emblematic of a desire to reconnect with masses”, reminds of Swami Vivekanand’s travels as a wandering monk in different parts of India (“Introduction” Gora XIV). Gandhian freedom struggle is the main theme of Kanthapura; the novelist’s silence on the Gandhi-Ambedkar clash on the political scene of India voices the unsaid in the novel which portray the untouchables. Moorthy, the protagonist of Kanthapura, advocates Nehruvian socialism in the ending of the novel.

(1)

Spirituality is India’s only politics and the fulfillment of the Sanatana Dharma is only Swaraj. (qtd. in Mohapatra 42)

- Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) was a multi-dimensional personality. He is known as a nationalist, freedom fighter, poet, philosopher, and yogi. After the partition of Bengal, he resigned from his job as a Professor and Vice Principal of Baroda College in the princely state of Baroda in the service of the Maharaja and came to Calcutta, where he became one of the leaders of the nationalist movement. “His stress on the country as a Mother and declaring with disarming frankness that complete independence was the goal of India’s national awakening had a thrilling impact on the mind of young India” (Das, Manoj 37). In a lecture delivered under the auspices of the Bombay National at Mahajan Wadi, Bombay, on 19th January 1908, Aurobindo said, “Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live” (“The Present Situation” 818). On this day, Aurobindo was dejected by the news items related to the judgement of The Yugantar Trial and the prosecution of another newspaper called The Nabasakti, published in the paper Bande Mataram. He said that nationalism was divine and immortal, it had great future. He added that Bengal, contrary to the expectations of other ‘nations’19, emerged as a savior of India. At one point of time, otherwise, Bengal had become atheistic and a land of “doubters and cynics” (820) under the influence of the western intellect and manners. It was only the power of ‘belief’ that became the strength of Bengal, and God selected Bengali people to save India.

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19 Aurobindo has called Bengal a nation and has used the word ‘nations’ for other states of present India.
Aurobindo said that those who rejected nationalism as ‘madness’ were confined to intellectual standpoint and thought that they, due to the lack of material strength, were unable to cope with the resistance of the British. This attitude would lead to despair. When the intellect failed, the heart of Bengal opened to receive the message of God and “in a single moment the whole nation rose... Bengal found the way of salvation and declared to all India that eternal life, immortality and not lasting degradation was her fate” (825). Through suffering, God-bestowed strength increased. Suffering was important as “without suffering, without the lesson of selflessness, without the moral force of self-sacrifice, God within us cannot grow” (825).

Aurobindo believed, “It is not by any mere political programme, not by National Education alone, not by Swadeshi alone, not by Boycott alone, that this country can be saved” (826). The great “idea that there is a great Power at work to help India” could save the country. Guided by the divine ideas, Bengali patriots took their decisions; they listened to their heart. They understood that God was doing everything; when God wanted them to suffer, they suffered because suffering gave strength. Aurobindo said, “This movement in Bengal, this movement of Nationalism is not guided by any self-interest, not at the heart of it. Whatever there may be in ‘some minds, it is not, at the heart of it, a political self-interest that we are pursuing. It is a religion which we are trying to live (827-8).”

In Aurobindo’s view, selflessness and courage were the other two names of faith and it was important to keep in mind “that the three hundred millions of people of this country are God in the Nation (829)”, “something that cannot be measured” by material comforts.

(2)

Narendranth Dutt, popularly known as Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902), was a follower of Ramakrishna\(^\text{20}\) of Dakshineshwar. He\(^\text{21}\) believed in the philosophy of

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\(^\text{20}\) Ramakrishna believed that “all religions are true, each laying stress on one or the other aspect of Supreme Reality of the Undivided and Eternal Existence, Knowledge and Bliss...To Ramakrishna, Kali the Divine Mother, whom he worshipped as Bhavatarinī in the temple at Dakshineswar built by Rani Rashmoni of Janbazar estate in Calcutta, was his living Mother and the Mother of the Universe. In the same temple compound by the side of the Ganges there were images of Krishna and Shiva, symbolizing the harmony of the Sakta, Vaishnava and Saiva doctrines” (Bose, Nemai Sadhan 10).

\(^\text{21}\) “For him the Absolute which comprises all Existence is unknown. The Eternal Subject can never be objectified, but it must be identical with the soul in us; otherwise from what source do we get our spirituality?” (Gupta, Subodh Chandra Sen 61).
Karma: perform your duty with full dedication and keep yourself detached from it at the same time. He proudly proclaimed:

I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother, say, the ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother. The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India’s gods and goddesses are my God. India’s society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age. The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good. O Thou Mother of strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a Man. (Vivekanand 480)

Swami Vivekanand didn’t have faith in politics and he said that he belonged as much as to the world as to India. “Yet, Swamiji made immense contributions to the growth of nationalism in India and to the indian freedom movement” (Bose, Nemai Sadhan 103). Although he didn’t use the word ‘nationality,’ yet he was the model of a national hero. Sister Nivedita writes, “He was a worker at foundations…he was born a lover, and queen of his adoration was his Motherland. To him, the thought of India was ‘like the air he breathed’ (104). Saroj Kumar Panda calls Vivekanand “a true nationalist in heart and spirit” (31).

Vivekanand’s work “contributed a good deal to the strengthening of the moral foundations of Bengal nationalism in theory and practice. In fact, through his writings he imparted among the nationalists a sense of pride in the past and gave a cultural confidence to people who had lost their self-esteem. At a time when the Indian intelligentsia was busy imitating the westerners, Vivekananda boldly proclaimed that the west had to learn much from India” (32).

Panda says that Swamiji advocated religious basis for nationalism. She quotes him: “in each nation, as in music, there is a main note, a central theme, upon which all others turn. Each nation has a theme, everything else is secondary. India’s theme is religion. Social reform and everything else are secondary” (31). Vivekanand’s message was the recognition of unity in variety and diversity of each nation. “Every

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nation should remember that it has a certain mission or theme, but subject to that fundamental unity, there would be differences between one man and in another in ability and quality” (Gupta, Subodh Chandra Sen 59).

Vivekanand advocated fearlessness. He was very critical of the British rule in India. He, at the house of Professor J.H. Wright, once said, “India has been conquered again and again for years and last and worst of all came the Englishman…the English have sucked the last drop of our blood…they have carried away with them millions of our money, while our people have starved in villages and provinces ” (67). He wanted Indians to have physical, moral, and mental strength. He rejected the policy of non-resistance as it gave freedom to the wicked to harass others. “…[T]alk of violence would not arouse any qualms of conscience in him, for he knew that a man has to kill millions of microbes if he has to breathe and several worms if he has to walk, and also millions of insects if he has to read the Gita by candlelight” (70). He was all praise for the Rani of Jhansi, the Mahrattas led by Shiva ji, Guru Govind Singh Ji, and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His favourite hero in literature was Satan, who “adopts all means, good or bad, to carry on a relentless war with an invincible enemy…he wanted to emphasize Satan’s unyielding courage and tenacity rather than his wickedness. Swamiji had also admiration for Robert Clive, who had faith in himself and his mission, and by force and fraud conquered India for England” (71).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) is known as Mahatma Gandhi, the title conferred upon him by Tagore. He dominated the Indian socio-political scene from 1919 to 1948. Consequently, this period is called the Gandhian period in Indian history. He started his career as a barrister and his services were hired by a Muslim firm to advocate its cases pending in South Africa. In South Africa, he raised his voice against the harsh treatment of the white racist regime to the Asian emigrant communities and the black natives. Khushwant Singh writes that Gandhi was imprisoned four times during his stay of twenty years (1893-1914) in South Africa. He adds, “The South African experience made Gandhi turn to pacifism. He read Thoreau and Tolstoy…Ruskin’s Unto This Last…The Gita…” (Indian: An Introduction 242). In
1915, Gandhi returned to India and got recognition for his work done in Africa. He spent the next four years in studying the Indian situation and entered the mainstream Indian politics after the massacre of the Jallianwala Bagh in 1919.

Gandhi advocated the ideas of Swaraj (self-rule), Swadeshi (native products for social development), Swadharma (to follow the best in his/her own religion), Satyagraha (holding fast on to truth), Sarvodaya (uplifting of all), Brahmacharya (Celibacy), Asangrah (non-possession), Sharirashrama (physical labour), Aswads (control of palate), Sarvatra-Bhaya-Varjana (fearlessness), and Ahimsa (non-violence). He proposed that as every country was fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so was every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly. His idea of Swaraj was based on *the Ramrajya* where the necessaries of life were enjoyed by the rulers as well as the subjects. At the same time, he also talked about Swaraj within one’s self, i.e. complete disciplined rule from within (Mohapatra 18). Gandhi believed in the supreme power of truth. For him, God was truth and truth was God. He was against untouchability and looked forward to Hindu-Muslim unity. For him, religion was not meant for personal purification but an immensely powerful social bond (22-3).

Gandhi framed Constructive Programme for the development of India on all fronts. Some of the important issues and ideas he included in the plan were: a ban on alcohol, the promotion and use of khadi, development of village as a self-sufficient unit in pool, education with the approach of character building, equality for women, and emphasis on following the Indian way of healthy living, the promotion of what he called economic trusteeship, building up peasants’ and workers’ organisations, and integration of the tribal people into mainstream political and economic life. Gandhi was in favour of local self-government at village and town levels for effective administration. He advocated simple living and high thinking.

In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi addressed one and all in India. He attempted to recast the nationalist consciousness through moral regeneration. He rejected immorality and inhumanity of modern civilization that were manifested in the Industrialization and capitalism. He allowed ‘nationalised or state controlled’ large-scale industries to a limited extent for the benefit of humanity (Suda 176). Gandhi was not against machines
as such but the ill effects of Industrialization which centralized wealth and made the poor poorer. His concept of Swaraj, which is an indigenous and Vedic word and carries sacred impression, didn’t mean political independence only; it included the concept of liberation of soul (Moksha) through self-interrogation. He disapproved the word ‘independence,’ which usually means freedom from all restraints. He was critical of unrestrained desires and temptations which promoted colonization and imperialism among the foreigners and which made the Indian youth mimic European civilization. He believed that the purification of the self would lead to the de-contamination of the nation from the Western influence.

Gandhi himself admitted in his life that he had ‘nothing new to teach the world’. He wrote, “I don’t claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems (Truth is God 7).” Gandhi concluded his autobiography, published in 1927, with the observation that those who sought to dissociate politics and religion understood the meaning of neither politics nor religion. He admitted in 1934 that “I could not live for a single second without religion. Many of my political friends despair of me because they say that even my politics are (sic) derived from religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion…I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be bound to God, that is to say, God rules your every breath (All Men are Brothers 62).” Gandhi’s view of religion was broad, controversial, and debatable. At times, he contradicted his own views. He himself said, “The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final, I may change them tomorrow.” Gandhi never confined himself to strict dogmas. Vinay Lal in his paper “Gandhi’s Religion: A Few Thoughts” refers to a number of cases when Gandhi contradicted his earlier views regarding religion. Let it be the issue of conversion or visiting temples or orthodox snatan dharam, Gandhi was “an ever changing man,” says Lal. Nevertheless, Gandhi was a true humanist, even questioning the portions of religious texts which would disturb human ‘conscience’.

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23 Harijan, 28 March 1936
24 Harijan, 21 March 21 1934, pp. 54.
Gandhian idea of religion in politics was very much secular as it is basically focused on the cultural aspect of religion; it emphasised the inclusion of moral and ethical values of religion to politics in order to make politics sacred. Lal says that Gandhi embraced the view that a true understanding and practice of one’s own religion requires an understanding of other faiths. “At his daily evening prayer meetings, conducted not in temples but under the open sky, passages were read from the Koran, the New Testament, The Geeta, The Upanishads, and even from modern Christian literature, such as Cardinal Newman’s ‘Lead, Kindly Light’” (Lal 3). Gandhi’s attitude towards religion was flexible and humane. For him, God was truth and non-violence. In this way, he was concerned with values rather than any sectarian form of religion and God. Ishtiaq Ahmed of Stockholm University in his article “Gandhi and the Politics of Religion” says that Gandhi wanted religion to play a positive role in bringing India’s myriad of religious, sectarian, ethnic and caste-based communities into an inclusive grand composite nation. He opposed the division of India into Pakistan and India. “‘My national service,’ Gandhi said, ‘is part of my training for freeing my soul from the bondage of flesh.’ He regarded his patriotism as a stage in the journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. And, therefore, for him there was no politics devoid of religion” (Dubey, S.N. 90). Gandhi viewed politics in relation to religion which simply meant ‘morality’ to him (Chandra, Bipan Essays on Indian Nationalism 95).

Gandhi’s views towards religion changed in the last phase of his life, when he delinked politics and religion altogether probably to avoid giving any wrong message to the masses and probably when he found communists using religion to spread hatred and violence against followers of other religions. In 1942, he said, “Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics” (93). In 1947, he said, “Religion is no test of nationality, but a personal matter between man and his God. In the sense of nationality they are Indians first and Indians last, no matter what religion they profess” (H, 29-6-1947, p.215). Ironically, on 30th January 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by

25 “He (Gandhi) said that religious texts should also be subjected to the changing standards of morality and conscience” says Istiaq Ahmed in “Gandhi and Politics of Religion”.
Nathuram Godse, ‘a Hindu Nationalist’, allegedly for Gandhi’s advocacy for the Muslims and distortion of Hinduism.

Gandhian thought and its influences are criticized by various scholars. To quote Grover and Mehta,

…the imperialists like Lord Linlithgow called Gandhian methods as ‘a form of blackmail’…Steeped in idealism, many of Gandhi’s ideas were divorced from realism. His philosophy of ‘the charkha, the bullock-cart and self-sufficient village’ has not prevented modern India from large scale industrialization and great expansion of the public sector. Again, Gandhi’s idea of the rich becoming the ‘trustees’ of the poor seems unworkable. He had no faith in socialism or communism but these seem popularisms of today. (336)

Khushwant Singh notes that though Gandhi wanted the Jews to passively resist Hitler, yet “when India fought Pakistan in Kashmir in 1947 and forcibly took over Hyderabad, Gandhi defended the Indian action. Charitably, this can be seen as the contradictions that exist in all great men” (246). Bipan Chandra in “The Ever-Changing Gandhi” also says that after Gandhi’s suspension of Non-Cooperation Movement because of Chauri Chaura incident in 1922, Gandhi assured Nehru and other leaders that “he would not withdraw the coming struggle because of such stray acts of violence by a section of the people, so long as the mass of satyagrahis practiced non-violence. And despite large-scale violence by the angered crowds at Sholapur and other places during 1930-31, he didn’t withdraw the Civil Disobedience Movement” (Essays on Indian Nationalism 97).

Shahid Amin in “Gandhi as Mahatma” speaks about the ‘power’ and ‘glory’ of Gandhi among common masses during the Non-Cooperation movement. He takes up the case of Abdulla Julaha, Bhagwan Ahir, and Rampati Chamar, the three Congress

26 “…the Indian government was withholding Rs 550 million due to Pakistan as its share of the cash left behind in the common kitty of the colonial state. India and Pakistan had been drawn into a military conflict over Kashmir, and the Indian government took the stand that Pakistan will purchase weapons with it. Gandhi did not accept such reasoning and started a fast unto death to compel the Indian government to pay Pakistan its share. That infuriated Hindu nationalists. On January 30, 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse” (Ahmed, Ishtiaq “Gandhi and Politics of Religion”).
volunteers of Chauri Chaura who were sentenced to death by the High Court of Allahabad in 1923. The convicts had set the police station on fire to usher in ‘Gandhi ji’s Swaraj’ in the name of Gandhi who in fact preached non-violence (66). Amin asserts that rustic people thought Gandhi to be some divine figure and spread stories of miraculous occurring in the name of Gandhi. “Gandhi was also fitted into the widespread practice of the taking of a vow (manuati), addressed to a god, a local godling or a saint, on condition that an affliction be removed or that a wish be fulfilled” (76). The writer says that the Gandhi of rustic protagonists was a misrepresentation of Gandhian thought.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) reviewed Gandhian ideology from ‘the dalit’ perspective and challenged its Hinduized basis. He questioned Gandhi’s concern over untouchability and casteism. He said that Gandhism was a paradox as “it stands for freedom from foreign domination [and] at the same time it seeks to maintain intact a social structure which permits the domination of one class by another on a hereditary basis which means a perpetual domination of one class by another” (Chakrabarty 103-112). He also rejected Gandhi’s unit of village for building a republic society because, he argued, Indian villages “represent a kind of colonialism of the Hindu designed to exploit the Untouchables. The Untouchables have no rights”. Ambedkar viewed that Hinduism never considered the untouchables its integral part. Sixty millions of Untouchables, who were used as “forced labourers” to do the dirty work of scavengers and sweepers, were deprived of better economic opportunities by Two hundred and forty millions of Hindus.

Ambedkar demanded for separate electorate for the Untouchables and when the Communal Award was announced by the British Prime Minister on 17 August 1932, Gandhi observed fast unto death in protest which led to a final compromise, popularly known as the Poona Pact (24 Sept. 1932). “Although he (Ambedkar) lost on the issue of separate electorates, he won 148 reserved seats in the provincial legislatures, rather than the seventy eight under the Communal Award” (Zelliot 227). This pact was not celebrated as victory by either side. “Ambedkar regretted the loss of separate
electorates. Many Congress leaders, particularly from Punjab and Bengal, felt that the
number of seats reserved for Untouchables far outweighed the actual problem of
untouchability in those provinces” (228).

Arun Shourie’s Worshipping False Gods (1997) portrays Ambedkar as an
unpatriotic, power-hungry anti-national, a stooge of the British. The writer challenges
Ambedkar’s contribution to the freedom struggle and the making of the constitution. He
presents him as a collaborator of the British. He asserts that Ambedkar’s demand for
separate electorate for the untouchables was a conscious effort in the divide and rule
politics of the British. To support his argument, he also emphasizes the fact that
Ambedkar was a member of the viceroy’s council during the Quit India Movement. He
adds that Ambedkar cannot be called the father of the Indian constitution because the
constitution of India was evolved by various committees after spending a lot of time on
it and the contribution of those who played major role in those committees cannot be
sidelined.

V. N. Gadgil in “Falsifying the Truth” rejects Shourie’s arguments and says,
“[D]uring the Quit India Movement, when Ambedkar was a member of the viceroy’s
executive council, he had the courage to shelter underground Congress leaders like
Achyut Patwardhan at his residence.” He also draws our attention to Amdekar’s
criticism of the British government during the Round Table Conference: “Before the
British, we could not draw water from the village well. Before the British we could not
enter the temple. Can we enter now?...Of what good is such a government to
anybody?”. Gadgil asks, “Is this the language of the British stooge?”. He adds that
Ambedkar was not callous; he signed the Poona Pact to save Gandhi. Ambedkar would
not have desired Gandhi’s death, asserts Gadgil. The writer rejects that Ambedkar is not
the father of the Constitution of India. He writes, “When one says that he is the author
of the Constitution, no sensible person implies that each and every article of the
Constitution was written by Ambedkar. Equally, when one says he is the father of the
constitution the words are not to be taken literally”.

The writer says that Gandhi ji also called Ambedkar ‘a patriot of sterling worth’
and Ambedkar admitted that though he had some issues over casteism with the caste
Hindus, yet he said he would ‘defend our land’ while he advocated the formation of Pakistan. The author concludes, “Shourie miserably fails to appreciate Ambedkar’s real contribution to the political strategy of fighting for the rights of the oppressed”.

(5)

Socialism aims at equal distribution through social ownership of the means of production; it craves for cooperative management of economy in the society. Its very spirit is against capitalism, which encourages private ownership and unequal distribution in the society. As man is a social being, whatever he produces is a social product. So, everyone who contributes to the production of a good is entitled to have a share in it, according to the philosophy of socialism. Unlike communism, in which the proceeds are divided based on need, under socialism the proceeds are divided on the basis of each individual's contribution to society; in socialism, common ownership is aimed at, as it gives everyone the right to participate in the social decisions that influence him. It is important to mention that there is a difference of opinions about the exact meaning and ways of bringing about socialism.

With such a social and economic system, every person would have access to the objects, goods, and services in the society; everyone would voluntarily do useful work according to their capacity and capability. Socialism, based on collectivist ideology, envisions the socialisation or nationalisation of means of production in agriculture and industry, equitable distribution of various goods and services, and the establishment of co-operative societies. It advocates social and political equality. Its foundation is laid in political as well as social equality. Political equality ensures the participation of everyone in political processes such as to vote, to contest elections, to express opinions and views without any fear of discrimination. Social equality means the availability of equal opportunities irrespective of one’s birth, caste, creed, religion, etc.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) “found in socialism a continuation of his love of nationalism” (Mohan 183). He never gave any definition of socialism, though he consistently spoke about it. According to him, Socialism, a way of life, a way of thinking and functioning, was a dynamic, growing, developing idea that challenged any stable and static definition. His approach to socialism was scientific and pragmatic. He
wanted to adapt the socialist ideology to the peculiarity of Indian society. He came across the oppressed tenants of Oudh in 1920. He realized that “the ultimate remedy was abolition of landlordism, removal of intermediaries and the dissolution of the feudal socio-economic structure...” (Ganguli 1213). In his presidential address to the Lahore Congress in 1929, Nehru asserted:

…the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over and almost the only points in dispute are the pace and the methods of advance to its full realisation. India will have to go that way, too, if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adapt the ideal to the genius of her race.” (qtd. in Mohan 185).

Nehru’s efforts led to a short step towards socialism; in 1931, Karachi Congress resolution on socialism advocated “nationalization of key industries and services and various other measures to lessen the burden on the poor and increase it on the rich” (1215). When he was appointed the president of the Congress in 1936, seven right-wing leaders including Rajendra Prasad resigned because of his socialistic ideas. The resignations, however, were withdrawn later.

Being a democratic socialist, Nehru did not wish to impose socialism on the Indians; according to him, socialism could be achieved in India with the consent of the great majority of the people.

His attitude to Socialism has led to some kind of duality: “This may mean one of the two things, that Nehru talked socialism when not in office but gave it up when he became Prime Minister, or that, with Nehru, socialism was a growing thing, and that there was nothing static or dogmatic about his conception of socialism” (Sachi 1227). Since Kanthapura portrays the scenario of pre-independent India and ends on the inclination towards the idea of Nehruvian Socialism, this part of the chapter briefly explores Nehruvian Socialism only as an ideology of Nehru in pre-independent India, and not as a matter of Nehru’s practice after becoming the PM of independent India.

Nehru accepted life to make it richer and fuller, and rejected Gandhi’s asceticism. He was “a crusader in the fight against forces which destroyed human
dignity and pride”. He was against violence in collective struggles, but didn’t refrain from using it when other methods failed. From Gandhi, he learnt that the means of social change had to be peaceful. He believed in the potential of man and disliked “religious fetishes and practices, rituals and dogmas which made man a prisoner and a slave of superstitious beliefs by weakening his will” (1228). He was a man of science and technology. He hated poverty and saw industrialization as a potential cure for India’s economic problems. Nehru was against capitalism; he was also against the regimentation and intolerance of totalitarian socialism. Hence he wanted to follow a middle path. He favoured a positive role for the private sector, which culled for effective State regulation and control. He said that production was more important than distribution. For the success of democratic socialism, Nehru put emphasis on the cooperative movement in India. According to him, Gandhi’s socialism had nothing to do with the economic framework of the society and it was “a kind of muddled humanitarianism” (Ganguli 1964). Nehru sharply reacted against Gandhi’s ‘trusteeship’, which was supposed to solve the class conflict.

27 “His (Nehru’s) use of force in Hyderabad, Kashmir or Goa was only as a last resort and his decisions were taken only after he felt that there was no other course left open” (Sachi 1227).