Chapter-8

N.K Bose as a Nation Builder

N.K Bose can be appropriately called a nation builder on account of the various dimensions of his work along the length and breadth of the country. In 1967 he was appointed the commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. He had worked wholeheartedly for them in this direction for quite a long time. In this post which he held, his responsibilities laid in monitoring their conditions in various states and union territories. His duty was to oversee the issues pertaining to tribal securities and to find out whether they were in conformity with the constitutional guidelines. He reported the same to the President and before the Lok Sabha. Bose knew that the scheduled castes and tribes constitute an important element of the nation and so he sincerely adhered to his responsibilities to build the nation with deft hands. Surajit Sinha writes,

Bose in his task of nation building applied his spontaneous social responsibilities, vigour and a great sense of realization. He discussed with his assistant, Bimal Chandra on which type of data to collect from the various scheduled communities in different states. Bose wanted to keep his research group slim and trim to avoid its unnecessary extension. He wanted to limit the group only to the bonafide researchers who would diagnose the ailments plaguing the society at large. Besides he decided to seek the help from the offices of commissioner, assistant commissioners of various states, anthropological surveys, research centres on scheduled castes and tribes, India’s registrar general and director general of the department of the depressed castes. He wanted to muster first-hand experience of all these officers to get a feel of our society and its people (Sinha:1994: 73).

He had tried presenting a precise picture of such depressed communities across the nation and tried portraying their predicaments with least exaggeration. In spite of holding a post like this he never tried waxing eloquently about our society or in delivering shallow sermons to its suppressed sections. He was more interested in analysing more resolutely the social conditions and try ameliorating their conditions. This way he wanted to have his tryst with the nation building and gingerly pave the path for national integration.
Bose reviewed the conditions of the Indian society on a comparative approach with the European counterparts to observe the stark difference between the two. He said such differences ought to do with the specific characteristics of the Indian stratified society that had remained unmatched in the world around. The stratified society stood as an invincible structure defeating every attempt of toppling or disrupting the hierarchical arrangements. All this meant that when the winds of progress have propagated the European ship of change swiftly, our society, however, has remained lull and standstill. This is probably because economic changes were not enough to instigate changes in other quarters of the Indian society. It was difficult to penetrate the hard shell of the orthodox patterns of stratification in India. Bose said such obduracy in the forms of stratification is rightly owed by the quintessential caste system and its insipid class structure.

Class distinctions were not as pronounced in India as it was in Europe. Therefore, caste and class remained coterminous with one another. Our nation did not prosper perhaps because neither caste nor class distinctions could be done away with. Bose therefore said,

Caste was class difference to a certain extent, but the growth of class differences in modern times on the basis of wealth has not succeeded in obliterating the earlier pattern of class differences based on caste to the fullest extent. It is therefore the desire and will of the Indian nation to do away with the hierarchy of castes and its consequent social discrimination, and prepare the ground for full social equality (Bose: 1971: 55).

A critical look at the caste system

So it is well evident that Bose was searching for the true pillars of nation building and was also trying to heal cracks in this mighty national edifice. He suspected that caste obduracy and class indifferences stunted the healthy evolution of the nation which therefore could not prosper adequately. The wrongly upheld caste-class nexus interfered with the system of social justice and intensified social discrimination and apathy towards the backward classes. As a Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Bose sought to dabble with such sensitive issues which lay at the core of nation-building. Bose therefore said,
The appointment of the Commission itself has been made because of the nation’s solemn determination to eradicate once for all...the age old evil of social discrimination and a sense of high and low, which is the direct negation of democracy (ibid:54).

Bose therefore vehemently opposed the hierarchized nature of the caste system and the evils that it sprouted in the society. He believed that the caste system as a form of stratification was at the root of jilting the well-founded democracy and must be uprooted at any cost.

Thus we find that Bose had found many faults with the inane orthodoxies of the caste system. He did not show any superfluous reverence for the caste system and did not want to side with it unnecessarily. He said caste system was good as long as it gives occupational exclusion to communities and ensures their survival. However, Bose was not ready to give any such oomph to the caste system more than it deserves. He pointed out at the grim paradox of the Indian society which worships its poets and philosophers over soldiers and warriors. Bose therefore asserted sarcastically,

Indian has paid a deeper homage to philosophers and saints than to kings and warriors. Although these have been periods when the Kshatriya, or warriors have been held in higher repute, yet, on the whole, it has been the Brahman who have received the unstinted adoration of the multitude for ages past in Indian history. This is comparable to what we find in China, where the poet and the philosopher were paid greater respect, while the soldier was considered to stand much lower in social estimation (Bose: 1962:84).

Bose, though took a critical approach towards the caste system, had nevertheless considered it on the ground of boosting the threads of social integration. Caste, he felt, had not only provided the economic security but has also worked towards the all-round stability of the social organization. Caste, while knitting its members together, had treated them with a lukewarm attitude. Caste acted as a sole custodian of the members’ social security though it was careful to constrict its occupational choices. But that did not recede the member’s reverence towards the caste system because of the cultural democracy that it rendered for the men in the society. In this way, caste acted as a basis of national integration especially in its role as the ambivalent social benefactor. Bose himself wrote,
Caste organization was a kind of federation of many trade unions. While within it no man was free to choose his occupation, the entire social organism, at the same time, held itself responsible for the safety and security of each of its component members. Over and above that, as we have said, caste guaranteed a modified form of cultural democracy. And these several factors carried the organization unbroken through countless political vicissitudes. (Bose: 1972:50).

We have already discussed these issues at length and showed how Bose had analysed the functioning of the caste system in the society. Besides caste, Bose have also pondered deeply about the evolution of the classes in the Indian society with particular reference to the backward classes and their problem of social justice.

**Backward classes and their integration with the mainstream society**

Bose wrote at length about the Backward Classes Commission constituted by the Government of India and made a critical assessment of it. He observed that though the Government is solemnly resolved to dispense with the inequalities of the country, not enough had been done to deliver the justice in the right way. He had questioned the very idea of the complete social equality that our country had been pressing for and had tried evaluating its practicality. He had wondered whether at all any concrete criteria for the social equality could be ascertained like the one the administration had been pursuing for. He had doubt with the conventional method of preparing a checklist of the socio-economically backward classes by following some random criteria. Bose discouraged such methods adopted by the Backward Classes Commission to ascertain the extent of backwardness prevailing in the country and suggested the preventive measures accordingly. Bose’s apathy for such stereotyped methods seemed obvious especially because of the lofty conceptions of social equality that Bose had in mind and groped for practical applications of such ideas. This became palpable when Bose seemed hinging back on the philosophers to derive his idea of social justice. As he observes,

> Personally we believe, George Bernard Shaw was right when he said that complete inter-marriage ability is the test of social equality. That should be the goal which we should try to reach eventually. But, in the meanwhile, we have to devise ways and means whereby those who have been ‘neglected’ so long (the Commission have used the Hindi term *upekshit* in this connection), and who were described as the ‘suppressed’
instead of the ‘depressed’ classes by Swami Vivekananda, can quickly raise their heads and march shoulder to shoulder with rest of the Indian population (1972:55).

Bose therefore said that though the government seemed concerned for the backward classes, it seemed confounded and digressive. He felt that the nation needed that orientation so that the noble mission does not lose track and get scrambled. He said, the commission must make sure that the fruits of social equality must reach the people who are farthest in the queue and also in the shortest possible time. Therefore, Bose said,

But the way has to be pointed out clearly so that the needed change may come about within the shortest time possible, and with the least expenditure of energy. It is also desirable that the benefit should flow more to those who stand in greater need of it (ibid: 55).

It is in this context that Bose felt that the criteria of social equality must be decided upon. He tried to scrutinize the potentiality of such pre-conditions which are randomly taken as the viable criterion for determining social inequality.

**Is proportional representation in the services a sufficient criterion for backwardness? —- an important question pertaining to national integration.**

Bose for long had this question popping up in his mind. The Commission had tried to gather information about whether one’s caste was enough represented in terms of their population, in the service sector of the economy. It is in accordance with this factor that one’s extent of backwardness will be ascertained. Nevertheless, Bose warned us that such tests are faulty ones for they could serve severe damage to the society as such. Bose said, for a country like ours which has a long history of colonialism, representation in services might not serve as a good indicator of backwardness.

This is because with the British rulers, menacing our indigenous economy brutally, very few Indians could make it to plummeted positions in the service sector. Those who did were usually from higher castes while some others were opportunist enough to scoop higher positions in the service. This also was related to the skill of sycophancy, well acquired by some middle classes who therefore bagged cushioned posts in service sectors. There were still others who, were engaged in trade and
business and who never the less could not be tagged as backward. Needless to say that lack of representation of castes in services could therefore not be the ideal indicator of their backwardness since non-service industry was then flooded by men of higher castes and middle classes. Thus, those who were engaged in trade and business thrived well, and nevertheless could not be tagged as backward even if they were less represented in the service sector where they excelled.

Therefore, if the Commission decides to categorize communities in terms of representation in services, Bose warns us that it would be an incomplete indicator of under-development and this faulty indicator would only end up in over-protecting the already protected communities. Bose therefore cautioned us that the indicator of representation was neither valid nor reliable enough to shield the vulnerable in the society. On the other hand, such inefficient index only ended up in ruining the order and democracy of the society which it was supposed to promote. Bose therefore said,

If, therefore, the test of proportional representation in the services is taken to be the test of advancement or backwardness, it is likely to lead to a wrong picture of the actual situation (ibid: 56).

Bose had illustrated his case to show that to what extent a wrong picture can be drawn if we consider the Commission’s proposed index of backwardness. He said,

The Marwari traders of Bengal or the Gandhavaniks and Suvarnavaniks are, we believe, poorly represented in the services, and so are the Mahishyas or the Paundrya-Kshatriyas, who are predominantly agricultural in their operation. But that does not, or should not, lead us to treat the above two groups on a par with one another in so far as economic or social backwardness is concerned. (ibid:56).

Therefore, the very idea behind the constitution of the Commission to incorporate the backward communities in the mainstream population would be defeated if proportional representation in services is taken as one of the criteria of backwardness. This would not only depict a wrong picture of the society but alongside would also present a strong paradox by not serving the people for whom it is meant. Bose also made us wary of its consequences when he said,
If representation in the services is employed as the test of backwardness in the Commission’s sense, then a few years hence, the same test is likely to be re-employed in order to find out how far the backward community has become advanced in comparison with others. There will be a scramble in the meanwhile for proportionately greater representation in the services on a communal basis; and this in itself will be an undesirable and harmful tendency (ibid: 57).

Bose feared that such a tendency propagates a fatal division of the society on the communal line. Bose also reminded us of the separatism so enraged by such representation in the past that proved really dangerous for the society and created such a furore. He warned us that such a proclivity actually tends to crop up provincialism and an unwarranted autonomy.

Thus the problem of representation in turn creates provincialism which becomes a threat in the path of national integration. He said the problem poses a still more dangerous dimension when it accelerates forward in the disguise of cultural and religious differences. Therefore, a clamour for representation becomes more severe and this in turn makes a greater clatter for separate provinces in the name of religio-cultural differences. Bose thus said,

> A similar desire for more governmental patronage has been responsible to quite a considerable extent in accentuating the growth of provincialism in India today. And we are not sure that such considerations in the services have not already brought about a lowering of the standards of efficiency to some extent (ibid: 57).

**Backwardness and social status-------a correlation between the two.**

Bose had tried comprehending the social status of the backward people especially in the context of the stratification ridden society and against the backdrop of the elite castes. Many reformers thought that all the Shudras must be considered backward, but there are others who felt there are variations in the rank of the latter and all are not equidistant from the central Brahminical order. Accordingly, there are corresponding gradations within the lower castes themselves. Their social status in relation to the hierarchical order therefore varies as do their cultural and religious life. Such variations are numerous and to illustrate this Bose said,
Among the *Shudras*, again, some are considered high and some low. Food of certain types, and not rice, is accepted by Brahmins from some and not from others. Lower down, the Brahmin in Bengal accepts drinking water from some and not from others. Others again are considered to be so low that even their touch (or sight and shadow, as in some parts of South India) defiles (ibid: 60).

Thus it is pretty evident that the variations are so rampant in the caste structure that the extent of backwardness remains hard to enumerate especially because of multiple intra-caste dictums for every individual caste. Thus the relative social status of the backward classes in relation to others remains ambiguous and complex. Writing much later Gail Omvedt too felt that the lower caste distinctions were such multifarious that earning a separate identity by each sub-caste became a significant tendency of post-independent India. Omvedt writes,

> In Andhra Kancha Illaiah began to theorise the role of patriarchy and caste. Ilaiah, a scholar from low caste herding community, had experienced discrimination in his own life; ..........His first book, *Why I am not a Hindu*, proclaimed loudly that the dalits and the ex-shudra communities had different deities, different ways of life, different production systems from the upper castes. He described them as the “productive castes” in contrast to the parasitical “twice born” communities” (Omvedt: 2011:76).

It thus seemed palpable that the backward classes had become quite conscious of their rights and demands and therefore to accommodate them strategically within the larger nation became an integral problem of national integration. Bose recognized the larger demand made by the backward classes for their exclusive share in education and public services. He therefore writes,

> Provincial Governments are now with the advent of popular influences forced to recognize the claims of hitherto unrepresented or inadequately represented communities in the services, and there is a tendency to tighten the rules excluding non-provincials. If all the provinces could be induced to keep the door open for all and if all appointments be filled up only by the persons best qualified to fill them irrespective of their religion and place of birth there would be no difficulty and unfairness, however much and however bitter the grievances on the part of the
Having said this Bose nevertheless could not still ignore the burgeoning demands of the lower castes for an exclusive right for basic infrastructure and public exposure. He understood that there was an insistent pressure on the national administration to carve out a separate place for the backward communities and it was fast becoming impossible for the state to bluntly refuse them.

According to him, there might be every reason to empathize with the backward classes and aid them as much as possible. However, as Bose had already said before, the relative social status of the backward classes in relation to others remains ambiguous and complex. It thus remains an important fact to ponder upon. Bose understood that despite several variations in the social status of the umpteen backward classes, there must be a benchmark of backwardness to be followed for universal categorization. Therefore, Bose thought that the question of acceptance of water from a backward class should serve as the yardstick for determination of backwardness. He accordingly said,

> If we are to make a practical proposal, it would be perhaps better to limit the socially backward to those whose water is not found acceptable by Brahmin priests. That would include the untouchables also (ibid: 60).

A separate segment of the society had other things in mind. They wanted the basis of backwardness to be determined by the parameter of manual labour since the white collar workers would always fare much better than the former. Bose dissented on such a parochial way of enumeration because he felt that manual labour itself is a vast term and has many shades. There are some castes that despite being manual labourers are more affluent than their petty brethren and might not be so much in need of protective legislations.

However, if reservation policies are made for the entire manual worker-castes, the prosperous sections might end up in appropriating the larger share of the premiums. This might prove troublesome for the lower castes who might feel left out from the national policies that were supposed to dole out benevolence to the backwards. Thus Bose said,
From one point of view, of course, all labourers can be looked upon as backward in comparison with people who pursue white collar jobs. But it would, we think, not be quite proper to lump them up with others who occupy a lower position in the social hierarchy. Moreover, agricultural communities, when prosperous, are sometimes comparatively better off than many of their lowly brethren. If the Government began dispensing patronages, there is a greater likelihood that many of the advantages would not reach down to the bottom but would be swallowed up by those who are in comparatively lesser need of it (ibid: 60).

Bose felt, this was the need of the hour, especially when the mass mobilization among the lower classes was burgeoning at a stupendous rate. Social movements were aplenty and participation in such demonstrations had gone viral with men haranguing for their rights.

**The new phase of social movements and the emerging trend of national integration**

N.K Bose was writing at a time when the society was on the verge of transition. He sensed the verve of the new ambience and was careful to keep it in mind while donning the new cap of the Commissioner of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in 1967. In the 1970s, the benefits of reservation were fast spreading like wild fire among the *dalit* youths. With the spread of education, the movement was fast gaining ground among such youths who were learning to vehemently oppose the Hindu ideology professed in their text books. Gail Omvedt writes,

> What was striking was the changing nature of this middle class and its increased spread. In Ambedkar’s time this consisted of only a very small section of educated dalits who could provide the core of activists for a movement; by the 1970s education and the gains from reservation had produced a widespread section. It ranged upwards to a few high level government employees and political leaders and downwards to the villages, where in most areas minimal education of the boys of the most conscious dalit castes (Mahars, Chambhars, etc.) was practically universal and was slowly beginning to include the girls as well. The nature of the Indian education system made them vulnerable to the modernistic upgrading of the Hindu ideologies found in school books; but simultaneously the ability to read and write proved a powerful weapon for the movement (Omvedt: 2011:78).
This was also the time when the society was running riot with movements of all kinds. Besides education, the communication network had grown up by then to render news and images of these movements to the audience outside. All these therefore bolstered the backward class consciousness among the people and made it a necessary element of the national integration. It had by then become clear that the history of the nation could not be written by the narratives of the elite castes alone but the depressed classes must be given their due place in it. The Indian society therefore could not remain insular from the movements waging across the globe, which, in turn, stimulated the fire in the belly of our own backward classes themselves. Omvedt writes,

Both education, whatever its limitations, and the communications network of the time made a range of contemporary and historical world events a reality for an increasing number of the poor themselves. The Vietnam revolution, the Chinese revolution, the Black movement and the Black poetry, Marxism, the women’s movement, the new left, were all part of the cultural mix that represented a worldwide phenomenon. The 1970s saw not only the rise of a new low-caste upsurge, but also the spread of a new kind of “Dalit consciousness to many other movements. (ibid:78).

Bose, though aware of the dalit emotions and the growing consciousness enraging these movements, was nevertheless, careful while doling out the benefits to them. He felt, though concern must be shown for the backward classes, one must be prudent about its limitations. He thought that privileges might be rendered out in aiding men to carry out their everyday lives but one must not go overboard. While meting out loans or while forming co-operatives, considerations might be shown but such protection must not be shelled out in appointments and services where merit should not be compromised upon. Bose himself said,

Of course in matter of application for services, there is no harm if one belonging to the scheduled groups enjoys partial remission in matter of fees. But when it comes to qualification for a particular post, our object should be not to remain satisfied with the minimum requirements, but to make use of the maximum qualifications from one among those who apply for a particular office. We cannot afford to sacrifice the efficiency of services at the altar of communal parity (ibid:62).
Bose was wary of the fact that with backward class emotions being over-loaded, the ripe condition might trigger a sensitized and uncontrolled situation. The partition of the society into several blocks challenged the integrity of the nation, and created constrained predicaments for the state. The state was suddenly getting over-whelmed with burgeoning diverse interests which were not just conscious groups but had strong organizational basis. The state, sandwiched between such socio-political outfits, could hardly breathe fresh air. It was increasingly getting clogged under such pressures, and delivering justice on a more undifferentiated general podium, seemed much difficult now. The stage was therefore ready for a full-fledged backward class movement to take off. K.S Chalam therefore writes,

The most important of the early davit movements included, the Adi-Dharm movement in the Punjab, organised in 1926, the movement under Ambedkar in Maharashtra based mainly among Mahars, which had its organisational beginning in 1924; the Namashudra movement in Bengal; the Adi-Dravida movement in Tamil Nadu and; the Adi-Andhra movement in Andhra which had its first conference in 1917 (Patankar and Omvedt, 1979). Ayothidas, Ayyankali, M.C. Rajah, Rao Bahadur Srinivasan and many others of the non-Brahmin movement have also worked for Dalit liberation. Thus, the ground for the Dalit liberation upsurge was prepared by a number of movements in different parts of the country (Chalam: 1995:95).

So we must keep in mind this national backdrop against which Bose was strategizing ways to chisel out a well-grounded form of national integration. Despite the rising differentiation, Bose never favoured advancing special treatments to particular social berths. Bose felt that it is a crucial issue to be given due consideration while building a nation for it is necessary to maintain a secular approach devoid of any communal flavour. If protection ought to be given it must be rendered at the preliminary stage in terms of education and socio-economic assistance without letting it loom large over the later years. If the primary reservation is allowed to be indulged upon in the adolescence, the man will lose his self-reliance and pick up a parasitic orientation which is so un-productive and malevolent for the society at large. Bose also at the same time said,
The backward classes of today must be given preferential treatment in regard to educational or economic facilities, with the proviso that these do not go against the long-range general interests of the nation. It is a difficult task; but we are sure that those who are in charge of the administration today will be able to keep their vision clear, and not allow sentimentality or political expediency to drag them into steps which, though apparently just, will serve to weaken the very foundations of our nationhood (ibid:62).

Thus it seemed very clear that Bose was very careful while deliberating on the very sticky issue of reservation. He understood that though reservation must be eked out to the backward classes he was gingerly enough not to make the nation a scapegoat of communal politics.

**Building the blocks of national integration along the Gandhian line**

Bose picked up the ropes of national integration in tandem with the moralistic underpinnings of the Gandhian ideology. Like Gandhi, Bose too felt that the downtrodden across the society irrespective of their castes must be accommodated within the national fold with dignity and reverence. Gandhi, though extolled the virtues of the caste system, nevertheless loathed the vocational discrimination within it. He said people must not be segregated into the high and low on the basis of the occupations they profess, instead they must be taught to respect the nobility embedded in every profession. Bose thus emphasized on the civic efforts to re-build the nation along with the administrative measures. Bose himself said,

> We believe that the role of non-official endeavour is very great in regard to the question of social uplift. Mahatma Gandhi saw clearly that some occupations like scavenging, leather-working etc. were looked upon as unclean by people occupying high rungs in the social ladder. And those who pursued these ‘lowly’ occupations by caste were assigned a low place in society. It was clear to Gandhi that any occupation which was necessary for the life of the community must be looked upon as equal to another, no matter whether one involved uncleanness or not (ibid:63).

Gandhi therefore, as Bose assumed, was waging a revolution in the Hindu society by abrogating the idea of the social hierarchy altogether. That manual labour was glorified and given such a lofty place in the society and this was much of a revolution
in the orthodox and highly stratified Hindu society. Gandhi while waging a war against the hierarchical caste society was also giving call to a great social upheaval that was set to present the Hindu society in a different form altogether. Bose thus said,

Gandhi enlisted volunteers from among high castes, employed them in the so-called 'low' jobs, and thus virtually created a revolution in Hindu society.... anybody who lived on the toils of others had no place in his ideal society. Bread labour was the first moral law of existence. (ibid:63).

Thus it was clear that Gandhi had proposed manual labour for every one irrespective of the kind of work they do. Gandhi had affiliated himself to Tolstoy’s theory of bread—labour. This theory assumes the basic responsibility of all men in the society towards the reproduction of the basic amenities of life, something which no man can evade. Bose himself corroborated this by saying,

Gandhi subscribed to Tolstoy’s theory of bread—labour, according to which no man was free from the obligation of body-labour for the production of the elementary necessaries of life. This was a law which should apply to intellectual workers as well. They too were not to be exempted from its operation (ibid:47).

Not just Tolstoy, Bose had also drawn his idea of social equality in work from several other sources. That every work should be given equal footing had already been emphasized upon by several other philosophers who definitely had inspired Gandhi. Therefore, Bose said,

It was in 1904 that Gandhi derived an idea from Ruskin, namely that, a lawyer’s work has the same value as a barber’s, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work (Bose: 1962: 47).

Bose said that Gandhi’s way of fighting for the rights of the poor was strong and resolute. He was adamant to place them on equal footing with the men of higher stratum. He said though intellectual labour was necessary, physical labour is a necessity for everyone and parasitic men should have no place in the society. Gandhi emphasized strongly that physical labour was an imperative for everyone
and no one should be spared of this even if he was a great intellectual. Bose therefore quoted Gandhi in the following way,

I venture to say that in ancient times Brahmins worked with their body as with their mind. But if they did not, body labour is a proved necessity at the present time. In this connection I would refer to the writings of Tolstoy and how he made famous the theory of Bread Labour which was first propounded in his country by the Russian peasant Bondaref…………as to this he had no doubt that if India was to live an exemplary life of independence which would be the envy of the world, all the bhangis, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day’s work. Indian society may never reach the goal but it was the duty of every Indian to set his sail towards that goal and no other if India was to be a happy land (ibid: 47).

Therefore, Bose it seems to have contemplated at large on the Gandhian way of bringing justice and social equality in the society. He too felt that the social integration was possible only if the non-official ways of meting justice were sternly followed. Not just change of laws would do, but the real problem would lie in indoctrinating the common minds with the civic ways of harvesting equality and equipoise. Gandhi too felt that for socio-economic equality to spread across the society, non-violent measures coupled with non-co-operation must be coupled and applied appropriately. The rich men could not be forced to shed off their wealth and share an equal pedestal with the poor. The thought of appropriating the wealth of the affluent sections of the society forcibly is wrong and unjustified for it would only create a macabre condition in society. Instead the rich in the society could be taken as the trustee of the wealth which they have accumulated for themselves. They might be convinced that they would not require to surrender the entire stock of wealth that they have accumulated for themselves. Therefore, they could remain the trustee of their wealth that the society uses. This way the rich could be assiduously used to bring about the social equilibrium in the just way without antagonizing them.

Gandhi knew that the rich and the enterprising had many things to contribute to the society and so they must be put to use in a tactful way. They must also be reminded of their dependence on the poor for their success and prosperity lest they go berserk in disturbing the roots of national integration. The poor should therefore through appropriate measures of non-violence non-co-operation give the rich a lesson for their
life. Hence, the rich should be turned into trustees of the wealth of the nation to make them participate in the task of nation-building and to boost their integration with the poor and the needy (ibid: 50).

The objectives of national integration that Bose proposed definitely was related to Gandhi’s theory of trusteeship from which, perhaps, he drew much of his inspiration. As far as the theory of trusteeship goes, Gandhi said,

Indeed, at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must lie that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for the superfluous wealth possessed by them. For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours… if, however, in spite of the utmost effort, the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term and the latter are more and more crushed and die of hunger, what is to be done? In trying to find out the solution to this riddle I have lighted on non-violent non-co-operation and civil-disobedience as the right and infallible means. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society. If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread against the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation (ibid:61).

Bose delved on this theory of trusteeship to assign men a place of their own. He felt the whip of inequality is very harshly affecting the poor. He therefore urged to build a trusteeship of the wealth, so that poor men can be made a beneficiary of the collective wealth without antagonizing the rich. This can be done in peaceful ways instead of pressurizing the rich to part with their treasures.

**Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the problem of national integration.**

Bose, as we saw, worked at length on the issue of the integration of the scheduled castes and tribes. He said that we are entering a new phase where these communities are becoming even more conscious of their rights and demands. This was specially so in the wake of the constitutional measures undertaken for them. Bose further said,

The object is to devise measures so that the present social distance between them and the rest of their Indian brotherhood is bridged as quickly as possible. At the moment, there is a rising political and cultural consciousness among them which is the result of the provisions laid down in our Constitution. They have begun to feel more deeply than
ever before that they are less educated, less economically advanced, and in several instances, also less regarded with equality by some other sections of the population (ibid:100).

The modern state administration had built up political and economic interdependence among the various communities so that the mutual interaction among its various layers is eased up. Bose invited the growth of various functional organizations and voluntary institutions which would help integration among the various layers of society spontaneously despite the linguistic and the cultural differences running amok. Bose himself said,

It may even be that, with growing economic and political interdependence, the higher forms of culture built up through ages in different parts of India, may begin to interact with one another more freely, and help in their mutual enrichment. This should be a natural process, the pace of which should never be artificially forced. The genius of Indian civilization in the past has lain in thus seeking unity at certain levels, while allowing diversity to continue and even thrive at other levels (ibid:100).

In this context, Bose analysed at length the educational, economic and administrative measures taken to uplift the conditions of the scheduled castes and tribes. Bose at the same time believed that effectiveness of the measures would depend not just on how well the government works but also on the overall response and awareness of the citizens of the nation. Even though Bose worked as a government representative of national welfare, promoting the rights of the scheduled and minority communities, he nevertheless encouraged alternative measures of national integration.

**Taking a middle approach so as to limit official patronage and encourage self-reliance of the men.**

Bose agrees that the motive is not just to raise the number of people from these communities into the educational fold but also at the same time to provide primary education to them. He wanted to reverse the prevailing tendency of education among the scheduled communities so as to turn the higher emphasis on college and professional training in favour of universal primary education. It was quite evident that Bose was gravitated towards Gandhi’s idea of primary schooling and wanted to promote it whole-heartedly. Bose thus pleads,
The policy has to be modified, so that, along with the needed higher education, more importance is given to the achievement of universal primary education, which should approximate as far as possible to the Nai Talm [337] or Basic education of Gandhiji’s conception (Bose: 1962: 102).

Bose took a middle ground which was amiable to both the scheduled and the non-scheduled communities. He was wary of the discontent that would result from granting of special privilege to the scheduled communities. The common mass without any constitutional shield thus floated like a boat without its oar and this disorientation was reflected in their educational and employment choices. The scheduled communities were showing a keen interest in higher education by virtue of their constitutional safeguards which thus could land them in secured bureaucratic jobs. The general populace on the other hand was ambling in vain without any proper direction. When the privileged communities were garnering their skills for well secured government services, the non-privileged ones were struggling hard into factories as workers and labourers. Bose said that such a policy not only created a divide among the mass in society but also imperilled and menaced the productive organization of the nation. Instead of participating in the productive organization of the nation with full energy and vigour men were looking for swanky positions which detached them from the real grass root functioning in the society.

Bose therefore recommended for vocational organizations and many such non-formalistic institutions which could revert this trend among their masses and would shift the administrative attention back to general mass in the society. That way nobody would feel disoriented and the educational or employment chances among the scheduled and its non-scheduled communities would not take a starkly contrasted picture. Moreover, the productive organization of the society would not be downplayed as many people both from the scheduled and non-scheduled communities would take an equal interest. This was more needed when the society was undergoing its transitional phase and the caste based non-competitive organization was swiftly shifting to the industry and modern technology which was highly competitive in character.
It was at this time that Bose recommended for a brave and cheerful participation in the productive organizations instead of looking for opportunist hide-outs in safe and secured bureaucratic services located on ivory towers. In his own words,

The present tendency to find security in assured jobs has to be progressively replaced by a healthy desire to participate in modern productive organization by a wise reform of the education which is being offered to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. For this purpose, a well-organized system of vocational guidance and of employment agencies has to be built up which will look after the interests of members belonging to the scheduled communities, while not neglecting the interests of every other student or employee who needs similar care. It is through such institutions that ‘national integration can be directly, but firmly promoted (Bose: 1962: 10).

Besides this, Bose suggested that special educational facilities must be assured for the people who deserve them the most. Such special provisions must be ensured for the poverty-ridden people who are in the greatest need of it, irrespective of their caste or religious affiliations. Therefore, Bose was not ready to go overboard for he said that such provisions would not be bestowed limitlessly and the flood gate must be closed. The men who would receive such opportunities must also learn to be self-reliant for that would create a boundless dependence on society. This would not only be cumbersome for the society but might also prove disastrous for them in the long run. Bose therefore said,

If the government’s resources are limited, one can argue that the benefits should firstly be extended to those who deserve it most. But once, having given them the best available opportunity in this respect, it would perhaps be wise to stop short at certain specified limits of official patronage, and encourage those who are thus educated to compete in the open market so that they are weaned from dependence on official patronage (Bose: 1969:36).

**Employment generation as a pre-condition for national integration.**

Bose said that the employment strategies envisaged for the tribes must include other avenues along land where the tribal concentration is most noted. However, Bose reminded us that too much concentration on land has its own loopholes for it could
create chances of disguised employment. The lessons of land usage must be instilled in them so that they become better equipped to enjoy the resources of the land. Bose said the proximity of the tribes towards the lands had resulted from the familiarity they had developed with the land. Perhaps, over-dependence on land could have fatal results especially as has been observed in case of migrating men who crowd in cities only after their native village economy have disappointed them. Bose said that this tendency must be defeated otherwise the migrating men and their stubborn choice of jobs would only escalate the graph of unemployment. Bose therefore said, “May be they prefer some kinds of work and avoid others; but this should not be regarded as an insurmountable disqualification” (ibid: 43). Bose therefore encouraged the tribal men to take interest in alternative sources of employment which should be sustainable enough in the long run.

Haimendorf in such a context also realized that tribal economy even in the contemporary India was basically agro-based and the governmental measures were also of the same genre. Haimendorf thus wrote,

With the commencement of the fifth Five Year Plan in 1977 an administrative setup known as the Integrated Tribal Development Agency was inaugurated. In this, high priority is being given to agricultural development, largely by provision of minor irrigation schemes. At the same time communications are to be improved and electricity brought even to backward areas. In order to provide employment for landless tribes, the establishment of minor industries is envisaged, and the Girijan Co-operative Corporation is supposed to provide improved marketing facilities for minor forest produce and to supply to tribes many of their basic needs. In pursuance of these aims Integrated Tribal Development Projects were prepared for specific areas of tribal concentration, or in some cases for individual tribal groups (Haimendorf: 1982: 47).

Bose felt that along with the conventional modes of production, such ways of fending off one self must be encouraged as far as tribal economy is concerned. Many critics felt that the tribal service sector could not flourish probably because the selection committee was biased and prejudiced towards them. Many advised for a representative from the tribal committees on the selection board lest the tribal applicants feel left out and discriminated. However, Bose felt that such a communal
composition of the selection body is harmful for the nation for it could create impediments in the way of national unification. Bose therefore said,

Personally, the writer believes that such a measure is not wise. If a selection board is alleged to function in an unfair manner, correction should be applied by every means; but not by the inclusion of representatives on a communal basis for that particular purpose. That would amount to lack of confidence in our own administrative apparatus, and concession to the belief that only a member of a particular community can look after the economic interests of that community. Eventually, and not illogically this may lead each region of India, or caste, to demand representation on public service commissions at the Union or State levels. A concession to ‘communalism’ of a new kind would undoubtedly prove detrimental to national integration, for it would consolidate, and not liquidate, the feeling of separateness (Bose: 1972: 104).

Bose was therefore inclined to develop a kind of society which was just and equal in rendering economic and employment opportunities to the people. He sought for a kind of transparency which was unheard of. Bose said while recruiting men for public services, complete confidentiality and neutrality had to be maintained even if that meant over-representation from any one specific community. The kind of impartiality which he wanted to maintain in public services was undoubtedly a primary component in making of the nation. Bose lamented that it was our misgiving that such impartiality could not have been maintained in the selection procedure which thus resulted in grievance and mayhem among the aspiring men. Bose said,

This violence is not necessarily at the instigation of interested political parties, but should be regarded as a sign of no-confidence in the bureaucratic apparatus, or even a lack of confidence in constitutional or legal means of securing justice. (ibid:104).

**Inculcating self-help and local knowledge in the crisis-ridden nation.**

Bose was thus embarked on rigorous expeditions to work among the inmates of the less fortunate societies which he thought should be the cornerstone of nation-building. But instead of politicising strategies to tap the resources of the tribal booties, he was all set to empathise with and have a benignant understanding of their predicaments.
This was perhaps possible because the politically shackled backdrop of his country had surreptitiously taught him the lessons of compassion for these denigrated denizens and to identify with their problems. The nationalist spirit was strong enough to drive him further. Bose had understood it very well that like his country, the voices of the shackled men are yet to be heard. He knew that there is no space for their representation, accountability, legitimacy and self-determination in the works that the anthropologists have so long been doing on them. So it was well evident that Bose was actually trying to retrieve a place for such men by building a model of what can be called traditional indigenous research where multiple voices can be heard and lenses will not have a colonial colour.

He asked his students not to depend on rote-learning from the western texts but to gather knowledge through indigenous experiences and oral history. This is because he wanted us to focus upon our own history and civilization. He felt that with the imperial forces barging into our country, the tribal life has been turbulently shaken to its roots. Their lands were encroached upon and their resources were sapped. He understood the society was swept off by the imperial power that was now ready to write off the indigenous men and the culture that the natives had cherished for long.

Bose wanted to slaughter the imperial ways of creating the narratives that would now be written but in their own terms. He knew that such narratives would be far away from the reality and would never stand as the true representation of the natives whom Bose wanted to empower. He thus felt the need for creating an indigenous knowledge base by combating the blatant forces of colonialism. He did this by creating a traditional form of knowledge corpus that took care of their routine practices like selecting a suitable place for Jhum cultivation, discussing with them the ensuing problems of slash and burn cultivation which they had been performing over ages, enumerating the carrying capacity of the land or investigating their problems of infertility among communities heavily fed on protein etc. This way Bose assisted them in building up a robust form of nation built on the basis of indigenous knowledge and leadership. He was all ready to set up self-help groups who will sustain their own selves through local expertise and skills. Russell Bishop while creating an indigenous knowledge for the Kaupapa Mauri community similarly writes,
Researchers in Aotearoa/New Zealand have developed a tradition of research that has perpetuated colonial power imbalances, thereby undervaluing and belittling Maori knowledge and learning practices and processes in order to enhance those of the colonizers and adherents of colonial paradigm. A social pathological research approach has developed in Aotearoa/New Zealand that has become implied in all phases of the research process: the "inability" of Maori culture to cope with human problems and propositions that Maori culture was and is inferior to that of the colonizers in human terms. Furthermore, such practice has perpetrated an ideology of cultural superiority that precludes the development of power sharing processes and the legitimization of diverse cultural epistemologies and cosmologies (Bishop: 2000: 110).

Thus like Bose, later researchers were also pressing for a local form of knowledge creation that harped on giving priorities to the local needs and aspirations. Bose said it is necessary to emancipate the backward classes by bestowing upon them the reins of their own society. Once they are turned into leaders of their own community, they would handle their own problems better for it is only they who know which are the real concerns for their society. Thus time and again, Bose emphasized on ingenious native leadership for it is the only way of strengthening a society especially for its crippling communities. Bose therefore said,

This is the way of developing an indigenous leadership from among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who will help to educate and uplift their own communities, look after the spatial disabilities from which their particular community suffers, and thus help in bringing them up socially and economically to the level of other more advanced communities (Bose: 1972:104).

Bose nevertheless had realized that the loopholes of indigenous leadership as well when he realized the indigenous leaders instead of striving towards equality had been driven by the band wagon of sectional interests. Therefore, instead of seeking for social equipoise the leaders are pressing for their own communal priorities. This, Bose warned us, is unjustified and blatantly betrays us of the resolution that the indigenous leadership made but broke so fast. Bose therefore said, “This is one reason why the rise of indigenous leadership which was expected to do away with the ills of inequality, has not so far succeeded in achieving the desired results.” (ibid: 225).
Prof N.K Bose had written quite prolifically on various aspects of nation and ways to create a sustained state. He looked at the issue of disintegration from various angles and tried ameliorating the problem in relevant ways. Given his background in colonial history, Bose tried tackling the problems besetting the country in his own way. His deep knowledge of the socio-political history coupled with his inquisitive mind for extensive research led him to investigate intently about the nation and its contours. Bose looked at the problem of national integration from various quarters each with its distinctive elements. His work seemed resplendent with these various essences of nation-building and the ways to refurbish the nation with a fresh spurt of ideas and thoughts that seemed extremely relevant for giving the nation a strong foundation.

**Bose’s thought on the wedding between the territorial and the national integration.**

Bose while discussing the various relevant ambits of national integration had underscored the area of territorial integration in detail. He was rather concerned with the problem of territorial unity and discussed the threats posed by it for the nation. A nation is earmarked by its territory which chisels out its geo-political distinction from other nations. Territory of a state therefore remains an important consideration while plotting the avenues of its integration. However, before coming straight to the area of territorial integration let us try and understand what we exactly mean by integration.

Myron Weiner, while discussing the politics of integration, discussed very well what he exactly meant by the term. He said,

Integration may refer to the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrete groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity. When used in this sense, "integration" generally presumes the existence of an ethnically plural society in which each group is characterized by its own language or other self-conscious cultural qualities, but the problem may also exist in a political system which is made up of once distinct independent political units with which people identified. National integration thus refers specifically to the problem of creating a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties (Weiner: 1965:53).
Weiner therefore makes it clear that even when he is explaining integration, he necessarily talks of territorial integration and its retention. His definition makes it very clear that in developing countries that are resplendent with ethnic minorities, territorial unification remains an essential condition for harmony and concord. Weiner’s explanation thus remains particularly significant for developing societies like India which has umpteen ethnic pluralities and to bridle all such multiplicities tenuously makes the question of territory even more pertinent. This is especially important because after India won independence, many areas which were only indirectly under the British rule became vulnerable ones. It was more so in case of boundaries between countries which did not attain much importance during the British rule. The boundaries and its inhabitants thus remained hidden under the blanket of darkness. The tribes or the marginal communities inhabiting such transitional areas were often confounded by the emergent sense of territorial integration acquired by the newly emerging nations.

Weiner therefore continued to say that there is an essential difference between territorial integration and national integration though one subsumes the other. He said that on the one hand, national integration deals with the individuals who despite belonging to separate social groups or historically distinct political units may still have relative feelings towards the nation. On the other hand, territorial integration refers to the pivotal control that the nation objectively imposes on its territorial ambit. Weiner therefore made it very clear that national integration cannot be espoused without adequately addressing the area of territorial integration. Thus it seems pertinent that if the two are proximately related to one another, it is self-evident that if one is at peril, it definitely imperils the other. N.K Bose while deliberating on the areas of national integration also realized this. He therefore was threatened when he found that the territorial integration was at stake. Bose expressed his agony in a rather conspicuous way when he said,

National unity and the territorial integrity of the country are being challenged. Secessionist forces have intensified their activities in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. Armed insurgency in these states has now acquired a dangerous dimension. Communal riots (mainly between Hindus and Muslims) have occurred in different parts of the country leading to loss of lives of hundreds of people belonging to both the communities. Such riots are still raging in several areas causing deep concern to all right-minded people. Caste
conflicts have led to a serious situation in states like Bihar, U.P and Tamil Nadu. Tension is high in many tribal areas. Some foreign powers, particularly Pakistan, are openly supporting divisive forces in the country with arms and money. They are also training terrorists. There is definitely a move from outside to Balkanize India. In this context questions have been raised about the viability of India as a nation. Are we to remain united or disintegrate into fragments? (Bose: 1991:2).

Bose was thus looking at territorial integration from all possible angles. He was primarily concerned with the secessionist forces prowling over the country at large. However, militant nationalism bred by a kind of jingoism had also been growing by leaps and bounds.

Bose was perturbed by the growing pace of secession going on not only in the national but also in the international sphere. He was appalled at the exorbitant rise in fragmentation of the nations into regional atoms and he was exasperated to find an ever increasing rate in the separatist urges of the national leaders. He was shuddered to imagine what this would lead us to but at the same time he found this tendency contagious such that it could not be controlled or stopped. He understood that it was an international issue because the secessionist forces were not confined within the four walls of the immediate nation but had almost encroached upon the entire globe. The urge for territorial separation was therefore a global phenomenon that was spreading like a wild fire in the nooks and crannies of the human civilization. Bose gave an account of this gory scene vividly when he said,

In the Soviet Union, not only the three Baltic Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, but many other Republics like Georgia and Ukraine at the present moment want to get out of the Soviet Union. In Yugoslavia, the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia have passed resolutions in their respective republican legislatures for their secession from the Yugoslav federation. The people in the autonomous province of Kosovo want to be separated from the Republic of Serbia in Yugoslavia. On this question they have been involved in long years of violent movement. In the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, which is the new name for Czechoslovakia, many people in the Republic of Slovakia want to secede from the federal republic. In the French-speaking province of Quebec in Canada, the demand for secession has been raised again, though this demand is yet to gather momentum. In the United Kingdom many among the Scottish and the Welsh people
want the separation of their lands from the United Kingdom. In Spain, the Basque nationals are for separation. In nearby Pakistan there are moves for secession in the provinces of Sind and Baluchistan. In Sri Lanka also a large number among the Tamils want their separate Homeland-Eelam. On the other hand, however, the process of unification of divided countries is also going on simultaneously (Bose:1991:3).

Thus it seems pretty evident that Bose for long remained agonized about the state of disintegration going on around the globe and therefore saw the Indian situation not as an exception but rather as a continuation of the larger international mayhem. Though Bose saw the problem as a rather global phenomenon, it can be argued that as far as the Indian situation is concerned, Bose was proposing an oriental approach. He distinguished the Indian context from the international one by choosing an indigenous approach and advocated strongly for it.

**The very basis of the territorial integration was already innate**

Bose strongly felt that basis for territorial unity in India had always been based on its ethnic diversity. Despite bolstered claims of colonial intervention, Bose resolutely abrogated such notions as proposed reasons of national unity. He strongly negated the much acclaimed theories of colonial mediation which said that British rule over the vast Indian sub-continent acted as an invincible shield against fragmentation. It was believed that India in itself was a nation of vulnerable geo-political crust till the British forces took over the country with storm. It was only after the colonial forces had interceded did the nation develop strong roots of territorial integration. Bose was not ready to conform to such claims when he strongly appealed to the nation to soon replace them by a robust theory of national unity amongst diversity which he claimed was a congenital quality of the Indian nation itself and would not necessarily be exported from outside. Bose time and again reiterated that territorial unity for Indian nation was not a foreign idea transplanted from some extraneous origin but was something that was already entailed within the nation for long.

Territorial integration, therefore, was seen by Bose as an integral character of Indian nation and extolled as an innate character san its derivation from external forces willing to wreak havoc over the nation. The argument would seem more pertinent if we can quote Bose as followed,
The lingering protagonists of an old and somewhat outmoded theory still maintain that there was no national unity among the people of India before the advent of the British. According to them, only with British rule modern communication system emerged and with introduction of the English language in the provinces the different parts of India came together and a feeling of oneness developed among the people of the country. And, after the British left the country, the process of disintegration has started again. But this formulation does not stand the scrutiny of knowledgeable and perceptive minds. The distinguished British historian, Vincent A. Smith, in The Oxford History of India has said, European writers as a rule have been more conscious of the diversity than of the unity of India. India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect (Bose:1991:4).

Thus we can argue, that Bose characterized the pre-British India with a form of territorial integration which blends all sorts of differences into a common cult that absorbs multiple and tenacious divisions thus creating an idyllic society constituted of equilibrium and equipoise. Bose contrasted this with a political integration that was harvested in post-British regime that spoke of integration along the vertical line. Such integration made the communities pro-active about their ethnic differences and created a form of militant integration that created more of disintegration in disguise of profound integration. Instead of fighting against the forces that acted as their predators, the local groups would integrate with them to show strong loyalty towards these patrons and instead fight against their own countrymen along communal lines being instigated by the foreign forces. Their objective was not to design any equitable society but to recurrently participate in the political process for individual participation and political premium.

Therefore, the researcher’s argument follows Weiner’s line of thinking who thus distinguished between these two forms of integration along the usage of the idea of ‘Elite-mass integration’ in James S. Coleman’s and Carl G. Rosberg’s edited work, *Political Parties and National Integration in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California, 1964). He said,
They use integration in two senses: (1) political integration, which refers to the progressive bridging of the elite-mass gap on the vertical plane in the course of developing an integrated political process and a participant political community, and (2) territorial integration, which refers to the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities on the horizontal plane in the process of creating a homogeneous territorial political community (Coleman & Rosberg:1964).

Evidently, Bose was strongly vouching for a really strong national integration in the horizontal sense of the term even at the cost of local communal feelings getting overshadowed by the over-towering presence of the central authority. Centralization of power might at times create urges for localization but such indiscreet demands were easily cut asunder by strong economic patriotism, which remains yet another core area of Bose’s theory. Territorial integrity therefore was given more importance than political integration by Bose. It was not important whether narrow disparate pockets of ethnic pluralities could claim autonomy, which in most cases got suppressed under a central authority, but what remained most important was whether the central forces annexed a definite territory and levelled all the ensuing differences under a common fold.

Thus the kind of national integration that Bose espoused was not approaching towards differentiation but towards homogenization and subordination on the claimed territorial jurisdiction. But unfortunately this amalgamation that Bose looked forward to never found in the times of British Raj which only created much hiatus in the country. Bose contrasted their regime with the Islamic reign which despite exhibiting their sharp differences from the Hindus still worked at a uniform blending of both cultures to create a rich tradition. Bose therefore said,

"With the advent of the Mohammedans, a new synthesis was gradually worked out. Though they did not accept the religion of the Hindus, they made India their home and shared in the common social life of the people - their joys and their sorrows. Through mutual cooperation, a new art and a new culture was evolved which was different from the old but which nevertheless was distinctly Indian. In architecture, painting, music - new creations were made which represented the happy blending of the two streams of culture (Bose:1991:11)."
Thus the theory of unity in diversity had been aptly used by Bose for his understanding of the problems of nation building as well as to dislodge the earlier rationale erected to justify the base of national integration. However, Bose did not just stop at that, he went on to probe deeper into the problem till he found something interesting about the relation posed between the elite and the masses.

**Bose’s approach of ‘elite-mass’ gap to the problem of national integration**

Perhaps, the way, Bose had approached the problem of national integration thus requires some more deliberation now. It seemed clear from Bose’s account that he was talking of a lingering mismatch between the government and the governed while talking of the grave problem of national disintegration plaguing the country. He felt that the Indian masses felt inhibited by the overpowering presence of the imperial forces and fought ways out of it desperately. Bose therefore argued how the national leaders of the yesteryears fought strongly against such forces which wanted to divide the country on the communal lines. He understood the problem of disintegration from the stand-point of the colonial policy of divide and rule that he believed had released strong secessionist forces in the country. He necessarily saw the problem as the one of disjunction between the elite and the masses where the former tries hard to en-cash on the communal differences whereas the masses pressed hard to preserve their local differences.

Bose said this was rampant in the colonial regime when the British rulers instigated the Hindus to fight against the Muslims on flimsy grounds thus creating panic and disorder across the political horizon. This, Bose felt, created differences in the aspirations of the elites and the masses. He demonstrated this by the recording the differences in the attitudes of the nation before and after the colonial advent. Bose argued that in the pre-British nation, the communal differences hardly surfaced despite strong multiplicities across ethnic lines, whereas the post – British regime was dotted with profuse ethnic bleeding. Bose thus walked along the line of looking at the problem of national integration from the angle of discord between the elite and the masses. He showed how the British intervention had divorced the masses from the elite thus creating long and pervasive lines of disintegration. This was unlike the past when the elites, Bose argued, integrated the masses and accommodated them within their fold.
Thus despite strong lines of differences, the elites of the Indian nation had succeeded in bringing the masses cutting across various lines under one umbrella. Bose corroborated his claim by giving the instance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose who did such an ingenious task in unifying the whole country in the Indian National Army in the South-East Asia. Bose thus said,

That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose performed a miracle by achieving a unique solidarity of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and even Anglo-Indians in the Indian National Army in South-East Asia in the early forties at a time when the Hindus and the Muslims were fighting with each other in India at the instigation of the British. Bose made an analysis of how the Hindus and Muslims worked together before the British came to India, in building up one common Indian nationality (Bose:1991).

Thus the argument is this that N.K Bose was trying to create a theory of national integration along the nature of the connection that grew between the elite and the masses. He argued that in the past the relation was one of harmony and concord while it eroded soon after the advent of the British regime to give way to discord and disorder. Bose was trying to show how the domain of national integration changed forms in the pre and post British regime in India. In the past he tried drawing integration along the horizontal line where the elites in the society tried creating a likeness across the multiple affiliations by trying to create a homogeneous society. He put the onus of creating this unity partly on the elites of the society and especially those that worked as the mentors of the Hindu religion. He had argued strongly of the catholicity of the Hindu philosophy that tried all means to tie the various communities within the society across their varying affiliations into a common mould. Soon after independence, cracks appeared in this mould and the gaps became pronounced with time.

**A local instance of such a gaping division.**

To show this growing gulf between the elite and the masses, Bose’s deliberation of the impacts of industrialization on Birbhum, a Bengal district, can be taken as a case in point. He showed how the district was bountiful and served as a store house of crops like paddy, cotton, mustard, sugarcanes etc that fed the villages. The villages
ensured that it could provide with all such essential services like carpenters, tailors, washer-men, barbers and the like so that the villagers hardly ventured out. Even the peripheral villages were doled out stacks of rice annually; such was the benevolence and affluence of the villages in Bengal. The *Ajoy* river supplemented this copiousness and complemented both agriculture and industry in rural Bengal. The industrial goods were transported by boats through water ways to different countries. The conditions changed drastically with the coming of the East India Company. It was no longer satisfied with the meagre profits that they accrued by selling these items here. The government in its drive to increase the supply of the foreign goods in north India, became oblivious of the concerns of the farmers of Howrah, Hoogly, Burdwan and Birbhum, took initiatives in laying railway lines. To ensure transaction lines along the railway channels, roads were built, to ease the lines of trade and communication. This increased trade for some, but not for all.

Thus the gaps between the elite and the masses were getting bolder with days. The infrastructure set by the government to enrich the affluent farmers and traders boomeranged back on the small farmers, who were marginalized beyond limit. The dams built on the *Ajoy* river to ease the official trades, brought bane in disguise of boon when the dam could no longer control the violent upsurges when the tides hit the river. The rivers were inundated with the water hyacinth that destroyed the very productivity of the ponds. The ponds decomposed and finally dried up into arid plains that were of no use. The farmers, tailors, barber all lost their means of livelihood and either became daily wage-labourers or fled the villages. Thus the pauperization of the masses was complete. Bose asks a pertinent question, who benefitted from such mayhem? Bose answered himself,

> The process benefitted only the rich and the middle-classes. They made incomes from different sources, accruing from business in rice and paddy. The trade centres were increasingly being converted into small towns. The beautiful girls of the households of *Jogi*, *Munchi* and *Haari*, went through unenduring pain till at a point when they were forced to join brothel houses. With the predominance of Malaria, the remaining families left the villages for cities in hope of better medical facilities. Following them, the cities sprouted schools, Harisabha, and therefore the vocations of teacher, lawyers, dramatists made for a handsome living (Bose: 2014:250)\(^1\).
Thus Bose repented that cities prospered at the stake of the dying villages, which were perishing by the new policies undertaken by the British government for the steady economic development. Such development never brought true prosperity for the villages, because neither the granary of the farmers nor the work stations of the carpenters came to life. It was a unilateral progress that thrived on the river banks of the villages, to propitiate the urban masses, at the cost of the drainage of the rural India. Thus Bose showed how the colonial forces divided the country into opposing classes that were forced to wage war against the other. More importantly the upper-middle classes were formed that boasted of their proximity to the colonial mentors and did not leave any leaf unturned to impoverish the very village that had supported them once. Thus with the pauperization of the masses, the very difference between the elite and the masses gave a serious blow to the integration of the nation. Thus following the lines of Weiner, we can argue that Bose was assuming a gap between the ruler and the ruled while framing his theory of integration. Bose’s theory becomes easier to understand after we have read Weiner who said,

Implied in this usage is the familiar notion of a "gap" between the elite and the mass, characterized by marked differences in aspirations and values. The "gap" may be widest in society with a passive population and modernizing elite, but a relatively stable if frustrating relationship may exist. More often the masses are beginning to become organized and concerned with exercising influence, while the elite responds with attempts to coerce, persuade, or control the masses. It is under these conditions of conflict and often internal war that we customarily speak of "disintegration. (Weiner: 1965:56).

Thus it becomes palpable that Bose must have had such dichotomous relation between the elite and the masses in mind while he was sketching post-British regime characteristic of disintegration resulting necessarily from the vertical form of integration that he saw was fast dividing the nation. The wealth accrued by conciliating the colonial mentors and helping them push their way in a foreign country like India, helped some people prosper at the cost of the others. Thus the sudden elitization of a few propertied classes and the emergence of the middle class drove the last nail on the coffin thus destroying the nation.
Conclusion

Thus from what we discussed so far, we can conclude our argument saying that Bose had always vouched for a distinct form of integration and had shuddered at the incident of such integration being challenged by secessionist forces. He lamented upon the partition of the country which for him must have been the most blatant form of territorial disintegration which still haunts our national history. Such partition has actually created a smoke screen to persuade the nation to divide the country along communal lines, the results of which have been only to create an atmosphere of terror and animosity. There had been more communal tensions in post-independent India than in the past. The communal clashes in Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar and Punjab have shown how the two nation theory can create gory after-shocks of strained territorial integration. In fact, Bose time and again have doubted the pre-dispositions of the national leaders spear-heading the partition of the country. He wistfully longed for a free country with people conscious of their territorial rights but not getting unreasonably belligerent about it. Bose felt that the way each community along various axes of their identity fought for their individual territory being oblivious of the greater territory of which they are parts, might pose serious issues of disintegration. The much celebrated idea of secularism that was once considered the unifying force of constitution has lost much of its relevance owing to the misappropriation of territorial integration. Bose therefore argued,

In the text books of history prescribed for our schools and colleges, till recently there had been passages with communal overtones - showing the bias of the authors for or against particular communities. Even now, the Union Government is maintaining at the taxpayers' cost two central universities - the Benaras Hindu University and the Aligarh Muslim University. Is this practice secular? Can there be a Hindu, or Muslim, or Christian University run by the Government in a secular state? (Bose: 1991:11).

Therefore, we can argue that Bose undoubtedly proposed for a revamp of the over-all construct of territory, such that it does not create a vicious circle of such problems that it actually purported to evade. The partition that objected to end communal strife actually ended in multiplying such strife by many more times paradoxically. Bose’s idea of territorial integration and his ways of applying it on the nation therefore
remains especially relevant in the separatist regime riding past the contemporary times that seems redolent of parochial loyalty and eroding nationality. Bose’s arguments and his deliberations of territorial integration have salience especially in this era of identity politics and communal onslaught.
References


