CHAPTER - I

Introduction

In the modern times, not only in India, but in a great many countries, democratic form of governance is established, but it is most popular in India. One important feature of this form, where federalism is accepted, is that the whole country is divided into various provinces or states for administrative convenience on the basis of social and linguistic diversities and geographical hindrances. But the sense of unity and oneness in the people of different provinces or states and their aspirations for the country’s advancement, greatness and security are the principal factors, which facilitate the prosperity and enhance the glory of the country or the nation. This sense of oneness amongst the inhabitants of a country and their aspirations for the nation's alround prosperity, protection and glory along with the feeling of unflinching devotion to the motherland or fatherland constitute the sense of nationalism of the people of that particular country.

We notice that in India the concept of nationalism is directly and widely influenced by the religious, economic, social, political and cultural facts and considerations. As a result of this, the notions of nationality and nationalism find a prominent place in almost all the languages and
literatures of India. Sanskrit is the oldest language in India and Sanskrit literature is vast and peerless; this Sanskrit language is the common heritage of all the people of India and its influence on different regional languages and literatures is very obvious. The two incomparable epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata have, for thousands of years, been exercising in the mindset of all Indians an abiding influence.

A number of Indian and western scholars are unanimous in their opinion that these two great epics are the finest poetic creations of ancient Indian genius and these continue to influence the cultural trends, literary endeavours as well as the value-system of even present day Indians.

In these two epics, we find reflections of the visions of Vālmīki and Vyāsa about the cultural unity and indivisibility of the vast country known as Bhāratavarṣa. The story related in the Rāmāyaṇa is not the story of a North Indian prince's expedition to South India and Laṅkā, but the story of the struggle of the benevolent sections amongst Indians for establishing the rule of law, for reasserting the right's of Indian people to live in peace and to follow the faiths of their choice, for defending the motherland from the onsloughts of barbaric forces coming from abroad and for upholding the honour and dignity of womanhood as well as the universal moral values, which sustained the social fabric of our nation.

The story of the Mahābhārata, on the other hand, is not only the story of oft-found intra-dynastic feud and resultant conflict for resolving the family dispute over the right of succession; it is rather the story of a momentous struggle for resolving much larger issues related to the duties
of ideal monarchs and their sense of commitment to the welfare of the subjects and their adherence to universal moral principles or eternal code of duty (otherwise known as Sanatana Dharma), which sustain the social structure and ensures the peace and order, stability and progress of the society. When powerful Kṣatriya kings turned despots and entered into unholy alliance for subduing the saner and benevolent sanctions amongst the royal class and threw off the principles of Rājadharna, Lord Kṛṣṇa formulated a long-term plan for re-establishing the rule of law or Dharmarājya in the extensive land called Bhāratavarṣa.

This gigantic endeavour undertaken by the prudent Kṛṣṇa was actually aimed at emancipating the people of the entire country from the clutches of despotic and arrogant rulers, who took delight in discarding ethical values and the principles of good governance as enunciated in the Dharmasāstra. Thus, in this great epic, the idea of nationalism is constituted by the concept of 'one country, one people'.

Through the present research endeavour, we propose to throw light on the concept of nationalism in the two immortal epics of India i.e., the Rāmāyanam and the Mahābhārata through affording interpretations of the texts and events of the epics in order to substantiate the contention that the concept of nationalism was very much present in the societies of the epic periods, though the nature and spirit of the concept varied because of the difference in time, place and circumstances.

But, before we proceed to the central theme, it is necessary to analyse the western and Indian viewpoints on the import of words like nation,
nationality and nationalism and also the primitive and principal source, from which the streams of Indian nationalism originated and afterwards flourished with the passage of thousands of years.

**Nation, Nationality and Nationalism – Western View:**

The western scholars have different opinions about the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism'. So we find a wide range of opinions amongst the western scholars, regarding what actually constitute a 'nation' and 'nationalism'. Israel Zanwile in his 'Principle of Nationalities' says "Nationalism is one of those tropical jungles of thought in which politics and journalism flourish."1 H. L. Featherstone in his 'A Century of Nationalism' opines that "Nationalism is not capable of scientific definition."2 Carlton J. H. Hayes remarks that nationalism is a very modern theory.3 Hans K'ohn considers nationalism to be the process of integration of the masses of the people into a common political form.4 In the course of discussion, he enumerates language, customs and traditions, religions, political frontiers as some of the important factors of nationalism. But, he appears to be confused in affording a concrete definition and eventually remarks, "Although some of these objective factors are of great importance for the formation of nationalities, the most essential element is a living and active corporate will. Nationality is formed by the decision to form a nationality."5

Robert Michel also mentions 'the will of people' as the essential element of nationalism. He says – "Nationality does not consist necessarily in either language or religion or a common past, but in the will of people.
The expression of this will is generally made by a synthesis of some of the constitutive elements which we have just enumerated, and sometimes all of them. However, Nationality can very well exist in the absence of several of them and can even be limited to a single element, the essential one: the will.  

**Nation:**

The political thinkers of the western countries have expressed different views on what the term 'nation' means. Erin Mckean opines that a nation is a grouping of people who share common history, culture, language and ethnic origin, often possessing or seeking its own government. The development and conceptualization of a nation is closely related to the development of modern industrial states and nationalist movements in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although nationalists would trace nations into the past along uninterrupted lines of historical narrative.

Benedict Anderson argued that nations were 'imagined communities' because, "the 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"; he traced their origins back to vernacular print journalism, which by its very nature was limited with linguistic zones and addressed a common audience. Although 'nation' is also commonly used in informal discourse as a synonym for state or country, a nation is not identical to a state. Countries where the social
concept 'nation' coincides with the political concept of 'state' are called nation states.

In the strict sense, terms such as “nation,” “ethnos,” and “people” (as in “the Danish people”) denote a group of human beings. The concepts of nation and nationality have much in common with ethnic group and ethnicity, but have a more political connotation, since they imply the possibility of a nation-state. Country denominates a geographical territory, whereas state expresses a legitimized administrative and decision-making institution. Confusingly, the terms national and international are used as technical terms applying to states. International law, for instance, applies to relations between states, and occasionally between states on the one side, and individuals or legal persons on the other.

The English word 'nation' comes from the French word 'nation' (itself derived from the Latin term 'natio') meaning: The action of being born; birth; or the goddess personifying birth; or a breed (like a dog), stock, kind, species, race; or a tribe, or (rhetorically, any) set of people (contemptuous); or a nation or people.⁹

In order to appreciate how the word 'natio' was employed in classical Latin, we may consider the following quote from Cicero's philippics against Mark Antony in 44 BC. Cicero contrasts the external, inferior nations ("races of people") with the Roman civitas ("community"). "Omnes nations servitutem ferre possunt : nostra civitas non potest" ("All races are able to bear enslavement, but our community cannot").¹⁰

St. Jerome used this "genealogical-historical term.... in his Latin
translation of New Testament to denote non-Christians – that is, others."\(^{11}\) An early example of the use of the word 'nation' in conjunction with language and territory is provided in 968 by Liutprand, bishop of Cremona, who, while confronting Nicephorus II, the Byzantine emperor on behalf of his patron Otto I, Holy Roman Emperor, declared:

"The land .... which you say belongs to your empire belongs, as the nationality and language of the people proves, to the kingdom of Italy."\(^{12}\)

Some scholars observed that the Latin word, 'natio', generally connotes 'to be born'. Therefore, in classical context, nation refers to a collectivity of persons, who possess the character of common descent having racial unity and common blood relations among the members of the group. Racial unity and common blood ties are usually found in the identical ethnic groups /communities. The German scholars like Herder, Fichte and Mazzini defined nation from this ethnographical perspective. Therefore, in other words, a group of people with cultural and linguistic uniformity and endowed with distinctiveness from others can claim to be a nation.\(^{13}\) In this perspective; the Kurdish of Iraq and Tamils in Srilanka are nations but are stateless peoples, because they are yet to be recognized as distinct nations on ethnographical ground from the politically dominant ethnic groups of Iraq and Srilanka. But, this theory of construction of nation on ethnographical consideration creates many problems. There are thousands of ethnic communities around the globe with organic, cultural and linguistic differences. Therefore, this leads us to ask a question; can all ethnic communities claim the status of nations? According to E. Gellner,
language is undoubtedly an important factor for formation of nation, yet it can not alone define nation. Gellner said:

"Beside the presence of thousands of dialects, there are around 8000 languages around the world. Therefore, he questions, can we, for a moment, imagine a situation having around 8000 or even more nation states?"\textsuperscript{14}

India itself would become hundreds of nation states, had this theory of national construction would have been universally applied. Ernest Renan discarded this organic, cultural and linguistic view of nation and said that ethnographic consideration could not play any role in the construction of modern nation states. He encapsulated this argument in the following language: "The truth is that there is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera. The noblest countries like England, France and Italy are those where the blood is the most mixed."\textsuperscript{15}

In the words of Ernest Barker, self consciousness of an ethnic community about their distinctiveness is most important for formation of nation. He argues, once an ethnic community becomes self assertive about their distinctiveness from others, they insist on recognition of their ethnographic differences either as superior group or as group at least equal to other groups and claim for a right to govern themselves in federal unit within an existing state or in a separate sovereign unit. Therefore, before, transforming itself into a nation, an ethnic community goes through a transformation process, in which they become politically self conscious about their distinction. Thus, Ernest Barker said:
"Nations were already there, they had indeed been there for centuries. But it is not the things that are simply 'there' that matter in human life. What really and finally matters is the thing which is apprehended as an idea is vested with emotion until it becomes a cause and a spring of action. In other world of action, apprehended ideas are alone electrical, and a nation must be an idea as well as a fact before it can become a dynamic force."16

Rupert Emerson is another scholar, who also argues that people, who feel that they are a nation, are politically mobilized and organized along ethnic line with certain definite political ends to be achieved. They use the existing cultural ethos as symbols to differentiate them from other ethnic groups. In Emerson words:

"The simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that they are a body of people who feel that they are nation, and it may be that when all the fine-spun analysis is concluded, this will be the ultimate statement as well. To advance beyond it, it is necessary to take the nation apart and to isolate for separate examination the forces and elements which appear to have been the most influential in bringing about the sense of common identity which lies at its roots, the sense of a singularity important national 'we' which is distinguished from all others who make up an alien 'they'."17

It is clear that both Barker and Emerson emphasized not only on the organic, cultural and linguistic factor, but also on the political factor i.e., distinctive political consciousness of an ethnic community to be
defined as nation. According to this idea of nation, the Kurdish of Iraq and Tamils of Srilanka were not nations till they became politically conscious and assertive about their distinctiveness from other ethnic groups and fought for recognition of this distinction. For example, there was no Tamil movement in Srilanka for establishing and recognizing their ethnographic distinctiveness from the time of Srilanka’s independence from the British colonial rule in 1948. It was only in 1956, the Tamils in Srilanka, for the first time, demanded for regional authority within a federalized Srilanka. However, as political consciousness among the Srilankan Tamils increased day by day, they started using their cultural, religious and linguistic differences as symbols for creating internal cohesion and launching a massive political movement for recognizing them as distinct ethnic community with a right to govern themselves in a separate political entity. And this became evident particularly in the 1980s, when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched a deadliest separatist movement against the Sinhalese dominated Srilanka government. From this analysis it is clear that the concept of nation, as Barker argued, can be cultivated and materialized with and without going for political separation.

The concept of nineteenth century's nation, of course, further argues that any nationality, which acquires political unity and sovereign independence, can transform into a separate nation. Therefore, according to this connotation of nation, the Scots, the Welsh, the Tamils in Srilanka and the Kurdish of Iraq are not nations, because they are not sovereign
and independent, albeit all these peoples are politically united and assertive for their separate ethnological recognition.

Like Ernest Barker, Paul Brass also opines that the concept of nation can be formed with and without a separate state. He argues that a nation is a particular type of ethnic community, which is politically organized with some recognized rights in a political system. In other words, nations may be created either by transforming an ethnic group into self conscious ethnic entity in a multi-ethnic state or by amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups and formation of inter-ethnic or homogenous national culture through the agency of the modern state.18 This idea of nation perhaps finds more suitability and acceptability within the political parameter of a large number of modern nation states, which are more or less multi-ethnic in composition and thus multinational in character.

**Nationality**:

Nationality is a relationship between a person and their state of origin, culture, association, affiliation and/or loyalty. In other words, nationality consists in a sense of belonging to the nation and also a feeling of identification with it. In practical terms, nationality is the membership of a nation or sovereign state. Nationality can be acquired by birth within the jurisdiction of a state, by inheritance from parents, or by a process of naturalization. Nationality affords the state jurisdiction over the person and affords the person the protection of the state.

By customs, it is the right of each state to determine who its nationals
are. Such determinations are part of nationality law. In some cases, determinations of nationality are also governed by public international law – for example, by treaties on statelessness and the European convention on nationality.

Generally, nationality is established at birth by a child's place of birth and/or bloodline. But nationality particularly in the English speaking world, may often mean citizenship although it does not mean the same thing everywhere in the world. For example, in the UK, citizenship is a branch of nationality which includes other subcategories. Citizens have right to participate in the political life of the state of which they are citizens.

Alternatively, nationality can refer to membership in a nation (collective of people sharing a national identity, usually based on ethnic and cultural ties and self-determination) even if that nation has no state, such as the Basques, Kurds, Tamils and Scots. Individuals may also be considered nationals of groups with semi-autonomous states which have ceded some power to a larger government, such as the federally recognized tribes of Native Americans in the United States. Spanish law recognizes the autonomous communities of Andalusia, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Galicia and the Basque country as "nationalities" (Nacionalidades), while in Italy, the German speakers of South Tyrol are considered to be Austrian Nationals. While defining nationality, W. B. Pillsbury says, "Nationality is an affair of the mind or spirit, not of physical relationship. The only way to decide whether an individual belongs to one nation rather than another is to ask him."19 Similarly Arnold J. Toynbee observes, "Nationality
is like all great forces in human life, it is nothing material or mechanical, but a subjective psychological feeling in living people. This feeling can be kindled by the pressure of one or several factors as a common country, language or tradition."^{20}

**Nationalism:**

According to the statesmen of the west, nationalism involves a strong identification of society and the state. Often, it is the belief that an ethnic group has a right to statehood, or that citizenship in a state should be limited to one ethnic group. It can also include the belief that the state is of primary importance, or the belief that one state is naturally superior to all other states.\(^21\) Gellner and Breuilly observes, "In brief, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones."\(^22\) It is also used to describe a movement to establish or protect a homeland (usually an autonomous state) for an ethnic group. In some cases, the identification with a national culture is combined with a negative view of other races or cultures.\(^23\) Nationalism is sometimes reactionary, calling for a return to a national past, and sometimes for the expulsion of foreigners. Other forms of nationalism are revolutionary, calling for the establishment of an independent state as a homeland for an ethnic underclass.

Nationalism emphasizes collective identity – a 'people' must be autonomous, united, and express a single culture.\(^24\) However, some nationalists stress individualism as an important part of their own national identity.\(^25\)
National flags, national anthems and other symbols of national identity are often considered sacred, as if they were religious rather than political symbols. Deep emotions are aroused.26 Gellner and Breuilly, contrast nationalism and patriotism. "If the nobler word 'patriotism' then replaced 'civic/western nationalism', nationalism as a phenomenon had ceased to exist."27

Before the development of nationalism, people were generally loyal to a city or to a particular leader rather than to their nation. Encyclopedia Britannica identifies the movement's genesis with the late 18th century American Revolution and French Revolution28; other historians point specifically to the ultra-nationalist party in France during the French Revolution. Iain McLean, Alistair McMillan observes, “French Revolution ... It produced the modern doctrine of nationalism, and spread it directly throughout Western Europe.”29

The term nationalism was coined by Johann Gottfried Herder (nationalismus) during the late 1770s.30 Precisely where and when nationalism emerged in the western world is difficult to determine, but its development seems to be closely related to that of the modern state and the push for popular sovereignty that came to a head with the French Revolution and the American Revolution in the late 18th century. Since that time, nationalism has become one of the most significant political and social forces in the history of Europe and America, perhaps most notably as a major influence or postulate of World War I and especially World War II. Fascism, is a form of authoritarian civic nationalism which
stresses absolute loyalty and obedience to the state, whose purpose is to serve the interests of the nation alone.

**Classification of Nationalism:**

Political thinkers of the west have classified nationalism into different kinds after a thorough consideration and in-dept analysis of various significant historic events occurring in different countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. After a critical analysis of the mental outlook, attitudes, tendencies and activities of the groups/particles espousing some distinct causes which they consider legitimate for promoting/defending the rights and interests and also for fulfilling the aspirations of their respective ethnic/linguistic/religious/ideological groups or their respective countries or nations, Western thinkers qualified the idea of nationalism with different adjectives.

In the following paragraphs, we would like to briefly discuss the varied forms and natures of nationalism as designated and elucidated by the western scholars and thinkers.

**Civic Nationalism:**

Civic nationalism defines the nation as an association of people with equal and shared political rights, and allegiance to similar political procedures. According to the principles of civic nationalism the nation is not based on common ethnic ancestry, but is a political entity, whose core is not ethnicity. This civic concept of nationalism is exemplified by Ernest
Renan in his lecture in 1882 “Where is the nation?”, where he defined the nation as a “daily plebiscite dependent on the will of its people to continue living together.”

Civic nationalism (or civil nationalism) is the form of nationalism in which the state derives political legitimacy from the active participation of its citizenry, from the degree to which it represents the “will of the people”. It is often seen as originating with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and especially the social contract theories which take their name from his 1762 book 'The Social Contract'. Civic nationalism lies within the traditions of rationalism and liberalism, but as a form of nationalism it is contrasted with ethnic nationalism. Membership of the civic nation is considered voluntary. Civic-national ideals influenced the development of representative democracy in countries such as the United States and France.

**State Nationalism:**

State nationalism is a variant of civic nationalism, very often combined with ethnic nationalism. It implies that the nation is a community of those who contribute to the maintenance and strength of the state, and that the individual exists to contribute to this goal. Italian fascism is the best example, epitomized in this slogan of Mussolini: 'Tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, nulla contro lo Stato.' (Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State). It is no surprise that this conflicts with liberal ideals of individual liberty, and with liberal-
democratic principles. The revolutionary Jacobin creation of a unitary and centralist French state is often seen as the original version of state nationalism. Franquist Spain, and contemporary Kemalist Turkish nationalism are later examples of state nationalism.

However, the term 'state nationalism' is often used to denote conflicts between nationalisms, and especially where a secessionist movement confronts an established 'nation state'. The secessionists speak of state nationalism to discredit the legitimacy of the larger state, since state nationalism is perceived as less authentic and less democratic. Flemish separatists speak of Belgian nationalism as a state nationalism. Basque separatists and Corsican separatists refer to Spain and France, respectively, in this way. There are no undisputed external criteria to assess which side is right, and the result is usually that the population is divided by conflicting appeals to its loyalty and patriotism.

Critiques of supposed 'civic nationalism' often call for the elimination of the term, as it often represents either imperialism (in the case of France), patriotism, or simply an extension of 'ethnic', or 'real' nationalism.

**Expansionist Nationalism:**

'Expansionist nationalism' is a radical form of imperialism that incorporates autonomous, patriotic sentiments with a belief in expansionism. It is most closely associated with the likes of Nazism (nationalist-socialism) and also shares some commonalities with American
Manifest Destiny and neoconservatism.

Expansionist nationalism promotes expansion into new territories, usually with the claim that the existing territory is too small or is not able to physically or economically sustain the nation’s population. One example of this is Adolf Hitler’s territorial demands.

**Ethnocentric Nationalism:**

Whereas nationalism does not necessarily imply a belief in the superiority of one ethnicity over others, some nationalists support ethnocentric protectionism or ethnocentric supremacy. Studies have yielded evidence that such behaviour may be derived from innate preferences in humans from infancy.\(^{32}\)

In the USA for example, non-indigenous ethnocentric nationalist movements exist for both black and white peoples. These forms of “nationalism” often promote or glorify foreign nations that they believe can serve as an example for their own nation, for instance, Anglophilia or Afro-centrism.

Explicit biological race theory turned influential from the end of the 19th century. Nationalist and Fascist movements in the first half of the 20th century often appealed to these theories. The National Socialist ideology was amongst the most comprehensively “racial” ideologies: the concept of “race” influenced aspects of policy in Nazi Germany. In the 21st century, the term “race” is no longer regarded by many people as a meaningful term to describe the range of human clusters; the term
Ethnocentrism is a more accurate and meaningful term.\textsuperscript{33}

Ethnic cleansing is often seen as both a nationalist and ethnocentrist phenomenon. It is part of ethnocentric nationalist logic that the state is reserved for one nation; but not all nationalist nation-states expel their minorities.

**Territorial Nationalism:**

Nationalist slogan “Brazil, love it or leave it”, was often used during the Brazilian military dictatorship. Territorial nationalists assume that all inhabitants of a particular nation owe allegiance to their country of birth or adoption.\textsuperscript{34} A sacred quality is sought in the nation and in the popular memories it evokes. Citizenship is idealised by territorial nationalist. A criterion of territorial nationalism is the establishment of a mass, public culture based on common values and traditions of the population.\textsuperscript{35}

**Romantic Nationalism:**

Romantic nationalism (also styled organic nationalism or identity nationalism) is the form of ethnic nationalism in which the state derives political legitimacy as a natural consequence and expression of the nation, or race. It reflected the ideals of Romanticism and was opposed to Enlightenment Nationalism. Romantic nationalism emphasized a historical ethnic culture which meets the Romantic ideal; folklore developed as a Romantic nationalist concept.
Cultural Nationalism:

Cultural nationalism defines the nation by shared culture. Membership in the nation is neither entirely voluntary (you cannot instantly acquire a culture), nor hereditary (children of members may be considered foreigners if they grew up in another culture). Yet, a traditional culture can be more easily incorporated into an individual's life, especially if the individual is allowed to acquire its skills at an early stage of his/her own life. Cultural nationalism has been described as a variety of nationalism that is neither purely civic nor ethnic. The nationalisms of Quebec and Flanders have been variously described as ethnic or as cultural.

Ultra-Nationalism:

Ultra-nationalism often leads to conflict within a state, as well as between states, and in its extreme form leads to war, secession, or genocide.36

Fascism is a form of authoritarian ultra-nationalism37 which promotes national revolution, national collectivism, a totalitarian state, and irredentism or expansionism to unify and allow the growth of a nation. Fascists often promote ethnic nationalism but have at times promoted cultural nationalism, including cultural assimilation of people outside a specific ethnic group. Fascism stresses the subservience of the individual to the state, and the need of absolute and unquestioned loyalty to a strong ruler.38
Third World Nationalism:

Since the process of decolonisation that occurred after world war II, there has been a rise of Third World nationalism in those nations that had been colonized and exploited. The nationalism of these nations were forged in a furnace that required resistance to colonial domination in order to survive. As such, resistance is part and parcel of such nationalism and its very existence is a form of resistance to imperialist intrusions. Third world nationalism attempts to ensure that the identities of Third world peoples are authored primarily by themselves, not by colonial powers.

Examples of third world nationalist ideologies are African nationalism and Arab nationalism. Other important nationalist movements in the developing world in the modern era have included Indian nationalism, Chinese nationalism and the ideas of the Mexican Revolution and Haitian Revolution. Third world nationalist ideas have been particularly influential among the left-leaning governments elected in Latin America in recent years, particularly on President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez's ideology of Bolivarianism, which has been partly inspired by the anti-colonial ideals of Simon Bolivar.

Liberal Nationalism:

Liberal nationalism is a kind of nationalism defended recently by political philosophers, who believe that there can be a non-xenophobic form of nationalism compatible with liberal values of freedom, tolerance, equality and individual rights. Ernest Renan and John Stuart Mill are often
thought to be early liberal nationalists. Liberal nationalists often defend the value of national identity by saying that individuals need a national identity in order to lead meaningful, autonomous lives and that liberal democratic polities need national identity in order to function properly.

**Left-wing Nationalism:**

Left-wing nationalism (occasionally known as socialist nationalism)\(^{39}\) refers to any political movement that combines left-wing politics with nationalism. Many nationalist movements are dedicated to national liberation, and are of the view that their nations are being persecuted by other nations and thus need to exercise self-determination by liberating themselves from the accused persecutors. Anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninism is closely tied with this ideology, and practical examples include Stalin’s early work 'Marxism and the National Question' and his 'Socialism in One Country' edict, which declares that nationalism can be used in an internationalist context, fighting for national liberation without racial or religious divisions. Other examples of left-wing nationalism include Fidel Castro’s 26th of July Movement that launched the Cuban Revolution ousting the American-backed Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Ireland’s Sinn Féin, the Awami League in Bangladesh and the African National Congress in South Africa.
National Conservatism:

'National Conservatism' is a political term used primarily in Europe to describe a variant of conservatism which concentrates more on national interests than on standard conservatism, while not being nationalist or not having a far-right approach. Many national conservatives are social conservatives, in favour of limiting immigration, and in Europe, they usually are eurosceptics.

National conservatism is related to social conservatism, and as such may be heavily oriented towards the traditional family and social stability.

Anarchism and Nationalism:

Anarchists who see value in nationalism typically argue that a nation is first and foremost a people; that the state is parasite upon the nation and should not be confused with it; and that since in reality states rarely coincide with national entities, the ideal of the nation state is actually little more than a myth. Within the European Union, for instance, they argue there are over 500 ethnic nations within the 25 member states, and even more in Asia, Africa, and the America. Moving from this position, they argue that the achievement of meaningful self-determination for all the nations requires an anarchist political system based on local control, free federation, and mutual aid. There has been a long history of anarchist involvement with left-nationalism all over the world. Contemporary fusions of anarchism with anti-state left nationalism include some strains of Black Anarchism and Indigenism.
In the early to mid 19th century Europe, the ideas of nationalism, socialism and liberalism were closely intertwined. Revolutionaries and radicals like Giuseppe Mazzini aligned with all three in about equal measure. The early pioneers of anarchism participated in the spirit of their times: they had much in common with both liberals and socialists, and they shared much of the outlook of early nationalism as well.

**Religious Nationalism:**

Religious nationalism is the relationship of nationalism to a particular religious belief, church, or affiliation. This relationship can be broken down into two aspects; the politicisation of religion and the converse influence of religion on politics. In the former aspect, a shared religion can be seen to contribute to a sense of national unity, a common bond among the citizens of the nation. Another political aspect of religion is the support of a national identity, similar to a shared ethnicity, language or culture. The influence of religion on politics is more ideological, where current interpretations of religious ideas inspire political activism and action; for example, laws are passed to foster stricter religious adherence.

**Pan-Nationalism:**

Pan-nationalism is usually an ethnic and cultural nationalism, but the 'nation' is itself a cluster of related ethnic groups and cultures, such as Turkic peoples. Occasionally, pan-nationalism is applied to mono-ethnic nationalism, when the national group is dispersed over a wide area and several states – as in Pan-Germanism.
**Diaspora Nationalism:**

Diaspora nationalism (or, as Benedict Anderson terms it, "long-distance nationalism") generally refers to nationalist feeling among a diaspora, such as the Jewish in the United States identifying themselves as Israelis, or the Lebanese in America and Africa, and the Armenians in Europe and the United States. Anderson states that this sort of nationalism acts as a 'phantom bedrock' for people who want to experience a national connection, but who do not actually want to leave their diaspora community. The essential difference between pan-nationalism and diaspora nationalism is that members of a diaspora, by definition, are no longer resident in their national or ethnic homeland.

**Criticism:**

A number of statesmen, thinkers and intellectuals of the western world have criticised the spirit of nationalism as understood in the west, while blaming it for being instrumental in sowing the seeds of dissention, secession and conflict.

Critics of nationalism have argued that it is often unclear what constitutes a ‘nation’, or why a nation should be the only legitimate unit of political rule. A nation is a cultural entity, and not necessarily a political association, nor is it necessarily linked to a particular territorial area - although nationalists argue that the boundaries of a nation and a state should, as far as possible, coincide.\(^{40}\) Philosopher A.C. Grayling describes
nations as artificial constructs, “their boundaries drawn in the blood of past wars”. He argues that “there is no country on earth which is not home to more than one different but usually coexisting culture. Cultural heritage is not the same thing as national identity”.41

Nationalism is inherently divisive because it highlights differences between peoples, emphasizing an individual’s identification with their own nation. The idea is also potentially oppressive because it submerges individual identity within a national whole, and gives elite or political leaders potential opportunities to manipulate or control the masses.42 Much of the early opposition to nationalism was related to its geopolitical ideal of a separate state for every nation. The classic nationalist movements of the 19th century rejected the very existence of the multi-ethnic empires in Europe. Even in that early stage, however, there was an ideological critique of nationalism. That has developed into several forms of anti-nationalism in the western world. The Islamic revival of the 20th century also produced an Islamic critique of the nation-state.

At the end of the 19th century, Marxists and other socialists (such as Rosa Luxemburg) produced political analysis that were critical of the nationalist movements then active in central and eastern Europe (though a variety of other contemporary socialists and communists, from Lenin (a communist) to Józef Piłsudski (a socialist), were more sympathetic to national self-determination)43. Most sociological theories of nationalism date from after the Second World War.

In the liberal political tradition, there is widespread criticism of
‘nationalism’ as a dangerous force and a cause of conflict and war between nation-states. Nationalism has often been exploited to encourage citizens to partake in the nation's conflicts. Such examples include The Great War and World War Two, where nationalism was a key component of propaganda material. Liberals do not generally dispute the existence of nation-states. The liberal critique also emphasizes individual freedom as opposed to national identity, which is by definition collective.

The pacifist critique of nationalism also concentrates on the violence of nationalist movements, the associated militarism, and on conflicts between nations inspired by jingoism or chauvinism. National symbols and patriotic assertiveness are in some countries discredited by their historical link with past wars, especially in Germany. G. P. Gooch remarks, "Nationalism is a child of the French Revolution."44 William Blum has said this in other words: “If love is blind, patriotism has lost all five senses.”45 Albert Einstein stated that “Nationalism is an infantile disease... It is the measles of mankind.”46

The anti-racist critique of nationalism concentrates on the attitudes to other nations, and especially on the doctrine that the nation-state exists for one national group to the exclusion of others. This view emphasizes the chauvinism and xenophobia that have often resulted from nationalist sentiment. Norman Naimark relates the rise of nationalism to ethnic cleansing and genocide, including the Armenian Genocide, the Nazi Holocaust, the deportation of Chechens and Crimean Tartars under Stalin, the expulsion of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia at the end of
the Second World War, and the ethnic cleansing during the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s.47

Political movements of the left have often been suspicious of nationalism, again without necessarily seeking the disappearance of the existing nation-states. Marxism has been ambiguous towards the nation-state, and in the late 19th century some Marxist theorists rejected it completely. For some Marxists the world revolution implied a global state (or global absence of state); for others it meant that each nation-state had its own revolution. A significant event in this context was the failure of the social-democratic and socialist movements in Europe to mobilize a cross-border workers’ opposition to World War I. At present most, but certainly not all, left-wing groups accept the nation-state, and see it as the political arena for their activities.

Anarchism has developed a critique of nationalism that focuses on its role in justifying and consolidating state power and domination. Through its unifying goal it strives for centralization both in specific territories and in a ruling elite of individuals while it prepares a population for capitalist exploitation. Within anarchism this subject has been treated extensively by Rudolf Rocker in Nationalism and Culture and by the works of Fredy Perlman such as Against His-Story, Against Leviathan and “The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism”.

In the Western world the most comprehensive current ideological alternative to nationalism is cosmopolitanism. Ethical cosmopolitanism rejects one of the basic ethical principles of nationalism: that humans
owe more duties to a fellow member of the nation, than to a non-member. It rejects such important nationalist values as national identity and national loyalty. However, there is also a political cosmopolitanism, which has a geopolitical program to match that of nationalism: it seeks some form of world state, with a world government. Very few people openly and explicitly support the establishment of a global state, but political cosmopolitanism has influenced the development of international criminal law, and the erosion of the status of national sovereignty. In turn, nationalists are deeply suspicious of cosmopolitan attitudes, which they equate with eradication of diverse national cultures.

While internationalism in the cosmopolitan context by definition implies cooperation among nations and states and therefore the existence of nations, proletarian internationalism is different, in that it calls for the international working class to follow its brethren in other countries irrespective of the activities or pressures of the national government of a particular sector of that class. Meanwhile, most (but not all) anarchists reject nation-states on the basis of self-determination of the majority social class, and thus reject nationalism. Instead of nations, anarchists usually advocate the creation of cooperative societies based on free association and mutual aid without regard to ethnicity or race.

The Indian viewpoint:

After considering briefly the western view of nation, nationality and nationalism and the nature and characteristics of different categories
of nationalism as well as the criticism of the spirit of nationalism as being instrumental in sowing the seeds of division and secession, strife and conflict, one may conclude that aggressive nationalism strives to belittle or enslave or eliminate other linguistic/religious/cultural/ethnic groups and countries or nations leading to conflict and bloodshed and eventually divides human society.

On the other hand, in India, thoughts on nation and nationalism developed on the solid foundation of the Eternal Order or Sanâtana Dharma which is not in essence a defined religion, but an openness to spiritual experience. The Indian concept of nationalism, therefore, does not preach hatred or malice towards any group, country or nation. Sanâtana Dharma upholds that every individual is God – we and the living beings surrounding us are God. It says that whatever way we approach the divine will not work until we recognize the Divinity in all created beings and elements of the universe. To the Hindu Seers, the entire universe is the creation or recreation of Supreme Consciousness itself. SanâtanaDharma has an unified world view. It teaches that Brâhmaṇ (or God) pervades the entire universe and He also transcends the universe. For instance, Ṛgveda says – ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यती किंचि जगत्यां जगत्।48 (Whatever transient object/creature is found in this evermoving world, is covered by the Supreme Self).

This vision of unity on the spiritual plane binds us together as members of the same family, as one and indivisible entity. This vision makes one look at every person as his own self. Realisation of this link with eternity through intellectual exercise, followed by penance, results
in total identification with all the beings and objects of this universe.

The realisation of this unity of consciousness does not allow individuals and groups to have feelings of enmity or malice towards any other group or nation because Indian vision considers all the creatures or even nature as the manifestation of the Universal Reality called Brahman. Indian nationalism, therefore, is mostly welfare-oriented and development-oriented and renounces the psychological tendencies, which instigate acts of enslavement or elimination of and hatred or atrocities against any race/country/nation. How the Indian seers' vision guides us towards the realisation of this unity of consciousness has been amply illustrated by a scholar of NE Region in his recently published article; The illustration runs thus – "The integral development process supersedes the narrow barriers and adopts within its purview various units of the vast creation, viz., individual, family, village/town, society, nation, the living creation as well as nature and culminates into an all-encompassing vision in which the three worlds become one's own country (स्वदेशो भूवनत्रयम्) and all the people living on earth are considered members of one family (ब्रह्मजीवं कुटुम्बकम्). The newly born child is by nature self-centred; but as he grows up, with the passage of time and on receiving correct intellectual and spiritual orientation, he feels himself associated inseperably with bigger units viz., family, village/town, society etc. On a succesful completion of this process of gradual development of consciousness, one day he considers himself an integral part of this visible creation. This integral humanism is nicely suggested in the guru-pranāma-mantra: अखण्डमण्डलाकारां व्याप्ते येन
चर्चाप्रम्।"(By whom the entire movable and immovable creation is pervaded in the form of spiral cycle)."

This benevolent vision, emphasizing the unity of consciousness on the spiritual plane, casts it chastening influence in moulding the concept of ancient Indian Nationalism.

**Derivative Meaning of Rāṣṭra :**

The Indian view on nationalism emphasizes the unity of consciousness amongst the people dwelling the land of their origin. This unity is based on belief in the same set of moral or ethical values, on the feeling of love for and devotion to the motherland and also the desire for working unitedly for the prosperity of the motherland and welfare of the people living in the land. Because of the commonness of such belief, feeling, devotion and desire amongst the residents of a particular country, a sense of unity and a sense of belonging to some common unit develops; this sense helps the people to discover their common identity and to take pride in the said identity in the form of belonging to the rāṣṭra.

The corresponding Sanskrit word for nation is 'rāṣṭra'. The importance of 'rāṣṭra' in the thought-process of the Vedic seers can be estimated from the fact that it has been mentioned 141 times in the Saṃhitā portion of the Vedas – 11, 71 and 59 times in the Rgveda, Yajurveda and Atharveda Saṃhitās respectively.

The term 'rāṣṭra' is derived from the root 'rāj' i.e., 'to shine' with the addition of the affix 'stran' in the unādi sūtra. Thus, the term 'rāṣṭra'
conveys three meanings: (i) that which manifests all the people – राजाज्ञि प्रक्षणति सर्वानां लोकान् हेतु राज्यम् (कर्मणि); (ii) by which all are unveiled or made known, all with grandeur –राज्यते प्रक्षणते (स्वर्गमहन्ना) सर्वनाम हेतु राज्यम् (करणे) as we get पीनेते अनेन हेति पाण्यम्; (iii) that which shines all over the world – राज्यते सर्वेषु लोकेषु हेतु राज्यम् (कर्जरि) as we get पतिति हेति पाण्यम्.

Rाष्ट्र is mentioned as one of the seven organs of the state in the two great epics, Arthaśāstra, Dharmaśāstras, Purाणas and also in Amarakośa – a lexicon.51 These seven limbs are known as saptāṅga or saptapraṇā of a state (rājaya). These seven limbs are stated to be – (i) Svामin (king), (ii) Amātya (minister), (iii) Janapada or Rाष्ट्र (territory and the people) (iv) Durga (fort) or Pura (capital city or fortified capital city), (v) Kośa (treasury), (vi) Danča or Bala (army) and (vii) Mitra (allies). Sāyanachāarya has used the word rाष्ट्र in the sense of kingdom,52 subjects,53 country, देशa54 and so on.

Thus, some scholars have indicated the meaning of the term as a kingdom, realm, empire, dominion, district and country, but in the Vedas it is taken in the sense of people, nation and subjects. The function of rाष्ट्र is said to be to enrich the people with all the wealth, as rाष्ट्र is thought to be property in itself.55

The Aśvamedha sacrifice has been described as the king of all sacrifices;56 on the other hand, the rाष्ट्र is said to be equal to Aśvamedha sacrifice – राज्यम् वै अश्वमेधः;57 such passages indicate the prime position of the rाष्ट्र, which is in itself a culture, religion, inspiration, emotion and sublime thought and also the foundation of all these. The importance of
raśtra is understood from the fact that in the Vedic literature, raśtra is
described to be kṣatra⁵⁸, subjects or viṣ⁵⁹ etc. Savitā⁶⁰ and Rudra.⁶¹

Having been derived from the root 'rāj', the raśtra becomes an
enlightening and spiritual geo-cultural unit and this idea has been amply
illustrated by the Vedic seers. It is said that Indra is propitiated with the
offering of sacrificial oblations and he is besought to bestow raśtra
upon us.

अभीवर्तैं हविषा येनेन्त्रो अभिवाद्ते।
तेनास्मात् ब्रह्मणस्य जीव्य राप्तय वर्तय॥⁶²

Broadly speaking, as per the vedic terminology, the raśtra appears
to be moulded into a beneficial unit, based upon illuminating thoughts,
sublime ideals and a common social psyche of a people living in the same
motherland. This unit came into existence out of the will of the intellectual
elite to be transformed into an integrated whole with the objective of
serving the material and spiritual needs of the society and promoting the
welfare of the society, humanity and other living beings as well as of the
nature. In other words, the evolution of raśtra in Vedic India may be
described as the progressive unfoldment of an integrated social psyche
on the basis of a common motherland and the ambition for the prosperity
of the motherland, belief in a set of universal moral principles or eternal
life values. Pandit Narahari Narayan Bhide illustrates the concept of raśtra
as follows – 'The feeling of eternal goal of human life which makes the
life celestial and elegant, and the race, language, literature, community of
economic interest, tradition, country, administration of the state, and
awareness in the invasion of foreigners which are found within the psychology being expressed with those seven organs, is the nationality or the rāṣṭriyatā. The people having such rāṣṭriyatā is a 'rāṣṭra' and the member of such rāṣṭra is the 'rāṣṭriya'.

Dattopantha Thengdi, an Indian thinker sums up the idea when he says "Nationalism starts from the point where the effort of the progress from natural diversity to psychological unity comes to an end." Avinas Chandra Das, with special references to some Rgvedic mantras, observes "It was the rāis or sage-priests, the mighty, wise thinkers of old, the brainist among the people, who led the van of progress in the early and subsequent stages of Aryan development.... It was these great minds that in early Rgvedic times fused the disjointed and discordant elements into one homogeneous whole and united the scattered villages into one confederacy under the supremacy of one vigorous and powerful clan whom they guided by their sage-counsels to the attainment of the blessed goal of one united people."

Vedas – the Fountainhead of Indian Nationalism:

On considering some relevant texts of the Sāmhitā and Brāhmaṇa portions of the Vedic literature, we may come to the conclusion that the Vedas constitute the origin or source of the stream of Indian Nationalism, which assumes the form of a mighty river with the passage of time, casting its abiding influence on the learned sages of the Purāṇas and the two great epics as well as on the poets and authors of classical Sanskrit literature.

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and even the modern Indian languages. In fact, the Vedas contain a considerable number of poems and passages which bear testimony to this irrefutable proposition.

According to the seer of Atharvaveda, the scholars put in great endeavour and walk on the earth, which is surrounded by oceans and they designate this land with its people as rāstra. This land is prayed as a rāstra and urged upon to bestow valour and brightness to the people.⁶⁷

Again, it is said that the learned seers perform strenuous penance for obtaining welfare of the people and as a result of that penance, the rāstra, bala (strength) and ojas (energy, splendour) are obtained by the people.

भद्रमिच्छन्न ऋषयः स्वर्विदश्यपो दीपशामुपनिपुष्यते ।
ततो राष्ट्रो वामोजरथ जाति तदस्मै देव उपसननमतु ॥⁶⁸

The proof of conscious efforts on the part of Vedic seers to bring a rāstra into existence is found at many places in the Vedic literature. Those are discuss about religion, politics, economics, astronomy, architecture, philosophy, medical science and so on. They also consider the need of an integrated social life devoted to eternal life values and of a people imbued with a spirit of service and sacrifice to the society. Thus, the evolution of rāstra is a result of their prolonged strenuous penance.

From the reference to penance in the vedic saṁhitās for envolving the conception of 'rāstra' we can understand that during the most ancient times, there was no feeling of unity amongst the people, they remained
scattered and used to live isolated lives as members of small clans. The intelligent people in the society planned to organise them so that a cohesive national identity may come into existence. Putting in a great endeavours with this end in view (i.e., through performing penance) they achieved success in their mission. The wise, farsighted and zealous sages and social activists were ultimately successful in wreathing the people of different clans into one single entity on the basis of commonness of thoughts and values and devotion to the motherland as well as aspirations for achieving material prosperity and also the eternal goal of human life; this entity came to be known as 'râṣṭra'.

It is revealed in a Rgvedic passage that the Vaśīṣṭha has beseech Indra to bestow an extensive and beautiful land to the Trṣus and being duly propitiated, Indra bestow the land.⁶⁹ Even after the acquisition of land, they remain unorganised and lead isolated lives. Vaśīṣṭha organise them and as a result, they are gifted with wealth and prosperity.⁷⁰ Some scholars translate the term Bhārata, as it occurs in the Rgveda, as the people of Bharata; they opine that the people, living in this country, organized themselves into a râṣṭra.⁷¹ For instance,

cheri rođadi udhe ahamindaṁ tapasvam.  
visvāmitya rāskyati bhahandhaṁ bharetāṁ jnānāṁ. ⁷²

Some other mantras may be referred to in this context.⁷³ The concept that this bhāmi or land has achieved greatness and splendour due to the noble deeds, performed by her benevolent sons with a view to resisting degeneration of the society and attainment of immortality is manifested
in the following mantra –

आ ने विष्णु स्वपन्यानि तर्फः  कृत्यानायो अमृतार्य गातुमः।

महा महादेव: पृथिवी वि तस्ये माता पुजेदित्याय्यसेवे वैः। ॥ ७४

**Eulogies of the Motherland:**

That the national life of the Indians of the Vedic period flourishes on this land called Bhāratavarṣa can be known from a number of mantras, sung in praise of this land. The rivers, mountains, natural surroundings, seasons, people dwelling this land and crops grown in its fields have been elaborately described and these leave no doubt that in the eyes of Vedic seers, mother earth and Bhāratavarṣa are identical. The famous Prthivasākta of Atharvaveda may be referred to in this context. The seers relate in details many characteristic features of Bhārat with a view to inculcating the feeling of unflinching devotion to this land in the minds of the people inhabiting this country.

The seers describe this land as the bestower of prosperity, delight and happiness, it is conceived to afford assurance of protection; it is full of life-sustaining paddy and other corns, water, milk and ghee. The seers declare that this land is prosperous in all respects; many medicinal herbs are produced here in abundance; the springs, lakes, ponds, rivers and the surrounding seas make sufficient quantity of water available to the people of this country; paddy and other crops of various tasteful species are produced on its soil; the mines are full of gold as well as various other precious metals and gems; the mountains bestow the desired
quantity of showers, are pure and are full of useful medicinal herbs;\(^{82}\) emit pleasant fragrance all around\(^ {83}\) and are full of swans, peacocks and other kinds of birds with beautiful wings;\(^ {84}\) by the grace of nature benefits and charms of all the six seasons of a year can be experienced in this land.\(^ {85}\) In a number of texts of the Saṁhitā, we find a manifested feeling of love and respect for various cities, mountains, rivers, forests and lakes of this country, testifying to their sanctity; those narrations give rise to the same feelings of love and adoration for a number of places in the minds of people and instil a conviction regarding the holiness of these places.

Thus, the beneficial and enriching aspects of Bhārata are described in detail with a view to inculcating an intense feeling of love for the motherland, which create a feeling of unique devotion to and adoration for the vast country called Āryāvarta or Bhāratavarṣa. So, we the sons and daughters of the motherland feel proud of the motherland, which is considered sacred and a prime object of worship. The motherland is also considered a living mother goddess, deserving to be worshipped and served by the sons and daughters of this land.

The Purāṇas and the two great epics – the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata present interesting tales in a pleasant language and intelligible manner and thus convey the eternal teachings and splendid messages of the Vedas to the post-Vedic generations of Indians. The descriptions of Bhārata as the sacred motherland, embellished with innumerable number of qualities, affectionate disposition and beneficial
aspects characterise many passages of a number of Mahâpurâṇas and Upapurâṇas. Likewise, the concept of nationalism and pan-Indian outlook as found in the Râmâyaṇa and the concept of 'one country, one people' (in spite of the rule of dozens of monarchs in different râjyas or states of Bhârat) as manifested in Lord Kṛṣṇa's endeavours for establishing dharma rajya in the entire extensive land enlighten our mind with a sublime sentiment of nationalism. This spirit of nationalism, having the Vedas as the fountainhead, influences the poets of classical Sanskrit literature and Prâkt literature also. Coursing through the passage of history, this thought-current of nationalism continues to influence the poems, novels and dramas of modern vernacular literatures of India.

The spirit of nationalism as manifested in unique forms and nature in the Purâṇas and the great epics will be illustrated by us through affording befitting interpretations of the relevant texts, in the subsequent chapters of the present work.

**Objective of the Study :**

The objective of the present research endeavour is to investigate into whether any feeling of nationalism existed in this land since ancient times. This type of investigation and research is bound to be extensive in nature and therefore, we proposed to especially consider the concept of nationalism as found in the two great epics – the Râmâyana and the Mahâbhârata.
There are enormous misgivings and misunderstandings regarding the prevalence of nationalist thoughts in ancient India. Most of the western scholars and a great number of Indian scholars are of the opinion that the concept of nation or nationalism was unknown in ancient India, which was composed of many small states and conflicting class/groups having almost nothing in common. In their opinion, the presence of large number of states or administrative units was the principal hindrance on the way of the development of Pan-Indian Nationalism. They argue that Indian Nationalism originated and developed as the consequence of British subjugation of Indian people in the eighteenth century.

But, after giving a cursory glance on some texts of the Vedas, Purânas and other Sanskrit treatises of old and medieval periods, we have developed an impression that the concept of a value-based cultural nationalism originated in the Vedic period itself and this concept further developed in the age of the Purânas and the two great epics as well as in subsequent periods of Sanskrit literary endeavours in the medieval period. We presumed that a study into the origin and growth and the unique aspects of Indian Nationalism as distinguished from the western concept of nation states is bound to be most interesting and enlightening.

The facts, which inspired us to think about researching into the current topic, are given below:

1. Some scholars opine that Indians are a nation of philosophers and national feeling was never present in the minds of Indian people.
2. The political thinkers of the west firmly believe that Nationalism is very modern.  

3. As we read and judged some ancient Vedic and Sanskrit texts in the light of the above-said observations of modern scholars, the following questions stirred our minds:

   a) We frequently come across the term 'rāṣṭra' in the mantra or saṁ hitā portion of the Vedas. How can this term be explained if there was no concept of nation or nationalism in those days?

   b) The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa speaks about an undivided rāṣṭra surrounded by oceans.

   c) The Purāṇas also speak of one and undivided country name Bhārata, where Bharatis live as the sons and daughters of this motherland. Therefore, how can we say that Pan-India nationalism was not prevalent in ancient India.

   d) Poet Kālidāsa also eulogises the land situated between the Himalayas and the oceans. Is this also not an evidence of Pan-India Nationalism?

These preliminary information gathered from the Vedic and Sanskrit texts led us to ponder about why should we not rise above the prevailing dominant theory about the non-existence of the concept of nationalism in ancient India and why should we not come forward to dispassionately investigate and critically analyse the texts in order to find out the truth. Our present research endeavour is indeed aimed at investigating the
elements of nationalism in the great epics and finding out the truth on the basis of objective analysis and reasonable interpretations of ancient texts.

We are confident that this process of investigation and analysis will yield the desired impact and is bound to add new dimensions in the field of indological studies thereby provoking a new authentic line of thinking on the concept of nationalism in ancient India and encouraging objective interpretation of facts in the light of ancient Sanskrit texts.

Scope of Study:

The Vedas being the root of all the aspects of the Indian culture and civilization, the concept of nationalism and the sense of moral values fully developed and bloomed in Vedic India. In order to judge whether any feeling of nationalism prevailed in this land since ancient times, it is necessary to look into our old treasures of wisdom like the Vedic literature, the Purânas and the great epics i.e., the Râmâyana and the Mahâbhârata. It is necessary to study the Vedic texts in order to properly appreciate the development of nationalism in this land. The ideas expressed by the Vedic seers evolved in subsequent ages, through the periods of the Purâñas, the vehicle of mass education and the great epics – the Râmâyana and the Mahâbhârata, which cast tremendous influence on the Indian life, culture and literature in the subsequent centuries.

We propose to investigate into these treasures of Indian wisdom and strive to find out how common cultural values and life-view laid the foundation of an all India outlook and moulded the spirit of nationalism
through the length and breadth of this great country.

Therefore, the Vedic literature, the Purāṇas and the two great epics comes within the purview of our study and research. Some works on Arthaśāstra, Smṛti and lexicon also were consulted for a more meaningful discussion on the current topic. However, any study of this nature can not be meaningful and successful without reference to the books composed on the topic of nationalism by the western and Indian scholars of the modern age. Therefore, we have extended the scope of our study to a number of books on the topics of nation, nationality and nationalsim authored by modern scholars of India and abroad.

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यत्न हदयं परमे व्यमन्त् सत्येनावृत्तमभृवं पृथिव्या:।
यत्न हदयं परमे व्यमन्त् सत्येनावृत्तमभृवं पृथिव्या:।
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84. A.V. 12. 1. 51.
85. Ibid. 12. 1. 36.
86. Sarma, R. S., Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India, p. 1.
87. Heys, Curlton, Essays on Nationalism, p. 29.
88. The term 'râstra' is found in the following râks/mantras in the Vedas :

(a) R.V., 4. 42. 1 ; 7. 34. 11 ; 84. 2 ; 10. 109. 3 ; 124. 4 and 5 ; 173. 1 and 5 ; 174. 2 and 5 (11 times in 11 râks).
(b) S'.Y.V., 9. 23 ; 10. 2 ; 10. 3 ; 10. 4 ; 20. 8 and 10 ; 22. 22 (71 times in 7 mantras).
(c) A.V., 1. 29. 1, 4 and 6 ; 3. 4. 1 and 2 ; 3. 5. 2 ; 3. 8. 1 ; 3. 19. 2 and 5 ; 4. 1. 2 ; 28. 4 ; 5. 17. 3, 4, 12 and 17;
5. 19. 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10; 6. 39. 2; 54. 2; 78. 2;
87. 1 and 2; 88. 2; 124. 1; 134. 1; 7. 35. 1;
8. 9. 13; 10. 3. 12 and 16; 10. 8; 11. 7. 11 and 17;
12. 1. 8; 3. 10; 5. 8; 13. 1. 8 and 9; 13. 1. 34 and 35;
15. 10. 2; 19. 24. 1; 30. 3; 41. 1; 20. 27. 1 and 10
(59 times in 51 mantras).

89. ‘पृथिवी: समुद्दर्पन्नाया एकराट’। A.B. 8. 4. 1.

90. उत्तरं यत् समुदेऽध्ये हिमाद्रेयेव दक्षिणम्।
    वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारतीयं यत्र सन्निति॥ VisPu. 2. 3. 1.

91. K.S. 1. 1.

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