CHAPTER-II
UNDERSTANDING NATIONALISM

One phenomenon that has played a crucial role in the political history of the last two centuries is nationalism. It has inspired numerous political movements and led to countless wars that have broken up empires and created many sovereign states. It has also paved the way for the construction of collective identities and has inspired and mobilized millions of people. National assertions have resulted in the formation of the nation-state which, even now, is seen as the ideal political institution that embodies the aspirations of the people. And today, the nation-state has become the principal political institution of the world, and national identity, is often one’s primary, if not the only identity.

One feature of nationalism is its enormous mobilizing power. Nationalism inspires and unites unknown millions into a single unit. The nation and its symbols arouse passion. Its triumphs, failures and sorrows are ardently shared by the masses. Even in our globalizing world, nationalism continues to be an inspiring force. Such a survival of nationalism is contrary to the expectations of nineteenth century scholars, both liberals and Marxists, who saw it as a passing phenomenon giving way to universalism.\(^1\) Nationalism, however, has not only survived but has become one of the most influential factors in world politics. And, as observed by Hobsbawm, the history of the last two centuries is incomprehensible without having some understanding of the nation and the terms derived from it.\(^2\)

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the nation and nationalism and the various issues related to it. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part covers various perceptions on nationalism and argues

\(^{1}\) Isaiah Berlin writes, “no significant thinkers known to me predicted for it [nationalism] a future in which it would play an even more dominant role. Yet it would, perhaps, be no overstatement to say that it is one of the most powerful, in some regions the most powerful, single movement at works in the world today;...” Isaiah Berlin, “Nationalism”, in Henry Hardy, ed., Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas, London, Hogartho Publishers, 1981, p. 337.

that it is a political doctrine. The second part discusses different definitions of the nation, both objective and subjective, and claims that it is a political community formed under the influence or diffusion of nationalism. The third studies how the nationalist doctrine influenced the formation of nation at different stages of history.

**Contesting Perceptions of Nationalism**

The emergence of nationalism is generally viewed in association with the French Revolution. The revolution acknowledged and incorporated in the *Rights of Man as Citizen*, perhaps for the first time in history, the nation as the source of political authority. Since then nationalism has immensely influenced political developments all over the world. In Europe, during the nineteenth century, a series of national movements emerged which had, at their core, the hopes for liberation and unification of many oppressed or fragmented people. Italy, Germany and Poland were the most significant among them. The influence of these national assertions spread beyond the borders of these countries and inspired many communities in the rest of Europe. Leaders like Mazzini and his writings had a pan-European impact.

In the twentieth century national aspirations and national movements continued to be a very powerful political force. This century also witnessed the universalisation of the phenomenon. In the first half of the century Europe remained the center of national assertions. However, in the second half, colonial peoples raised the slogan of nationalism resulting in the emancipation of a large number of Afro-Asian states from colonial rule. Later, in the last quarter of the century, a new wave of nationalism, what is generally referred as ethnic or ethno-nationalism, appeared on the political landscape.

In spite of being a prominent political phenomenon for a long period, there is a lot of confusion about the exact nature of nationalism. This is because scholars on nationalism hold divergent views. They see it as a political doctrine, a sentiment, a movement or as an instrument to capture power. Thus, without producing a lucid understanding, academic discussions engage us in diverse
positions and debates. Even an accomplished scholar like Anderson observes that the nation and nationalism is notoriously difficult to define.³

A careful observation of the phenomenon will help us to uncover a few causes that make it a complex subject. In fact, the main obstacle towards developing a clear idea about nationalism arises from its occurrence in highly diverse circumstances across time and place. It surfaces in industrially developed countries as well as in under-developed and agrarian societies. Sometimes nationalism emerges among economically affluent groups, while sometimes national assertions are from poorer people. Thus, the marked difference in the conditions of its formation makes nationalism an elusive and complex phenomenon which is not easy to define.

The complex nature of nationalism also owes a lot to the ways in which it is realised. Nationalism generally appears in relation with a large number of phenomena like religion and culture and is usually specified as ethnic nationalism, civic nationalism, linguistic nationalism or religious nationalism. In Balibar’s opinion nationalism never functions alone, but is always part of a chain in which it is both the central and the weak link.⁴ The complex relationship of these different factors understandably influences its nature. And the various cases often have different forms and content, sometimes contrary to each other, which make the phenomenon very intricate.

Nationalism is not bound to any particular social programme and this adds to its complexity. This enables various groups with different outlooks to appropriate it and become the champions of nationalism. The inherent strength of nationalism to mobilise the masses also tempts various groups to speak in its language. In democracies it is usual for various political parties to present themselves as the real defenders of the national interest. Thus, the presence of all these factors – different manifestations which spread across different continents and across centuries – together with a large number of other factors, and the fact that it often becomes part of different socio-political programmes, gives


Nationalism its characteristic ambiguity. According to Nairn nationalism is a "Protean phenomenon" and it informs modern history to such a large extent that one may of course maintain there is no such thing as an "archetype" for it, and no single form which displays its meaning.\(^5\)

Despite all these ambiguities, a careful reading of the important studies on nationalism can help us identify certain major and recurring notions of nationalism that scholars agree upon.

One major idea about nationalism gives prominence to the nation and the loyalty expressed by a people towards it. According to this view, nationalism is a feeling or an approach that places the nation at the centre of all activities and tries to uphold its concerns and values.\(^6\) This view has been articulated by Hroch who defines nationalism as "that outlook which gives an absolute priority to the values of the nation over all other values and interests".\(^7\) Connor also shares a similar view.\(^8\) A natural extension of this view considers nationalism as love or loyalty towards one's state which is similar to patriotism. Common parlance like Indian nationalism, Russian nationalism, American nationalism, etc, often conveys this dimension of the phenomenon. Barry expresses this view of nationalism.\(^9\)

Another prominent view of nationalism is that it is a movement. Nationalist movements have been an inseparable part of the political milieu of the last two centuries and have played a significant role in moulding the political character of the period. This may be one reason why many scholars give considerable emphasis to this aspect. Seaton-Watson considers this as one of the two aspects of nationalism and describes it as an "organized political movement,

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\(^6\) There are some internal and external implications to this position. It implies that loyalty to the national community should transcend loyalty to more particular identifications, personal, cultural, economic or political, and members of one's nation have higher moral claims than members of other nations.

\(^7\) Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movements to Fully-formed Nation: The Nation Building Process in Europe", in Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., *Mapping the Nation*, London, Verso, 1996, p. 80. One implication of this approach is that there is an implicit assumption of the prior existence of a nation and nationalism emerges later.

\(^8\) Connor considers loyalty to one's ethnic group as nationalism and self-determining ethnic groups as nations, Walker Connor, "Nation Building or Nation Destroying", *World Politics*, vol. 24 (3), 1972, p. 334.

designed to further the alleged aims and interests of the nations." Smith also considers nationalism as an ideological movement.

A closely related notion of nationalism is that of a response, or an awakening, of people who encounter adverse situations. The situations can be economic, cultural or political or a combination of these factors. The sense of backwardness, collective grief, humiliation or fear of a threat awakens and inspires people to change existing conditions, and this may culminate in a movement. While Nairn considers nationalism as a response of exploited societies, Minouge describes it as a political movement depending on a feeling of the collective grievance against foreigners.

Some scholars view nationalism in the instrumentalist sense and argue that a precise understanding of it is possible only by comprehending the instrumental nature of it. They also argue that nationalism has been a weapon in the hands of various sections of society to achieve their goals and control the state or the people. In other words, various sections that hold different, even opposite aims, can appropriate nationalism. In fact, paradoxically it has been noted that nationalism is a politics of interest, not identity, so it must be explained in instrumental terms, that is, by focusing on the calculation of the elites. It has, thus, been argued by Breuilly that "to focus upon culture, ideology, identity, class or modernisation is to neglect the fundamental point that nationalism is, above and beyond all else, about politics, and that politics is about power. Power, in the modern world, is primarily about control of the state. The central question, therefore, should be to relate nationalism to the objective of obtaining and using state power." The underlying perception of Marxists, who consider nationalism as an ideological weapon in the hands of an emerging bourgeoisie to achieve a big

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12 Tom Nairn, no-5, p. 336.
14 John Breuilly, Nationalism and the State, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982, p. 2.
national market and for construction of the trans-class hegemony, is similar to this.

Although the above-mentioned views are recurrent in academic discussion, it is much better to consider nationalism as a political doctrine or principle. Nationalism as a political doctrine is based on the assumption that every nation requires its own political institutions for the preservation and reproduction of their identity, cultural and economic development. Breuilly describes three fundamental assumptions of the doctrine: There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character. The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values. The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty. This idea of nationalism also finds expression in the writings of Kedourie and Seaton-Watson.

Gellner articulates, arguably, the most well known definition of nationalism as a political doctrine. According to him nationalism is a “political principle which holds that the national and political unit should be congruent.” Gellner supports the idea that a national group, which is culturally homogeneous, has the right to have its own state. And this relationship between national and political unit explains, in association with one another or as an apriory condition, the legitimacy of the state. The result is that nationalism becomes “a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, ethnic boundaries within a given state.”

The nationalist doctrine that appeared during the French Revolution received universal acceptance afterward. It awoke the oppressed people by conveying the message that they are the real source of political power and inspired them to assert their right to be independent. It is through such movements many societies, which are severely fragmented on the basis of religion, region, caste, language, class, etc., are knit together and transformed into a unit by national consciousness. It is in this sense that national movement becomes the motor behind the formation of a nation. It also spread the message that the legitimacy of

15 ibid., p.3.
17 ibid.
the states comes from the nation, which prompted states to engage in activities to build one within their boundaries. These two developments that flared out of the nationalist doctrine recurred in the subsequent periods, in various forms, in great variety of social settings and with wide variety of political and ideological constellation. In other words, nationalism that emerged on the political landscape during the French Revolution, along with other modern ideas like democracy, liberty, and equality has immensely influenced the political developments in the later years.

A discussion on nation would enhance our understanding of the important role played by nationalist doctrine in its formation.

Nation

Perhaps the most important human association in our time is the nation. In the modern period people can be members of various communities based on caste, religion, language, territory, etc. Such associations often play a very significant role in our lives and during moments of crisis like inter-community rivalries, wars, natural calamities, people make great sacrifices. All these features are applicable to the nation also. The question that repeatedly arises in the discussion on nation is how we can differentiate the nation from other communities. In other words, to develop a clear idea of the factors that make the nation unique is a crucial step towards understanding it. In this context definitions like “intense group identifications,”\(^\text{18}\) which can be applicable to other communities also, become inadequate and a more rigorous inquiry into the factor or factors which differentiate the nation from other groups becomes necessary.

However, developing a clear understanding of nation is not an easy task. Although there has been intense discussions and debates on this question, the concept is so elusive that Seaton-Watson ruefully comments that “no scientific definition of a nation can be devised, yet the phenomenon has existed and exists.”\(^\text{19}\)


\(^{19}\) Hugh Seaton-Watson, no-10, p. 5.
In order to understand the concept adequately we should begin by asking whether nation is a feature of the modern period or it existed in the past also. Some scholars believe that the nation is much older than the modern era. Smith points out two broad strands, primordialism and perennialism. According to the first view, the nation is primordial and natural and is part of the human condition which is outside time and history. Nation has its beginning, growth, glorious period, decay and rebirth. Perennialists, on the other hand, do not consider nations as the constituent part of the natural order, as they are found in every continent and in every period of history. They are perennial and immemorial, but not primordial and natural. Perennialists like Hastings argue that nations are immemorial, that they have their roots in pre-modern epochs, usually in the Middle Ages. However, nations like that of Jews, the Armenians and the Persians have their roots in the ancient world. Armstrong also holds a similar view.

The outlook of modernists is markedly different. They see the nation as a modern political community that evolved in the context of modern developments. According to Hobsbawm, for example, the characteristic of the nation and everything connected with it is its modernity. In his book Nations and Nationalism, he carefully studies the meaning of the word nation in major European languages and points out that the modern notion of nation – as a body of citizens whose collective sovereignty constitutes them a state – arose only in the eighteenth century. Scholars like Gellner, Anderson, and Nairn also consider the nation as a modern phenomenon. We can arrive at some conclusion only by developing a clear idea regarding the nation.

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21 ibid., p. xxvii.
23 John Armstrong does not differentiate between ethnic and national groups and considers the modern nations as the continuation of ethnic or religious identities. John Armstrong, no-18.
Before going into the various definitions of nation let us take a quick look at the different meanings that the word nation has had through the ages.\textsuperscript{25} The word nation is believed to have originated from the Latin word 'nasci', which means 'to be born'. In ancient Rome it referred to foreigners who lived in Rome. Since they were not entitled to Roman citizenship, only they had 'national identity'. In the Middle Ages, in European universities, the term 'nation' referred to students who belonged to the same country or region. In the late Middle Ages it acquired a new meaning, a 'community of opinion', in the context of the ecclesiastical councils. Later 'nation' was used to refer to 'elites' or the 'representatives of authority'. It is only in the modern period that the word 'nation' came to mean the people in a modern political sense.

**Objective Factors**

One of the methods of defining the nation is on the basis of the objective elements that constitute it. The most recurrent elements are language, religion, ethnicity, territory, shared history, etc. One well-known definition that is based on these grounds is by Stalin who defines the nation as "historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture."\textsuperscript{26} A closer analysis of the major factors would help us in understanding their role in the formation of the nation.

Perhaps the most discussed factor in the formation of the nation is language. The role played by language in building national communities is no doubt unparalleled in history. It has also been a barrier in inter-community communication and thus an important criterion that distinguishes one group from others. In Europe, during the nineteenth century, language functioned as the core element in the formation of the nation and consequently scholars who studied European nationalism stressed the role of language in the development of national consciousness. The leaders of several national movements in the twentieth century were also keen on developing a common language for multi-lingual people.


Gandhiji's attempt to propagate Hindi and Israel's attempt to revive Hebrew are examples.

In the practical realm, language functions as the means of communication and for administrative and other related purposes. Apart from this, language also acts as the medium for intellectual interaction and the storehouse of cultural resources. Such interactions at the intellectual, cultural, political and administrative domains eventually facilitate the construction of a society. According to Anderson, the most significant feature of language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities. Breuilly, however, suggests that the idea of language as a basis for making political distinctions is modern and the reasons that make language a criterion for the formation of a political community is not just its importance in building the culture of that community. In his opinion, "Only when language was rendered institutionally significant in the three modern components of nationality – law, polity and economy – did it acquire political significance. In other words, language becomes significant not merely as a repository of the national culture and memory, as a store house of myths, but also as a matter of political, economic, legal and educational interest." 

The significant role that language has played in the formation of the nation is reflected in the vast literature devoted to it. Some early theoretical inquiries can be seen in the writings of German romantics like Herder and Fichte. In Herder's opinion, language plays such a major role in the development of the consciousness, self-awareness and the perception of nature that it is indispensable to the working of human mind. Fichte also emphasises the closer relationship between language and the nation. But unlike Herder, who believed in the great diversity of cultures, he holds that some languages are 'superior to others'.

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The well-known Marxist scholar Kautsky also believes that the basis of a national community is to be found in the development of a national language. In his view, language plays the role of a barometer in the development of modern nations.\textsuperscript{30} He argues that the process of development and consolidation of a common language is by no means abrupt and simple but a slow and sometimes painful process for the smaller communities or dialects. However, citing the Irish case, Kautsky argues that linguistic assimilation does not always weaken national aspirations.

Germany, Italy and Bangladesh are some of the states built on linguistic nationalism. Instances of long-standing linguistic national movements are that of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and French in Quebec.

However, development of a large community on the basis of a language is not always a straightforward process. In many cases it is the result of various factors like the conscious and persistent efforts of the state, a unified education system, growth of print and other communication facilities. For example, when Italy became independent in 1860 only 2.5 per cent of the population used Italian in their day to day life and in France at the time of Revolution (1789) only 12 to 13 per cent spoke French correctly.\textsuperscript{31} In both these cases state policies played a crucial role in the development of the national language. Modern Hebrew is also the result of state supported efforts. This is also true of many nations that claim language as the unifying bond.

Religion is another objective element. Historically religion has played a major role in building trans-local communities, and it is not surprising that it functions as one of the main elements in the formation of the nation. A religion builds community feeling among its adherents through common practices and rituals and distinguishes them from others. It also renders various symbols, images, icons and, in some cases, a sacred language—all of which can function as a powerful means to build an “unselfconscious coherence”\textsuperscript{32} among people. Scholars like Gellner and Anderson acknowledge the role of religion in the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ephraim Nimni, “Great Historical Failure: Marxist Theories of Nationalism”, \textit{Capital & Class}, vol- 25(1), 1985, p. 67.
\item Eric Hobsbawm, no-2, p. 60.
\item Benedict Anderson, no-3, p. 16.
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development of the nation. Gellner, based on the African experience, argues that communities converted into “world religions” such as Islam or Christianity, are better equipped to develop an effective nationalism than others. The reason behind his argument is that the communities that converted into a world religion are linked to a literate high culture, and he points out Somalia and Ethiopia as examples. The Marxist scholar Hobsbawm also observes that the links between religion and national consciousnesses can be very close and the relationship is much stronger when nationalism becomes a mass force than when it is a minority ideology and activist’s movement.

There are several historical examples that show the close link between religion and nation. During the Indian national movement both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha envisioned a nation based on religion. Jinnah claimed that Hindus and Muslims were two nations and even centuries of coexistence had not been able to bridge this divide. Savarker argued that, “verily Hindus as a people differ most [sic] markedly from any other people in the world than they differ amongst themselves. All tests whatsoever of a common country, race, religion, and language that go to entitle a people to form a nation, entitle the Hindus with greater emphasis to that claim.” In Europe too religion played a major role in the formation of nations like Ireland and Poland. Israel is another important case where religion is the sole basis of the nation. Religion also plays a central role in some current national assertions such as Kashmir and Chechnya.

However the formation of nation on the basis of religion is not a smooth one. The development of religion as a uniting factor is determined by conditions existing at a given time or in a region. In many Western and West-Asian cases the sub-sects of religion function as the core factor. And in some cases, in accordance with changes in socio-economic and political realms, unity built on the basis of

33 Ernest Gellner, no-16, p. 83.
34 Eric Hobsbawm, no-2, p. 67. This should be seen in the light of the reluctance that Marxists generally have in acknowledging the role of religion in the formation of nations. Stalin did not include religion among the constituting elements of a nation. Moreover, one of the major purposes of Stalin’s thesis was to refute the claims of Jewish Bunds that they were a nation.
religion is often undermined by new solidarities like the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan. Thus, the relationship between religion and the nation is much more complex and situational.

Ethnicity is another important element that plays a significant role in the formation of the nation. However, ethnicity is a complex term, which is used in various senses. In general usage it means that those belonging to an ethnic group feel that they have certain things in common which make them a community and distinguishes them from others. These differentiating elements can be a common descent or perception of common descent, history, culture, physical features, etc.\textsuperscript{36}

The key debate over ethnicity is whether it is given or a constructed entity. Some scholars consider ethnic identities as given or relatively fixed from birth or early life, and rooted in the non-rational foundation of the human personality. To them common descent and ancestry or a belief in them are important factors.\textsuperscript{37} In contrast to the above view many scholars consider ethnic identity as constructed and emphasise the cultural aspect of it.\textsuperscript{38} According to this position, formation and crystallization of an ethnic group or other identities are the result of economic,

\textsuperscript{36} Anthony D. Smith lists six main criteria of ethnic community as (a) a collective proper name, (b) a myth of common ancestry, (c) shared historical memories, (d) one or more differentiating elements of common cultures, (e) an association with a specific home land and (f) a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population. Anthony D. Smith, \textit{National Identity}, Deno, University of Nevada Press, 1991, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{37} There are different strands within this view. Van Den Bergh, a socio-biologist, focuses on individual genetic reproductive drives which, extended through the ‘nepotism instinct’, develops greater physical differences between peoples that produce group formation. However, this view is not widely supported as a biological bond or an extended family is too small a unit and politically insignificant in the formation of big ethnic groups. Geertz and Shils see ethnic identity as cultural ‘givens’ that emanate from kinship, race, language, territory and religion which take centuries to crystallize and are quite stable. Another important view on ethnicity is based on the belief or perception of common descent or ancestry. Weber, Smith and Connor are some scholars who hold this position. According to Weber, an ethnic group is that where its members “entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration.” Max Weber, Quoted in Craig Calhoun, no-35, p. 408. Pierre Van der Bergh, “Race and Ethnicity a Socio-biological Perspective”, \textit{Ethnic and Racial Studies}, vol-1 (2) 1978 pp. 401-411. Clifford Geertz, \textit{Interpretation of Cultures}, London, Fontana, 1973. Edward Shils, “Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties”, \textit{British Journal of Sociology}, vol-7 (1), 1957, pp. 13-45.

\textsuperscript{38} According to Kymlicka the difference between the two approaches can be inferred from their relations to outsiders. Ethnic nationalism, which is based on a shared ancestry and race, normally does not permit outsiders to join as members. Cultural nationalism, on the other hand, which is based on language, religion and culture, is open to outsiders. Will Kymlicka, “Modernity and National Identity”, in Shlomo Ben-Ami and others, eds., \textit{Ethnic Challenges to the Modern Nation State}, Haundmills, Macmillan, 2001, p. 16.
social and political developments.\textsuperscript{39} Barth, moving away from both these positions, defines ethnicity as the existence of recognised group boundaries.\textsuperscript{40}

In spite of all these debates, scholars like Connor, Armstrong and Smith consider ethnicity as a crucial factor in the development of the nation. According to Smith, most nations are formed on the basis of myths, memories, traditions and symbols of older ‘ethnines’ by bureaucratic incorporation or by the vernacular mobilisation of the people. He cites examples from Western Europe for the first case, from Eastern Europe and Asia for the second.\textsuperscript{41}

Race is another important element in the formation of nations and it is closely related to ethnicity if we define ethnicity on a biological basis. Race is a biological category that has visible physical features.\textsuperscript{42} The existence of visible physical differences, naturally, functions as a separating factor among people. And when a nation is formed on the basis of visible physical features, membership in such a nation will be attainable only through birth.

Some of the early instances of using race or perceived racial superiority in the construction of nation can be seen in the writings of German romantics of the nineteenth century. Fichte formulated the concept of “natural language”. Claiming that a people who used a natural language were intrinsically superior, he classified German as a natural language. This idea of the superiority of Germans appears in the writings of Gobineau and Chamberlain.\textsuperscript{43} These writings later contributed to the rise of Nazism which was based on the superiority of the Aryan race to which the Germans claimed they belonged. Racial difference was also a uniting factor of considerable significance in anti-colonial nationalism.

\textsuperscript{39} Scholars like Eric Hobsbawn, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein hold this position.

\textsuperscript{40} He holds that ethnicity is based not on the basis of fixed character or essence of the group, but on the perception of its members which differentiate them from others. And the cultural content of the group can change if the boundary mechanism is intact. Fredrick Barth, ed., \textit{Ethnic Boundaries}, Oslo, Norwegian University Press, 1969.

\textsuperscript{41} Anthony D. Smith, no-36, p. 123.

\textsuperscript{42} However, there are some scholars who argue that what we call ‘racial difference’ is not just biological, but a socio-political construction. Etienne Balibar, no-4.

\textsuperscript{43} Andrew Vincent, no-29, p. 598.
A shared history or a common past is another important element of a nation. A community’s belief that they collectively shared the challenges, sorrows, victories and hopes provides a powerful emotional bond that ties them together. A shared history also enriches societies with numerous symbols, images, legends, myths, etc., which are invaluable resources in the development of a community feeling. The significance of the shared past is that along with it, there exists, always, a vision of a shared future. In other words, communities not only remember past generations but also imagine many future generations which provide the strength to face present challenges.

Miller explains how shared history makes a national community different from other communities. To him a national community is a community of obligation and current members of the national community are obliged to continue the work of their forebears which they accomplish partly for their contemporaries and partly for their descendants. 44 Thus, a historical community, which stretches both in the past and in the future across generations, comes to our mind when we speak of a nation as an ethical community. And Miller observes that here we see the “depth of national communities” that may not be the characteristic feature of many other associations.

The importance of the past in the construction of the nation was well perceived by the leaders of anti-colonial movements and many of them claimed a glorious, valiant past. Nkrumah persistently referred to the ‘Golden Age’ of the Ghanaian Empire. In Indonesia, Sukarno’s slogan was “Glorious past, dark today, promising future.”

One question that always appears along with the claim of a shared history is its authenticity. It is immensely difficult to disentangle the element of genuine shared memory from that of exaggeration. Successive generations and different groups may differ on their views on history. One important matter, as pointed out by

Anderson, is that it cannot be remembered, but must be narrated.\textsuperscript{45} And who will narrate the past becomes the crucial question.\textsuperscript{46} Whoever narrates history may be selective in collecting facts, and in the process, forgets or neglects certain parts. Every nation has many past events which can mar its present communion. This is why Renan commented that, “to forget and – I will venture to say – to get one’s history wrong, are essential factors in the making of a nation; and thus advance of historical studies are often a danger to nationality.”\textsuperscript{47} However, what matters is not the antiquity of the contents of tradition, but the efficiency of the process by which tradition constitutes certain beliefs and understandings as unquestioned, immediate knowledge, that becomes the basis for disputing or questioning other claims.\textsuperscript{48}

Another factor that has been central to the formation of the nation is an historic territory or homeland. A moral and exclusive claim over a specific territory may be the most important element that distinguishes a nation from other human communities. The significance of the homeland in a community’s life is enormous. It is in that land their ancestors lived, their society developed and their future generations will breathe. The various aspects of a nation’s life – its economy, culture and social life – have evolved through intimate interaction with the territory. A community’s values, art, language and myths, rituals, ceremony, etc., grow out of its inhabitation in a particular land for generations. In certain cases the territory becomes religiously important and becomes a sacred land. Thus, in multiple ways, territory is closely associated with people and is an inalienable part of their history, memory and identity.\textsuperscript{49} The crucial goal of all national assertions is to build their own state in that territory.

\textsuperscript{45} Benedict Anderson, no-3, p. 204.

\textsuperscript{46} Romila Thapar observes that a society has many pasts out of which it chooses some over the others and it creates history. The choice is determined by those who are dominant, although occasionally, the voice of the others may also heard. Romila Thapar, “Nation Building, Development Process, Communication towards a Renaissance of Historical Perspective”, in L R Singh, ed., Nation Building and Development Process, Jaipur and New Delhi, Rawat Publications, 1994, p. 37.


\textsuperscript{48} Craig Calhoun, no-35, p. 399.

\textsuperscript{49} There are many examples to show how political leaders, sensing this intimacy, evoke popular emotions by mentioning the significance of the homeland in their life. In his outgoing speech Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said, “Eretz Yisra’el is not only
This close relationship between a people and their history with a territory has a crucial role in the modern scheme of thinking. According to Miller, a nation’s association to a territory has a crucial role in making it a political community and this relationship is in contrast with most other group identities to which people belong. According to him it is the territorial element that makes nations uniquely suited to serve as the basis of state, since states by definition must exercise their authority over a geographical area.\(^5\)

**Subjective Definitions**

We have discussed a set of factors like language, ethnicity, religion, race, shared history, territory, etc., which have played a crucial role in the formation of nations. And, undoubtedly, there are enough cases in history where these factors have played both core and contributing roles. A vital point to be remembered, however, is that the mere existence of these factors may not create a nation. Rather a nation is the outcome of the specific socio-economic and political situations of a particular time. For example, Tamils have been living in Sri Lanka for hundreds of years. However, they developed into a nation only in the unique political and economic conditions of post-independent Sri Lanka. This shows that in the context of new socio-political and economic conflicts new identities often emerge undermining old solidarities. The Pakistani experience would explain it more clearly. After the creation of Pakistan as a home for the sub-continent’s Muslims, in 1947, new conflicts resulted in the emergence of new national identities like Bangla, Sindhi, Mojahir. Apart from such socio-political and economic factors the role and conscious efforts of intellectuals, the political leadership, and in some cases the state, is vital in bringing some factors as core and developing a national

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another piece of land, it is not just a place to live. Above all, Eretz Yisra’el is a value; it is holy. Any conscientious Jew aware of his roots will never be able to treat Eretz Yisra’el as a commodity... And just as there is a single Eretz Yisra’el, there is only one nation of Israel.” In one of his speeches to Kosovo Serbians Slobodan Milosevic said, “This is your land. These are your houses. Your meadows and gardens. Your memories. You shouldn’t abandon your land just because it is difficult to live, because you are pressured by injustice and degradation. It was never part of Serbian... character to give up in the face of obstacles, to demobilize when it its time to fight... You should stay here for the sake of your ancestors and descendants, otherwise your ancestors would be defiled and your descendents disappointed.” Quoted in Walker Connor, “In Lieu Conclusion: Ethno-Nationalism and Tomorrow’s World Map”, in Gurnam Singh, ed., *Ethno-Nationalism and the Emerging World [Dis]order*, New Delhi, Kanishka Publication, 2002, p. 386, p. 382. David Miller, no-44, p. 1682.

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identity around it. Thus, as commented by Horowitz, what counts, is not whether objective differences are present, but whether they are used to mark one group off from another. 51

What we understand from this discussion is that the mere idea of objective factors are not sufficient to give a clear idea about the nation. And complicating the picture are the large number of cases that do not allow us to pinpoint one criterion or one or two combinations as a universal model.

It may be this limitation of objective definitions that has prompted scholars to look for subjective ones. Scholars like Hobsbawm, Renan and Seaton-Watson frame their definition on the lines of subjective criteria. According to Seaton-Watson, “a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form, or behave as if they formed one.” 52 Renan, who considers that “the existence of nation is a daily plebiscite” 53, provides another, but much more radical, subjective definition. Here the conscious choice of the people becomes the criteria of the nation and all other objective elements are secondary or unimportant.

However a few questions arise with subjective definitions. If choice or belief is the basic criteria for defining a nation, it can be a criterion for many other human associations also. Miller, who considers such shared beliefs as one criterion of nationality, also suggests that this shared belief itself does not distinguish nationality from other kind of human relationships. 54 In this context, the question of the basic criteria that distinguish nation from other groups arises.

This issue draws our attention to what is arguably the most important aspect of a nation. It seems that the political element of the nation is the crucial factor for its identity. The nation is not just a community; it is a community that believes that it is politically self-determinant. It is a community that has the moral right and the will to decide its destiny through political action. The crucial

52 Hugh Seaton-Watson, no-10, p. 5.
53 Ernest Renan, no-47, p. 154.
54 David Miller, no-44, p. 1681.
difference between the nation and other human associations is this political content which is integral to its persona. Here the idea of a nation as a human community is radically different from other communities. A nation's right to decide its political will and the realization of this ideal in the form of an independent state is unique to it. No other community, ethnic, religious, or linguistic, normally considers itself as a basis for a state.55

Intellectual Influences

Another aspect worth looking is the role of nationalist doctrine. The influence or diffusion of nationalism plays a crucial role in transforming communities into a national unit. Wherever communities were under alien rule the activities of the intellectuals and the national movement that follows them create diffusion. In such contexts a national movement becomes the crucial historical agency that transforms the traditional, often highly fragmented, communities into a politically conscious nation. When people are ruled by indigenous nobility, the doctrine inspires the people to see themselves as the source of political authority and mobilizes for more political rights. The growing recognition of nationalist doctrine also impels the states to engage in activities that help to build a uniform nation in an attempt to ensure legitimacy. The increased activities of governments and the growth of industrial capitalism also played a crucial role in the formation of nations in such cases.

However, the rise of nationalist doctrine was not an isolated development. It was closely connected with modern developments in the socio-economic realm and political ideas. According to Anderson it is the expression of a radically changed form of consciousness.56 And whenever we use the term nation it implies a community which encompasses modern notions of political life. In other words, nation invokes the idea of a people who are the legitimate holders of a state. Here we see the idea of the popular sovereignty as embedded in nation.

55 The political content of the nation and its expression, generally as the aspiration for a state, is the central feature of many explanations. For Anderson, nation is an imagined political community. Benedict Anderson, no-3, p. 6. (Emphasis Added). David Miller considers nation as "a community of people with an aspiration to be politically self-determining." David Miller, On Nationality, Oxford, Clarendon, 1995, p. 19.
Popular sovereignty, though taken for granted now, was a novelty in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the past rulers acquired their right not from the people but from other sources like divine sanction, religious approval, belonging to a dynasty, etc. In such political orders, people were just subjects of the ruler. However in the context of major socio-economic changes in the eighteenth century, older notions began to lose their hold over the society and were replaced by the idea of popular sovereignty. In fact, what originally distinguishes the idea of nation is not a claim to territorial sovereignty but to the sovereignty of a specific people who happen to occupy a particular geographical area. Thus, whenever we use the term nation, it pre-supposes a population that embodies the right to decide their political destiny. One of the early affirmations of the idea is the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789.

The principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body of men, no individual, can exercise authority that does not emanate expressly from it.

The nation also presupposes one more meaning which radically distinguishes it from the earlier societies; the equality of individuals as citizens. Like popular sovereignty, the fundamental equality of citizens is also novel in political history. In earlier societies people were regarded as subjects who were hierarchically placed on the basis of various socio-economic considerations. However, in a nation all individuals have equal rights and status as citizens. All other identities and associations become insignificant or irrelevant in the relation between a nation and its members. Taylor regards this as one of the two important features of modern imaginary, i.e. "the shift from hierarchical, mediated-access societies to horizontal direct access societies." In earlier societies, which were hierarchical, an individual belonged to a society via belonging to some component of it. In contrast, the modern notion of citizenship is direct i.e. one’s fundamental way of belonging to the state is not dependent on, or mediated by any other memberships. One stands alongside one’s fellow citizens, in direct relationship to the state which is the object of their common allegiance.

All these features point towards a community that is fundamentally a novelty, whose constituting principles are incompatible with the communities of the previous period. A nation internalises principles like popular sovereignty and the fundamental equality of citizens that were non-existent in earlier political societies. Such characteristics of a nation also help us to clarify an earlier debate; whether a nation is a modern phenomenon or whether it is much older.

**Nationalism and Formation of Nations**

The doctrinal character of nationalism and the important role it played in the formation of nations can be ascertained from history. This part will survey three different models of nation formation in Europe — from national movements, within established states, official nationalism — and anti-colonial nationalism. By referring to these cases, we can argue that the diffusion of nationalist doctrine was a major factor in the development of nations.

Europe has witnessed two major models of nation formation. In one model, the national aspirations of fragmented people or national movements from those under alien rule resulted in the development of nation. In the second, a nation was formed within established states. Smith describes the first case as "ethnic-genealogical" and the second as "civic territorial". The influence of the nationalist doctrine is evident in both these types.

**National Movements to Nation**

Germany, Italy and Poland are examples of this type of nation formation. During the first half of the nineteenth century they were under alien rule or divided into

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58 Various scholars who have studied European nationalism have categorised it in precisely this way. Pioneer among them is Hans Kohn. Later John Plamenatz, Miroslav Hroch. Smith, etc., also made such a division. According to Hroch, in Western Europe — England, France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and the Netherlands — the early modern state developed under the domination of one ethnic culture either in an absolutist form or in representative estates systems. In most of these cases the late feudal regime was subsequently transformed by reforms or revolution into modern civil society in parallel with the construction of a nation-state as a community of equal citizens. In most of the Central and Eastern Europe an alien ruling class dominated the ethnic groups who lacked indigenous nobility, a political-unit or a long literary tradition, though they occupied a compact territory. Here nation building can be dated to the moment when selected groups within a non-dominant ethnic community started to discuss their own ethnicity and to conceive of it as a potential nation to be. Miroslav Hroch, no-7, p. 80.

59 Anthony D. Smith, no-36, p. 123.
many principalities. However, division of communities (language/religious/ethnic, etc.) into different political units as well as the differences between the rulers and ruled was not an exception in earlier period. But the nationalist doctrine unveiled during the French Revolution introduced a radical vision of political life and made a lasting impact all over Europe in the nineteenth century. People who were dominated and divided began to imagine themselves as nations. They aspired to overthrow their alien rulers, unite with their kin and to carve a state of their own. Nationalism, as mentioned by Berlin, provided a new vision of life with which a wounded society could identify themselves around which they could gather and attempt to restore their collective life. Thus what we can see in German, Polish or Italian uprisings were a people inspired by a new idea – nationalism.

The three-phase division of the national movement introduced by Hroch is applicable to these cases. The early proponents of the nationalist idea were intellectuals who were concerned with the cultural and historic aspects of their society. They were followed by a politically oriented group which desired to alter the unhappy condition of their society. However, as mentioned by Nairn, even though the elite and the intelligentsia at the periphery wanted to counter this adverse situation, they were not resourceful enough to do it by themselves. Their only resource was people and the elite and intelligentsia were left with no option but to mobilise them. Thus, they were forced to invoke whatever similarities they shared and speak in a language that would give them access to the lower classes and touch their sentiments. And those compulsions led to the “political baptism” of the lower classes. In other words, with the emergence of the national

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60 Isaiah Berlin, no-1, p. 349.
61 Miroslav Hroch states that a nationalist movement passes through three structural phases which are distinguished on the basis of the character and role of the actors and the extent of the national consciousness in the ethnic group at large. These phases are (a) when the activists of a group are involved in scholarly inquiry and the dissemination of an awareness of the linguistic, cultural, social and historical attributes of the non-dominant group. (b) The ethnic group tries to project itself as a future nation among its population, with significant signs of success. (c) The majority of the people are aware of their national identity and a mass movement arises, and this is a stage that also witnesses various strands in the national movement. Miroslav Hroch, no-7, p. 81.
62 To Nairn, “This is why a romantic culture quite remote from enlightenment rationalism always went hand-in-hand with the spread of nationalism. The new middle-class intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite the masses into history; and the invitation card to be written in a language they understood.” Tom Nairn, no-5, p. 340.
movement the hitherto neglected masses were not only “invited into history” but also become the centre of political discourse.

To mobilize the masses, national movements and their leaders utilised whatever sources that were available to them. Natural features like rivers, mountains, meadows, historical events, myths and legends—all become effective weapons in the process of building community feeling. The moral values, unique qualities and ancient glories of the community were invoked and the nation was usually referred to as a big family. Through such a process, a political community with a unique identity and moral purpose was envisioned and slowly evolved over time.

The diffusion of nationalist doctrine was immensely helped with the progress in the fields of transportation and communication. According to Anderson an “imagined political community” was made possible only with the revolution in the area of “print-capitalism”. The post reformation period saw the large scale printing of vernacular material. With the advent of capitalist production, which seeks a larger market, vernacular publishing increased tremendously. In the same period vernaculars also became official languages in many kingdoms which elevated them to the “language of power”. These processes pioneered the creation of specific linguistic communities associated with eventual national identities. For Anderson, the nation became imaginable only in the context of print-capitalism.

As nationalist doctrine was closely connected with the ideals of democracy, freedom and equality, national movements also addressed many pertinent issues of the period. Questions like relations between the monarchy and republic, church and state, landowners and bourgeoisie, town and country,

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63 In Anderson’s thesis print-languages are crucial and he claims that print-languages laid the basis for national consciousness in three different ways. They created unified fields of exchange and communication below the Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Secondly, print-capitalism provided fixity to language which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity which is so central to the subjective idea of the nation. Thirdly print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Benedict Anderson, no-3, pp. 44-45.

64 Anderson writes, “what,... made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communication (print), and fatality of human linguistic diversity.” ibid., pp. 42-43.
employers and workers, also emerged as serious issues in the movement. National movements also tried to portray their goals in a universal sense. The Italian movement proclaimed that their fight was against all oppressors – foreign and domestic. Polish nationalists described themselves as, “a nation martyred in the cause of liberty, fighters for the freedom of mankind... For our liberty and yours.”

The historic outcome of these national movements was the mobilization of formerly passive communities into active political units, that is, nation. In other words an overarching national identity, undermining many local or particular loyalties, emerged. In the process, former subjects were brought into the political community of citizens and a new state, the collective political institution of the people, realised.

Nation Formation within Existing States

In the modern era, Europe witnessed another model of nation formation. In this model a linguistically and culturally diverse population within an established state was incorporated into a single national unit through the diffusion of nationalist doctrine along with the increased activities of the government and rapid capitalist development. These processes resulted in the gradual integration of diverse groups and outlaying regions into the culture of the dominant ethnic group. Britain, France and Spain are examples of this model.

We have seen that the notion of the state as the collective political institution of the people grew among the intelligentsia and the middle class after the French Revolution. This idea inspired more and more popular mobilizations for democratic and political rights across the Europe. The voice of the masses was increasingly recognised as the consent of the people gained respect. All these processes paved way for the formation of a modern political community.

Although monarchies were predominant in nineteenth century Europe, changing political circumstances in which traditional guarantors of loyalty were losing their validity forced rulers to build an organic relationship with the people.

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65 Hugh Seaton-Watson, no-10, p. 103.
66 ibid.
As observed by Hobsbawm, "even when the states as yet faced no serious challenge to its legitimacy or cohesion, the mere decline of older socio-political bonds would have made imperative to formulate and inculcate new forms of civic loyalty..."67 And wherever the state succeeded in developing a single national identity and consciousness that became an invaluable emotional asset.

The growth of bureaucracy was one factor that played a crucial role in the development of civic loyalty.68 Along with growing activities of the centralized states, the strength of the civil service, the army and the unified legal system and judiciary also increased. Through the adoption of a national language and state wide education, the cultural identity of the dominant ethnic group was disseminated within its borders. Scholars like Tilly, Giddens and Smith regard the establishment of the modern state and its various activities as the major factor in building a uniform civic identity. According to Giddens the various characteristics of the modern state – territoriality, monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, bureaucracy, administrative surveillance, taxation, law and a modern army–played a crucial role in the development of nationalist feeling. And the distinguishable nascent form of nationalist sentiment was associated with the states that developed early with fixed capital. He cites France and England as examples.69 Inter-state war was another factor that played a crucial role in the formation and consolidation of a national identity in such cases.

Another development that played an important role in the formation of nations was the emergence of industrial capitalism. Rapid industrial growth had a lasting impact on various spheres of human life. Many urban centres developed, commerce multiplied, communication and transport facilities were revolutionized and the interaction of people within a country intensified. These activities facilitated the mobilization and incorporation of diverse groups into a single national culture. Two scholars who emphasize the role of modernization in the formation of nations are Duetsch and Gellner.

67 Eric Hobsbawm, no-2, p. 85.
68 Public expenditure per capita increased between 1830 and 1850 by 25 per cent in Spain, by 40 per cent in France, by 44 per cent in Russia, by 50 per cent in Belgium, by 70 percent in Austria, over 90 per cent in the Netherlands. Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution 1789-1848, New York, Mentor, 1964, p. 229.
Gellner understands nationalism as a structural necessity of industrialism.\textsuperscript{70} It is an essential component of modernisation, of transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one. In Gellner’s view an industrial society is built on the principles of sustained and perpetual growth and continuous improvement. In such an ever-progressing society, human roles become optional and instrumental and the old stability of the social role is simply incompatible with growth and innovation. And nationalism is rooted in a division of labour which is complex, cumulative, and continuously changing. This mobility also brings a certain kind of egalitarianism due to constant change which hinders the survival of traditional barriers such as caste or estate.

Apart from mobility, Gellner also sees a “subtle but profound and important qualitative difference in the division of labour.” In an industrial society the major part of training is generic and is not specifically connected with any highly specialised professional activity by a person. He does not deny specialisation in an industrial society, he, however, argues that its educational system is unquestionably the least specialized and the most universally standardised. The reproduction of social individuals is carried out in a centralised way. Another feature of this new society is that work generally involves communication with a large number of unfamiliar people which gives rise to a precise communication system. That is, “a society has emerged based on high powered technology and the expectancy of sustained growth, which requires both a mobile division of labour, and sustained, frequent and precise communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning, transmitted in a standard idiom and in writing when required.”\textsuperscript{71} To enable the population to face this necessity “exo-education” plays a crucial role. However, in the modern period such indispensable education is large and expensive and therefore needs the support of the strongest institution, i.e. the state. Such a centrally administered universal education is integral to the development of a society which shares a homogeneous culture. Thus, a society with a high culture emerges, unlike the

\textsuperscript{70} Ernest Gellner, no-16, p. 46. 
\textsuperscript{71} ibid., p. 34.
diversified, locally-tied, illiterate “little culture” or traditions that were the norm in earlier times. According to Gellner, nationalism is, essentially, the “general imposition of high culture on society.” And he argues that it is nationalism that engenders nations, rather than nations giving rise to nationalism.

Marxists also view the formation of a nation in relation with the capitalist mode of development. Marx and Engels see the emergence of the modern nation in relation to the processes in which the feudal mode of production is replaced by the capitalist mode. As the result of these developments, the fragmented feudal society of petty principalities unites into the nation-state — in other words a culturally diverse feudal society is transformed into a standardised population. One of the fundamental requirements of capitalist production, a large domestic market, also develops in the process.\(^\text{72}\)

The nation, which emerges in the context of large scale economic and political changes and social dislocation fulfils another important exigency of the human life. It provides a sense of belonging and thus an emotional security to the masses who faces the destruction of their old social systems, values and beliefs. According to Anderson, the period, that saw the dusk of the religious mode of thought under the impact of Enlightenment, brought its own “modern darkness”. This situation necessitated a “secular transformation of fatality into continuity, continuity into meaning” and “few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation.”\(^\text{73}\) Giddens also observes that the belonging to a national community provides “ontological security.”\(^\text{74}\)


\(^\text{73}\) Benedict Anderson, no-3, p. 12. He also comments that “nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being.” p. 13.

Official Nationalism

There is a third model of nation formation in Europe which is known as official nationalism. In this case the attempt to build a national community came from the imperial rulers themselves. Seaton-Watson and Anderson refer to Tsarist Russia as an example. This model clearly demonstrates the impact of nationalist doctrine. With the emergence of nationalist doctrine the link between a state and nation became highly desirable and the legitimating factor and, at the same time, the presence of non-nationals was considered as undesirable or a threat. The Russian Empire during the nineteenth century included a large number of non-Russians and capitalist development in Russia was not extensive enough to assimilate a large number of foreigners. This situation made necessary direct action from the state for the incorporation of non-Russians into Russian culture.

Tsarist Russia conducted a massive effort to Russify its diverse population in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although Count Uvarov recommended that Russia should be based on three principles: autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality, in 1832, the massive Russification policy was started only in the 1880s by Tsar Alexander III (1881-94). The policy emphasized that all subjects of the Tsar should consider themselves Russians and owe allegiance not only to the monarch but also to the Russian nation. The Russian language and culture, to which less than half of Empire’s population belonged, was to be imposed over time on all subjects, ensuring that they put Russia first, and preferred Russian culture to their own original culture. Consequently Russian was made a compulsory language in all schools, especially in minority areas. Thus the growing recognition of the nationalist doctrine forced even the imperial state to stretch the “short, tight skin of the nation over gigantic body of empire.”

All these cases show that the influence of nationalist doctrine was a major factor in formation of nations in Europe. Even the nations that were formed as a result of national movements or where nation was developed within established

75 Hugh Seaton-Watson, no-10, pp. 58-89. In Asia, Japan and Thailand are examples of this model.
76 Benedict Anderson, no-3, p. 86.
states the impact of the doctrine was obvious. Readings of colonial cases will clarify the point more.

Anti-Colonial Nationalism

Afro-Asian societies, when compared to Europe, were different in many respects. First of all most Afro-Asian societies were very diverse in terms of their language, culture, religion, caste, etc. Consequently a pertinent question crops up – can such diverse societies be considered as or could they develop into nations?77 Secondly, these societies were not only diverse but most of them lacked a crucial feature of the nation, a shared history. Most of these societies had never existed as political units before, and in many cases, the principal uniting factor, geographical and administrative unity, was the result of colonial conquest. Another feature of these societies was their agrarian stage of development. In some African societies even agriculture was in initial stages and many groups were nomads or semi-nomads. Thus, Afro-Asian nationalism was born in vastly heterogeneous and predominantly agrarian societies.78

There were some developments, may be a much lesser extent than Europe, that facilitated the development of national consciousness among people under colonialism. A clearly demarcated boundary, one outcome of colonial rule, was one such development. These boundaries, unlike those in the pre-modern period, divided the people into nationals and foreigners. In earlier times boundaries were

77 For example Seeley commented that India was a geographical expression like Europe or Africa that could not make the territory of a nation and a language, but the territory of many nations and languages. Seeley, Quoted in T. K. Oommen, “Conceptualizing Nation and Nationality in South Asia”, in T. K. Oommen and S. L Sharma, eds., Nation and National Identity in South Asia, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2000, p.1.

78 The next part limits the discussion mainly on anti-colonial nationalism. But Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlove, in their discussion of Asian nationalism, point out four different routes of nation formation. These are; ethno-religious, state into nationhood, anti-colonial liberation, and class struggle and social revolution. In the first case ethno-religious groups politically organise and develop into a nation and then achieve a state. Bangladesh, Pakistan and Singapore are examples for this model. In the second route a nation is formed within an existing state which had been ruled by a historic dynasty-like Japan and Thailand. For the third route, the class struggle and social revolution model, China is an example. The most widespread model of nation formation in the Afro-Asian continent was the anti-colonial liberation model. This route comprises features of the first two routes—it was formed within the boundaries of the colonial states and at the same time it was the result of popular mobilisation. Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlove, “Asia in Theories of Nationalism”, in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science [Vol-31], London and New York, Routledge, 2000, p. 859.
fluid and people easily moved from one political unit to another. But with the imposition of colonial rule the fluid divisions of space were transformed into rigid ones. Thus, colonialism constrained human relations and socio-political and economic activities within a particular territory.

Secondly, a new colonial administrative system, which was extensive in terms of activities and personnel, was introduced. These professionally built hierarchical systems transformed societies into well-knit units in the administrative sense. The majority of colonial personnel, especially in the lower ranks, were natives and this experience gave them a better notion of their society. Some early anti-colonial assertions, like the Indian struggle of 1857, when several regiments of the British Indian Army revolted, originated from the colonial machinery itself.

Along with such developments transportation and communication facilities were also growing. By the end of the nineteenth century the railway and other transportation facilities, which were introduced to strengthen the imperial hold and to capture markets for their goods, improved and this enhanced long distance travel. The same period also witnessed the growth of print and other communication methods. The publication of newspapers, books and magazines both in the vernacular and colonial languages increased. These publications became instrumental in revealing the evils of colonial rule and also spread the dream of an independent state. It also communicated inspiring events around the world like the Japanese victory over imperial Russia (1905), and the Russian Revolution (1917) Thus, the growth of communication facilities became a powerful instrument to converse with millions of people and consequently unite them under national liberation movements.

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79 Thongchai Winichakul describes the borders of Siam, which had wide border zones away from the royal centre, and where people could have multiple loyalties. In his opinion it was the presence of the French and the Dutch in neighbouring countries that lead to the clear mapping of Thailand. As a result people in the border were eventually drawn into the Thai identity. Thongchai Winichakul, “Maps and the Formation of the Geo-body of Siam”, in Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlove, eds., Asian Forms of Nation, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1996.

80 The primary aim of the colonial rule was greater control and extraction, but the very dynamics of these actions exceeded, some times on a much greater scale, the immediate and limited aims of the alien rulers.
Arguably one development that made the most enduring impact on Afro-Asian societies was the introduction of modern education which was originally meant for the creation of lower level civil servants and 'dark skinned westerners.' In Anderson’s view the pyramidal structure of colonial education systems and the countless student “pilgrims” were influential in the imagination of the new nation.\footnote{Anderson, citing the example of Indonesia, analyses the importance of the highly national and hierarchical structure of the government school system and the generalisation of the syllabus and qualification across the colonial state for the creation of such imagination. However, Anderson bestows more importance on the “hierarchy of geography”, which inspired generations of students to conduct “pilgrimages” from their home to higher centres of education and back. Such journeys and the experiences in the classrooms, where one meets students from all over the country, had a very significant function in envisaging “a territorially specific imagined reality”. Benedict Anderson, no-3, p. 127.} This education system produced a small group of individuals, those were familiar with new developments and ideas, especially with nationalism and national movements, who later become the nucleus of all national movements.

The first stage of modern nationalism begins, in most cases, with the activities of intellectuals in the socio-cultural realm.\footnote{In this period attempts were also made by scholars to explore the contributions of natives to religion, art, philosophy and literature which brought out the immeasurable value of their ancient cultures. The studies of various Western orientalists also revealed the scholarship of the East and the greatness of their ancient history and glory. Such activities helped to revive their confidence and pride in their culture and history which enormously heightened the self respect of colonial subjects. These developments should be seen in the context of enormous humiliation and damage inflicted on native people by colonial rulers. Western academics also constructed a stereotype image of easterners as non-progressive, non-entrepreneurial, who lack reason, intellect and were slaves to emotions. For example- David Hume in his *National Character* wrote, “I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, or even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No indigenous manufactures amongst them, no arts, no science.” Immanuel Kant made a hierarchal chart of different races in which very blond northern Europeans had the first place and Indians had the fourth. Hegel also placed Africans outside history and believed that they deserved to be enslaved. A good discussion about Western biases can be seen in E Chukwudi Eze, “Modern African Philosophy and Colonialism”, in E Chukwudi Eze, ed., *African Philosophy: An Anthology*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1988. Gyanendra Pandey and Peter Geschiere, “The Forging of Nationhood: The Context Over Citizenship, Ethnicity and History”, in Gyanendra Pandey and Peter Geschiere, eds., *The Forging of Nationhood*, New Delhi, Manohar, 2003.} Even though many of these intellectuals were products of a modern education and were attracted to modern and liberal ideas, some of them were trained in the traditional system or believed in its inherent strength and superiority over modernity. With such a world view they were naturally concerned about the threat from western influences to their culture and religion. While the first section mainly engaged in social and religious reform and the promotion of educational activities, the second group was
concerned with the revival or purification of indigenous traditions and religion. In India, while Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) and Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) represent the modernist section, Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) represents the second.

Political opposition against colonial rule began to emerge in the early years of the twentieth century. As noted earlier the leadership of such movements came from modern educated elites and from the middle class of the colonial societies. Most of them were influenced and inspired by the modern ideas like nation and nationalism which were widely recognised by that period. The ideas like democracy, equality and Marxism also influenced the colonial world.

Invariably all liberation movements, which were influenced by the nationalist doctrine, desired to achieve a modern nation-state in which all people would be equal partners and enjoy the same rights and duties. This political programme, as nationalist movements have done every where, brought people in to the centre of political process in Afro-Asian societies. This was a radical departure from the history of these regions, in that it rejected not only the colonial rule but also the earlier socio-political systems of these regions which were dominated by oppressive relations based on feudal, caste and class lines. Thus, national liberation movements, based on modern notions of political life become, instrumental in developing national consciousness among its diverse peoples.

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83 Even before the emergence of the modern national movements, colonialism faced stiff challenges, mainly from traditional elements of the society who were displaced by it. The Great Indian Revolt of 1857, the resistance of Amir Abdel Kedar in Algeria in the 1830s, the resistance of Veluthambi Dhalava in Travancore were some of the examples. However, such assertions should be differentiated from the nationalisms of the twentieth century due to the latter’s modern and progressive political outlook and programme.

84 The influence of modern ideas is evident on various occasions in the history of anti-colonial nationalism. In Vietnam following the seizure of power from the Japanese (August Revolution) the leaders of the newly independent republic issued their declaration of independence on 2 September 1945. The declaration begins with stirring lines from the Declaration of Independence of United States of America in 1776 and the Declaration of French Revolution (Rights of Man and the Citizen) and comments that, “for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens.” Ho Chi Minh, “The Burden of Empire”, in C.R. Hansman, ed., The Polemics of Revolt: From Gandhi to Guevara, London, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1969, p. 356. According to Anderson Sukarno’s (Indonesia) declaration was also similar to the American Declaration. Benedict Anderson, “Indonesian Nationalism: Today and in the Future”, New Left Review, no-235, 1999, p. 3.
Mobilization of the masses, as it was the only resource that colonized people had in their fight against the colonial yoke, was the primary step for the realization of such a political goal. In the process, the leadership of the anti-colonial nationalism addressed some of the important issues of their society, of which economic problem was a major one. Thus, the miserable economic condition of the masses, especially those of the rural peasantry and landless labourers emerged as significant issues. While the movements that were led by the bourgeois democratic parties, like Indian National Congress, took a softer view on such issues, the movements led by left wing parties adopted a radical stance. For example Truong Chinh, one of the leading figures of the Vietnamese nationalism described their programme as, “In the present historic conditions, a colonial revolution must have the following double character: first, it must be an anti-imperialist revolution aimed at overthrowing the imperialist domination, and second, it must be an agrarian revolution so as to confiscate the lands of the feudal landlords and distribute them to the peasants.”

The destructive economic impact of the colonial rule was also brought out during the anti-colonial nationalism. Under colonialism Afro-Asian societies and their economies were ruthlessly exploited, destroyed and in the process, colonisers

85 Tom Nairn’s idea of “political baptism” of the lower classes is applicable in colonial cases also and Intelligentsia in colonial world, like intelligentsia of the peripheral of Europe, depended on the power of the mobilized masses to realize their dream. Tom Nairn, no-5.

86 For example Nehru commented that, “Mass support cannot be coming from vague ideals of swaraj. It is essential that we must clearly lay down an economic programme for the masses...” Jawaharlal Nehru, “Social Fabric of a Nation”, in S. Gopal and Uma Iyengar, eds., Essential Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 6.

87 The importance of the rural peasantry in the anti-colonial movement was widely acknowledged. One of the great contributions of Mahatma Gandhi to the Indian national movement was his success in drawing the rural masses to the national movement. Peasants occupied the central role in the political programme of Frantz Fanon who believed that in colonial countries, the peasants are the revolutionary group. (Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, London, Penguin Books, 1961, p.61) In his report on the National and Colonial Question Lenin emphasises the importance of the peasantry. According to Lenin, “it would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they can emerge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support.” V I. Lenin, “Report of the Commission on the National and the Colonial Question-July-26.” in V.I. Lenin, On National Liberation and Social Emancipation, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1986, p. 285.

changed the economic structure of many colonies to make it appropriate to the changing needs of the imperial economy. Some scholars exposed the persistent exploitation of the colonial countries and its extractive character and impoverishing impact. Dadabai Naoroji (1825-1917) made one of the earliest revelations of the disastrous economic effects of colonialism. In his book, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, Naoroji introduced the 'Drain Theory'. According to it, the relentless extraction of raw materials, metals, profit and tributes, salaries, pensions, payment to services like shipping and banking, impoverished colonial countries. Such a drain retarded the formation of capital in India while it accelerated capitalist development in Britain. R C Dutt's *Economic History of India* was another work that exposed the harmful economic impact of colonial rule.

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89 During the early years of colonialism the main economic interest was commerce. According to Harry Magdoff, at first, the new colonial powers used their military prowess to pursue well-trodden paths of plunder, piracy and the annexation of foreign territory. But in Europe trade and commodity production were increasing and the capitalist mode of production was emerging. The geographical discoveries and overseas conquests of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries immensely accelerated commerce. This worldwide trade and the huge profits from it played a crucial role in the advancement of capitalism. Early capitalists were interested in acquiring gold, silver, spices and slaves to work on plantations. With the spread of industrialism the demand for raw material and agricultural products increased and with the growth of capitalism the Afro-Asian continent become markets for the growing volume of machine-produced goods. Harry Magdoff, "Imperialism: A Historical Survey", in T Shanin, and Hamza Alvi, ed., *Introduction to the Sociology of the Developing Societies*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillion Press, 1982, p. 12.

90 However, even years before Naoroji's book, some of the early references to the colonial plunder can be seen in the writings of Karl Marx. In *Capital* he explains the gravity of colonial loot and the significance of that profit in the development of the capitalist system. Marx writes, The English East India Company, as is well known, obtained, besides the political rule in India, the exclusive monopoly of the tea-trade, as well as of the Chinese trade in general,...The employees themselves fixed the price and plundered at will the unhappy Hindus. ...According to one of the lists laid before Parliament, the Company and its employees from 1757-1766 got ...6,000,000 from the Indians as gifts. Between 1769 and 1770. the English manufactured a famine by buying up all the rice and refusing to sell it again, except at fabulous prices...The colonies secured a market for budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother country and these were turned into capital. Karl Marx, "Form Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist", in Aijaz Ahmad, ed., *National and Colonial Question*, New Delhi, Left World, 2000, p. 41.

In another occasion Marx wrote "...speaking only of the value of the commodities that Indians have to gratuitously and annually send over to England – it amounts to more than the total sums of the income of the 60 millions of agricultural and industrial labourers of India! This is a bleeding process with a vengeance!" Karl Marx, "A Letter written to Danielson", in Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, *On Colonialism*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978 [7th ed], p. 346.

The leadership of national movements was clear that the colonial rule was the major factor that distorts the development of their societies. According to Nehru, "they [colonial rulers] prevented our industrial growth, and delayed political growth, and preserved all the out of date feudal and other relics they could find in the country."\textsuperscript{92} In such a situation the independence, which was the liberation from exploitative imperial economic order, was the first step in the construction of a progressive economic system.\textsuperscript{93}

With the adoption of the modern idea of nation, which embodies the notion of fundamental equality of citizens, some unequal and unjust practices of native society became problematic. The creation of a national community is an immensely difficult project in an unequal and oppressive society. In other words, it is too difficult for the exploited and the exploiter to be comrades in the same project. This was perhaps one reason why Raja Rammohan Roy commented that India could not yet be called a nation because its people are "divided among castes".\textsuperscript{94} To attract the majority of the exploited and downtrodden, nationalist movements were forced to address their problems also. The campaign against untouchability was one of the major constructive programmes adopted by Gandhiji and Indian National Congress. Many political and social movements emerged from the oppressed groups also. In India the question of lower castes was raised by Jyotiba Phule, Ambedkar, Ramaswami Naiker, Sree Narayana Guru, etc. Thus, the new political discourse unveiled by national movements was spreading to new areas of colonial society and challenging some of its traditional structures.

Liberation movements skilfully used various aspects of their society to mobilize people and make them emotionally attached to it. Religion was one of


\textsuperscript{93} However, to national leaders alien rule was not an exclusive question of economic looting or political domination. Rather, it was the denial of the natural right of the natives to rule themselves which caused severe moral degradation both in the colonized and colonial countries. To Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the early twentieth century Indian nationalist leader, Swaraj was his birthright. Amilcar Cabral, the leader of Guinea-Bissau, was driven to action against the Portuguese not so much because he was African but because of what he saw as the demands of justice. Patric Chabal, "The Social and Political thoughts of Amilcar Cabral: A Re-assessment", \textit{The Journal of Modern African Studies}, vol-19 (1), 1981, p. 33.

the most common factors among them. As religion was the only trans-local element that linked the whole people in many colonial societies, it became a very effective weapon for popular mobilization.\textsuperscript{95} Various incidents, myths, legends and symbols from the past also became important sources of inspiration and mobilization. 'Golden Eras' were remembered and historic dynasties/empires as well as the collective resistance of people against alien attackers were invoked.\textsuperscript{96} The leaders frequently used familial words and metaphors in their speeches and writings and repeatedly reminded the people that colonial domination was an insult to them.\textsuperscript{97}

This phase of nationalism resulted in the independence of a large number of Afro-Asian states. The same process also introduced the ideas of popular sovereignty, equality and citizenship among people who were the prisoners of traditional views. However, the importance of this stage is much greater than the overthrow of an alien rule. National assertions succeeded, in varying degrees, in bringing together many fragmented and diverse societies into one political unit by developing national consciousness among them. And the nation that emerged as the result of anti-colonial nationalism was radically different from traditional communities in terms of its unity, consciousness, constituting principles and identity. In this sense liberation movements in Afro-Asian continents, as pointed out by Frantz Fanon, were a historic process of self-creation.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{95} In India Tilak used religious festivals as part of the political activity. Gandhiji also used religious symbols. Islam was an important element of unity and inspiration in African countries like Morocco, Somalia, and Algeria.

\textsuperscript{96} Javanese empire of 'Majapahit' was an important symbol during the Indonesian nationalism. Vietnamese resistance against the Chinese during the pre-colonial period was a source of inspiration during the Vietnamese liberation. David E. F. Henley, "Ethnographic Integration and Exclusion in Anti-colonial Nationalism: Indonesia and Indochina", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science [Vol-3], London and New York, Routledge, 2000, p. 1041-1082.

\textsuperscript{97} Ho Chi Minh in one of his speeches in 1946 says: "Compatriots in the South and Southern part of Central Viet-Nam! The North, Centre, the South are part and parcel of Viet-Nam! We have the same ancestors, we are of the same family, and we are all brothers and sisters.... No one can divide the children of the same family. Likewise, no one can divide Viet-Nam." Ho Chi Minh, Quoted in Walker Connor, no-49, p. 382.

Conclusion

This chapter was an attempt to understand nationalism and the various issues related to it. To develop a lucid idea of nation and nationalism we examined theoretical concepts, economic and social conditions of its emergence and different phases of its manifestation. In the process an idea of a political principle that has been alive throughout the last two centuries emerged. It seems that nationalism is, fundamentally, a political principle that recognizes the right of a human community, that is, the nation, to decide its political destiny. Or, to put it in another way, nationalism is a political principle that acknowledges the right of a nation to have a political set-up of its own. This principle, which was explicitly stated during the French Revolution, received universal acceptance due to its moral power and such moral power and universal acceptance gave birth to many political movements, nation-states, and psychological attachments. And it still inspires millions.