

Module name/ title: Nation Building Process and Marginalization in India

Paper: Media and Margins

Component I: Personal Details

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Component II: Description of the Module

Items	Description of Module
Subject Name	Media and Communication Studies
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Objectives	
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1. Introduction

Nation-building is a normative term which became popular among American political scientists especially after World War-II. However, as used by political scientists, the term covers not only conscious strategies initiated by state leaders but also unplanned societal changes. In general, the term 'Nation Building' refers to the processes of national integration and consolidation that led to the establishment of modern nation state as distinct from various form of traditional states, such as feudal and dynastic states, church states, empires, etc. The classical theory of nation building was only related with western societies. However, its proponents maintained that the theory was applicable to the study of nonwestern societies also. Its main proponents include Karl Deutsch, Charles Tilly, and Reinhard Bendix.

2. Learning Outcome

In this module, you will learn about the process of nation building in India and various challenges it faces in this process. You will also learn about the process of marginalization and various marginalized groups in India and their role in the process of nation building. This module also helps you to analyze whether the inclusive policy of the state protects the rights of these marginalized groups or not.

3. Concept of Nation and Nationalism

To understand the concept of nation-building, one needs to know what exactly a nation is. A nation is a community or a large group of people with strong bonds of identity which is typically based on shared culture, religion, history, language or ethnicity. Benedict Anderson, one of the most important theorists of modern nationalism, coined the expression "imagined communities" to describe modern nations. To him, nation is a product of imagination in the sense that the members of the community do not know each other personally and can only imagine themselves to be in communion with each other (Anderson 1995).

Nation building can also be differentiated from Nationalism. Nationalism precedes nation building activity. It is the sentiment of belongingness that creates the desire among people to assert their identity and exert their influence. People combine their resources to create that identity. When the sentiment gives rise to a construction activity it becomes the process of nation building. It is this process which helps to perpetuate the nationalist sentiment.

4. Definition of Nation Building:

The term 'nation-building' can be defined both in a general and a restricted sense. In general, the term referred to the policies and projects by which newly independent governments would purposively effect the transition from 'tradition' to 'modernity'. This quest or transition entailed a total and massive effort of social engineering' in which all elements of a modern state were assembled. These elements include administrative, legal, extractive, and coercive organizations recognized by the social theorist Max Weber as the core of any state. In its more restricted sense, 'nation-building' referred to the self-conscious production and dissemination of national consciousness and sentiment of a felt sense of national identity. This task was to be undertaken by a small minority of intellectuals and state officials.

It can be said that there is no unanimity among scholars regarding the definition of nation building. However, various thinkers have defined it in their own way.

According to Elaigwu (2011), nation-building can be viewed in two main dimensions of identity. One, closely linked to state-building, refers to the acceptance by members of a polity in central government with the central government as a symbol. Secondly, nation-building involves the acceptance of other members of civic body as equal fellow members of a corporate nation a recognition of the rights of other members to a share of common history, resources, values, and other aspects of the state. According to Walker (2011), nation building is the most common form of a process of collective identity formation which legitimizes public power within a given territory. This is an essentially indigenous process which often not only projects a meaningful future but also draws on existing traditions, institutions and customs redefining them as national characteristics in order to support the nation's claim to sovereignty and uniqueness.

In the words of Smith (2012), nation building is the conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. It involves the development of behaviors, values, language, institutions and physical structures that elucidate our history and culture; concretize and protect the present and ensure the future identity and independence of the nation. Nation building thus is the deliberate, keenly directed and focused, and energetic projection of national culture, and the collective identity. Much of the literature on nation building involves when people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages or petty principalities to the larger central political systems (Toffler 1990).

5. State Building and Nation Building

The term nation-building is often used simultaneously with state-building. Although both terms are closely related, 'state-building' and 'nation-building' are distinct processes. 'State-building' is seen as the task of building functioning states capable of fulfilling the essential attributes of modern statehood. 'Nation-building', on the other hand, refers to more abstract process of developing a shared sense of identity or community among various groups making up the population of a particular state. Therefore, 'state-building' focuses on the practical task of building or strengthening state institutions, while 'nation-building' is more concerned with the character of relations between citizens and their state. 'State-building' has long been a focus of international development assistance with a wide range of capacity-building programs directed at strengthening key institutions. 'Nation-building', on the other hand, has often been viewed as a more nebulous process with a limited role for external assistance.

Many people believe that nation-building is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, that is, it takes a long time and is a social process that cannot be jump-started from outside. The evolution of the Italian city-states into a nation, the German city-states into the Zollverein customs union and later a nation, the multiple languages and cultural groups in France into the nation of France, the development of China from the warring kingdoms, took a very long time, and were the result, not only of political leadership, but of changes in technology and economic processes (the agricultural and then industrial revolutions), as well as communications, culture and civil society, and many other factors.

6. Nation building in India

In terms of diversity, India can be described as one of the most complex societies. In fact it is the most diverse, most complex, most persistent and most authentic plural

society in the world. India's plural character is apparent in practically every major aspects of its collective life, be its social systems, economic formations, cultural patterns; or linguistic groups, religious communities, castes, sub-castes and sects; or local variations of commonly prevalent mythologies and commonly revered deities; or ethnic identities, regional alignments and sub regional attachments; or diversities of history marked by moments of triumphs and tragedies and differences in heroes and villains, and in the rich tapestry of folk lore, folk dance, music, cuisine, crafts and artifacts of life (Khan, 1992).

It has been seen that the post-independence Indian state, despite its diversities, has been engaged in a project of nation building which subscribes to the western notions of nation-state in which, ideally speaking, language, religion, and political sovereignty have coterminous boundaries. In the context of nation-building experience in India and other parts of South Asia, Phadnis and Ganguly write, "post colonial nation-building approaches (in the region) focused almost exclusively on creating a unified 'national identity' based around either common political values and citizenship or a putative majoritarian 'ethnic' identity. The aim of both approaches, on the whole, has been to produce a pulverized and uniform sense of national identity to coincide with the state boundaries that seldom reflect ethnic divisions on the ground. This type of outlook towards nation-building, as promoted vigorously by the modernization school of thought, refused to accept the notion that states incorporating more than one 'ethnic nation' could be both stable and harmonious" (Phadnis & Ganguly, 2001).

However, Indian state faces various challenges in the process of nation building. The immediate challenges were the post-partition problems, the rise of Hindu Communalism and the role of Indian Communists who questioned the very basis of Indian political structure. Despite these challenges and diversities nationalist leaders like Nehru, Gandhi, and Ambedkar pleaded for a new Indian nation which will be based on the ideals of liberty, fraternity, equality. Nehru gave emphasis to the development of national consensus as it was essential for India's unity and progress.

It is important to note that in the process of nation-building in India some communities were left out either because of their low numerical strength or due to low bargaining power with the power structure. These communities include minority groups, marginalized groups, backward class, etc. Therefore, Nehru, Ambedkar and Gandhi state that development of nation is no less than social justice and therefore development of nation is thought to be development of all citizens, irrespective of who they are, in other words, irrespective of their caste, class, gender, language, religion, region, etc. It means that development is ought to be inclusive development.

7. Concept of Inclusive Development

In simple words, Inclusive Development (or Inclusive Growth) means that development of a nation should reach all sections of the society. We have seen that inclusive growth is a major concern for human development in India with rising inequalities. Government of India aimed at promoting 'inclusive growth' as it recognized that high national income growth alone did not address the challenge of employment promotion, poverty reduction and balanced regional development or improving human development. The subject of inclusive growth was used most visibly in the theme of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. The theme is 'towards faster and more inclusive growth,' which clearly reflects the need to find a sustainable balance between growth and inclusion. The Eleventh Plan defines inclusive growth to be "a growth process which yields broad-based benefits and ensures equality of

opportunity for all". The inclusive growth and development vision as envisaged in the Five Year Plan also reflected the budgetary and political commitment of the government. Though, efforts and progress in the direction of inclusive growth and development appears to be quite satisfactory, however, challenges, problems and constraints in achieving the goals of inclusive planning have emerged that require multiple approaches and strategies to address them effectively and efficiently (Vijaykumar, 2004).

It has been seen that the historical discrimination and exclusion encountered by certain groups and communities have been sought to be ameliorated by the Indian Constitutional provisions of inclusion and positive discrimination. The Indian State also ensures and protects the rights of these communities through various Constitutional provisions.

8. Marginalization

Marginalization has been defined as a social process by which a person or a group of people are made marginal or become relegated to the lower edge of the society. There are various structural factors which became the reason for marginalization such as caste, class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc. These factors push a section of society to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally and socially following the policy of exclusion. It also denies these people equal access to productive resources and avenues for the realization of their productive human potential and opportunities for their full capacity utilization and eventually it leads these groups of people to poverty, misery, discrimination and livelihood insecurity.

The forms of marginalization are very, and it changes from country to country. It is true that more marginalized groups exist in Third World especially in developing nations. Women, people with disabilities, dalits, aged people, children, poor, sexual minorities, etc. are most vulnerable marginalized groups in almost every society.

Therefore, a marginalized community is a group of people who are confined to the lower or peripheral edge of the society. People belonging to marginalized communities are always denied or deprived from the involvement in mainstream economic, political, cultural and social activities. The Encyclopedia of Public Health defines marginalized groups as, 'To be marginalized is to be placed in the margins, and thus excluded from the privilege and power found at the center'.

The problem and difficulties faced by various marginalized groups in India are categorically summarized below:

a. Women

Gender inequality or discrimination is a factor through which women are marginalized in a society. Women are always marginalized relative to men, in every country and culture. For example, women are excluded from certain jobs and occupations, incorporated into certain others, and marginalized in others. Women belonging to lower classes, lower castes, illiterate, and the poorest region have different levels of marginalization than their better off counterparts.

b. People with disabilities

People with disabilities have always been seen in our society with a kind of stigma which results in their social and economic marginalization. The disabled face various

types of barriers in their day to day life activities. However, disabled women, children and aged are more vulnerable and need more attention in our society.

c. Dalits

Caste based marginalization is one of the most serious human rights issues especially in India. The marginalization of Dalits influences all spheres of their life. In other words, it violates their basic human rights such as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Caste based discrimination entails social exclusion. However, in recent years due to affirmative action and legal protection, the intensity of caste based marginalization is reducing but it still continues.

d. Tribes

Unlike the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are a product of marginalization based on ethnicity. In India, tribal people face various problems in terms of land alienation, poverty and indebtedness, health and nutrition, education, etc. Again in India, Scheduled Tribes population is known as by various names such as Adivasis, Adimjatis, Girijans, Vanvasis, Pahadias, etc. These names imply the notion of primitive, isolated and backwardness. In recent time, the government has taken various affirmative action and legal protection to protect tribal people from the exploitation and discrimination.

e. Aged People

Ageing is an inevitable and inexorable process in life. In India, the population of the elderly is growing rapidly and is emerging as a serious area of concern for the government and the policy planners. According to data on the age of India's population, in Census 2001, there are a little over 76.6 million people above 60 years, constituting 7.2 per cent of the population. The vulnerability and marginalization among the elderly is not only due to an increased incidence of illness and disability, but also due to their economic dependency upon their spouses, children and other younger family members.

f. Children

It can be truly said that children are the most vulnerable sections of a society because their physical and mental capacities are being less developed than those of adults or not developed to their full potential. Although India ratified UNCRC in 1992, the problem of violation of child rights is quite rampant in all parts of the country. India is home to the largest number of children in the world with approximately one-fifth of the world's children living in India. There are about 43 crore children in India in the age group of 0-18 living in India. It is estimated that 40 percent of children in India are vulnerable due to various reasons as violence, poverty, lack of healthcare, lack of education, sexual abuse, and so on (Planning Commission, 2012).

g. Sexual Minorities

Another marginalized group that faces stigma and discrimination are the sexual minorities such as gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, etc. Their marginalization is due to the sexual preferences such as the heterosexual kind of sexual relations as the only form of normal acceptable relations within the society. Homosexual people are ridiculed and ostracized by their own family and are left with very limited support

structures and networks of community that provide them conditions of care and support.

It is true that marginalization is the unfair or unjust treatment of individual or minority groups by the majority or stronger group. Making marginalized refers to making separated from the mainstream society and being marginalized refers to being separated from the rest of the society or forced to remain on the fringes or outskirts and not to be at the centre of social or national life. Sometimes marginalized people are not considered as an ingredient or part of the society rather they are thought to be unwanted or negligible in the building of a society or nation.

In India, marginalized groups continue to remain in a vulnerable position even after country has gained independence and marches ahead on the path of progress and development.

9. Conclusion:

It can be truly said that 'Nation-building' cannot be built without the active participation of ordinary citizens. It is through the participation of each and every citizen, which contributes to the formation of national identity and thereby nation building. In India, although the inclusive policy of the state encompasses every citizen irrespective of their caste, class, gender and so on, however, the marginalized groups like women, dalits, scheduled tribe, children, etc. still faces various discrimination and exploitation. Therefore, it hampers their active participation in socio-economic and political activity.

Nation-building process in India will not become successful unless marginalized groups of the country actively participate in the social, economic and political activity. Nation building is based on national consciousness that is the consciousness of belonging to a greater national identity by leaving their small group identity based on caste, class, gender, religion, etc. In India, due to the discrimination and exploitation faced by the marginalized groups, they often engage in various protests or movements thereby demanding for their separate identity from the mainstream. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the state, various stakeholders as well as our society to reduce discrimination and exploitation against these groups and thereby treat them as an integral part of our nation building process.

10. Summary

In this module, you have learnt about the process of nation building in India and how this process requires the active participation of every citizen of country by giving importance to marginalized groups, backward class, minorities, etc. Thus, nation building is building common national identity among all rather than small group identities based on class, caste, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc.