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National Integration through REC / NIT System in India: An Overview

Kishor Chandra Satpathy

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VISTAS OF EDUCATION



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NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND COMMUNAL HARMONY

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India, that is Bharat, is a nation and not the one in the making. The common culture, religion, language or common aspirations together with a common territory constitute the basis for formation of a Nation.

‘It is an interesting fact of history that India was forged into a Nation on account of a common language nor on account of continued existence of a single political regime over its territories but on account of a common culture evolved over the centuries. It is cultural Unity -which has welded this country into a Nation’.

‘The history of India over the past centuries bears witness to the fact that India was at no time a single political unit. Even during the reign of the Maurya dynasty, though a large part of the country was under the sovereignty of the Mauryan Kings, there were considerable portions of the territory which were under the rule of independent kingdoms. So also during the Moghul rule which extended over large parts of the territory of India, there were independent rulers who enjoyed political sovereignty over the territories of their respective kingdoms’.

The cultural unity can be traced to the day to day pattern of life of the people of India since the time immemorial. There is a filial love between the territory of Bharat and the people. Without any hesitation any one which born in India or of Indian origin feels that the country is as good as his mother. We know Ramo who told his brother Lakshmana that the mother and motherland are greater than that even of heaven (i.e. the abode of gods and goddesses).

The territory of India was described in an entire chapter of Vishnu Purana (approx. 245—300 AD) long back thus: - ‘The country which lies to the North of seas and to the South of Himalayas, is Bharat and the people of this country are Bharateeyas’.

The people and the territory of Bharat which is our homeland is the body and the culture and the tradition comprising the values of life evolve the through out the centuries constitute the soul of our national life. If the culture disappears, the Nation dies, for the body without soul is dead.

The country has had a tradition in religion that it is not a matter of doctrine or dogma or rites; it is a matter of man’s encounter with the Ultimate Mystery of the world. Whether we are a Hindu, Muslim or Christian, our differences relate to the ways of approach, or form of address. Because we thought religion was a kind of personal insight into the Ultimate reality, we never laid must stress, exclusive stress on any particular way of approaching the Supreme or calling the Supreme. This is a thing that came down to us from the very early days. The Asokan (272—232 BC) stone edict says “Do not quarrel about religions..... no religion has a monopoly of truth; you must try to know the God above all gods who is expressed in different ways and different individuals”. Our Constitution regularized it and as pointed out to us—every citizen of India has the liberty to profess, practice and propagate his religion so long as he does not

injure the convictions of other people'. 'This has been the tradition that has come down to us for the last 30 or 40 centuries'. 'Our has been a country where all religion are welcomed, not merely tolerated'.

If we follow our constitution scrupulously in respect of our right and duties as well as other things as enshrined in it as the proud citizens of the great country, there is no doubt that national integration and communal harmony is sure to get the going to make India as one of the strong and highly developed countries in the world.

'Broadly speaking we have to go back to our roots. The enduring strength of India is her capacity to synthesise different cultural religious traditions, different styles of living, and different modes of expression. Exclusiveness of any kind is alien to the spirit of India'.

'The problem of integration must also be seen in its socio-economic context. A faster rate of growth and development is essential to contain and dissolve tensions. This of course involves helping all the weaker section who are weaker economically or socially or who have been under privileged. Govt. has a responsibility, but so as everybody else—every citizen and every political party or group. Integration is a continuing process and we have to guard against any factor which weakens our unity'.

The Govt. of India and for that matter all the State Govts are engaged in the implementation of various plan programmes on education for all, health and hygiene, khadi and village industries development, village road construction, National Highways Development Project connecting the entire country from Silchar (Assam) to Porbandar. Srinagar to Kanyakumari including the Golden Quadrilateral connecting the metros of Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, etc., and, the successful completion of all these activities will prove a big step towards realization of the

National dream of making India a very strong country free from all kinds of tensions—social or communal.

But, to go ahead on the road of progress and upheaval, we must feel proud of being Indians and be honest, hardworking and sincere. There is no alternative to hard work and we must make every effort to involve local people in project works. Villagers and slum dwellers must be exposed to the realities of life and make them see that by their own coordinated efforts they could live a better life in their own country—the mother India—which is the largest democratic state in the world.

The 12th Jan, the birth day of Swami Vivekananda according to the English calendar, was declared by the Govt. of India as the National Youth Day “as it was felt that the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth”. The first National Youth Day was celebrated on Jan 12, 1985, and since then it is observed every year.

To conclude, we may quote Swami Vivekananda thus: “I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others..... Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give to her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life”.

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