

National identity derives itself from the idea of Nation-State. Nation-States themselves have their own history. While there are various theories regarding the origins of Nation-States, it is generally agreed upon that the bases of the Modern Nation States were laid after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. It led to the formation of Classical Nation States of Northern and Western Europe. It also laid the foundation for the growth of Nationalism. This ultimately led to formation and consolidation of Second generation of Nation States such as Italy, Germany, and countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The process of decolonization in the aftermath of Second World War saw the emergence of third generation of nation-states in the African and Asian Continents. The process of the formation of Nation-States continued till the end of 20th century when several new nations emerged in the aftermath of the decline and disintegration of USSR. The emergence of Kosovo in South-Eastern Europe and Southern Sudan in Africa highlight the fact that the process of Nation-Formation is still on, even in the 21st century.

The history of origin of National identity illustrates the importance of political events in the formation or emergence of modern nation-states. But that politics itself has been a derivative of interplay of diverse factors. National identity as such seems to be a superset of a combination of factors which include linguistic identities, regional loyalties, culture, religion and history.

Linguistic identities have been a feature of several demands of national self-determination. The wave of Nationalism in Europe in 18th and 19th century and the more recent struggle for and foundation of Bangladesh was largely based upon this very premise. One Nation-One Language was also mooted as the idea for the basis of national identity largely based upon the European experience. Similarly regional or ethnic identities have also acted as foundation of national identities. The disintegration of USSR into multiple nation states was seen as the culmination of the struggle for freedom of diverse groups that were ethnically diverse. The making and remaking of various African boundaries is also seen as the result of the assertion of ethnic identities as separate national identity.

Culture has also served as the bedrock of various nationalisms. The diversity of cultures has been seen as a challenge to the formation of a strong singular national identity. This line of argumentation also spilled over to religious identity as well. Religion was used as the basis

for the two-nation theory which led to the partition of United India into India and Pakistan. The modern state of Israel is also an example of the formation of National identity on the basis of an imagined coherence between Culture and Religion on one hand and Nation-State on the other.

All or any of these identities are given the form of National identity with the help of history. It is the history of the Nation which gives legitimacy to national identity and assertion of sovereignty by that nation. Renan has even sarcastically remarked that 'Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation'. This is the reason all nations try to trace their history to a hoary past. Failure to be able to discover or forge one's history is seen as an existential question mark constantly lurking upon its national identity.

Benedict Anderson has famously theorized that 'Nation is an imagined community. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.... Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined'. Ultimately it is the width and depth of the imagination of this community which decides the course of a nation. A country like India, with multiple and diverse linguistic, religious and ethnic identities could claim to be a nation only because of the inclusiveness and tolerance that has been its hallmark since centuries.

When various groups feel assured that their identities would not be threatened but will actually flourish in the idea or imagination of a nation, only then a diverse but united nation like India can sustain and grow. Only an inclusive imagination can breed patriots, since exclusivity breeds division, secession and war. As such Patriotism is not only a display of love and a deep sense of affection for one's country; it is also a feeling of pride. Rabindranath Tagore often used a term 'Deshabhimaan' as a synonym for this word in his works which aptly captures one of the dimensions of this word.

National identity and Patriotism give a sense of belonging to an individual in the world. It helps a person feel the presence of an extended family around him. Naturally the actions guided by such a philosophy will lead to betterment of a society and progress of the