

## Essay #4

Being Minority is a fate no one wants. Can Nationalism be inclusive?

Outline

### I- Introduction

Nationalism is inherently exclusive; it cannot be inclusive. The continual violation of basic human rights, discrimination and cultural suppression of minorities are few problems faced by them due to exclusive nature of nationalism. Therefore, being minority is a fate no one wants.

### II- unfolding nationalism in relation to the fate of minorities

### III- Inclusive nationalism aims to provide equity to minorities! A Counter Perspective

A- Minorities have equal access to opportunities

(Canada's Multiculturalism Policy)

B- legal protection of rights of minorities

(1973 Constitution of Pakistan)

②

C- Minorities have proportional representation in political and social institutions

(South Africa Constitution)

IV Nationalism is inherently exclusive and creates problems for minorities.

A- Violation of fundamental human rights of minorities

(Yazidi community in Iraq)

B- Ethnic cleansing of minorities

(Genocide in Palestine)

C- Cultural suppression of minorities

(Uyghur Muslims in China)

D- Prejudice and discrimination against minorities

(Muslim minorities in France)

E- Minorities face exclusion from national identity

(Hindu Nationalism in India)

F- social segregation of minorities within same territory

(Black Americans in US):

G- Minorities are politically marginalized

(Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar)

V Approaches a nation should adopt to move towards inclusivity featuring minorities

A- Promotion of intercultural understanding

B- Ensure equal representation in Government

C- Providing inclusive economic opportunities

D- Encouraging equal access to education

VI Conclusion

Being minority is a fate none wants.

The exclusive nature of nationalism suppresses minorities in all domains of life. This leads to exacerbated inequality and perpetual social tension. Carrying an ideal path between pragmatism and passion, nation should move towards adopting inclusivity to facilitate minorities.

(9)

**Being Minority is a fate no one wants. Can nationalism be inclusive?**

As we approach to the end of 2024, military airstrikes and other abuses have intensified, causing widespread displacement and destruction. The Israeli attacks have disproportionately impacted civilian population mainly children and women, violating law of war and human rights protection. The violence contributes to thousands of deaths; millions of displacement among Palestinians. The dominating nature of Zionist nationalism has engulfed Palestinian Muslims to severe oppression. **Can the ongoing debates surrounding the lives, rights, and recognition of minorities truly demonstrate that nationalism is inclusive?** The current situation of minorities world wide rejects the inclusivity of nationalism. The mayhem continues to suppress minorities, constricting the space for them to live peacefully. Nationalism is inherently exclusive; it cannot be inclusive. The continual violation of basic human rights, discrimination and cultural suppression of

minorities are few examples of problems faced by them due to exclusive nature of nationalism.

Therefore, being minority is a fate no one wants.

**"Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind" - Albert Einstein**

In this quotation Albert Einstein states that nationalism is primitive and harmful ideology, that hinders human progress and unity.

Nationalism is a sense of belongingness to one's nation. It connects people together who share a common culture, language, history or set of values. It often involves a strong sense of pride and loyalty to a country. While, it brings people together and constrict opportunities for minorities. Several authors have critically examined the relationship between nationalism and treatment of minorities. It creates potential for exclusion and oppression of minorities in a nation. **Benedict Anderson**, comprises this stance in his book: **"Imagined Community"**. He argues that nationalism creates a mindset of **"us vs them" mentality**. This marginalizes minorities and make them vulnerable to discrimination.

6

Critiques believe that nationalism is inclusive, it unites people, through shared values and civic principles. Nationalism fosters sense of belonging among minorities and major groups. They embrace diversity as source of national strength.

Inclusive nationalism supports all of its citizens regardless of their backgrounds. Minorities are given equal access to social, economic and educational opportunities. **Canada's Multiculturalist**

**Policy**, justifies the inclusivity of nationalism.

Canada has long embraced multiculturalism; it promotes inclusivity by encouraging equal opportunities for to all. Canadian government provides funds to multicultural programs, mainly to help minorities and preserve their rights. It rationalizes the point that inclusive nationalism provides full access of minorities to avail the opportunities.

Moreover, inclusive nationalism helps minorities to ensure their rights by providing them equal treatment and protection in law.

In Pakistan under **1973 constitution of Pakistan**, the legal rights and protection of minorities is

enshrined in constitution. It grants religious freedom and equality to all minorities without any discrimination. Pakistan's constitution provides reserved seats for minorities in national and provincial assemblies, ensuring legal protection to rights of minorities. Protection of minority rights Act, prohibits discriminations based on race, religion and ethnicity.

Furthermore, Minorities have proportional representation in political and social institutions. It empowers them and allows them to participate in equitable policy making procedures.

Presently, **South Africa's constitution**, ensures equal representation to all minorities. It provides platform to racial groups to represent themselves politically and socially through proportional representation of electoral parties.

Like, African National Congress (ANC) has a say in government to form policies addressing their interests and needs.

Keeping the view of critics aside, it is widely believed that nationalism is inherently exclusive. The inclination of nationalism more towards exclusiveness than inclusiveness creates

8

numerous problems for minorities. These problems hinder their way to live peacefully in a nation through embracing own traditions. It not only creates physical oppressions, but also creates psychological problems.

Nationalism refers to deliberate denial of basic rights and freedom to minorities by favouring dominant group. It leads to exclusion and mistreatment of minorities.

In recent years, the **Yazidi community in Iraq and Syria** continue to face severe human rights violation. Many Yazidi women and children are captured by **ISIS**, violating their right to freedom. The prolonged violence, discrimination and lack of safe settlements, breaches the availability of basic human rights of minorities.

Secondly, the belief that nation belongs to a specific group and mindset of "us vs them" mentality, often leads to discrimination of minorities. This believe of discrimination widens ways for nationalist ideologies to purify the land from minorities. It is clearly evident by ongoing **genocide in Palestine**. People



of Palestine are deprived of all rights and targeted to inhuman treatment of Israeli forces.

**Ethnic cleansing** is practiced by Israel to expand their Zionist nationalisms. **Nearly** forty-five thousand Palestinians are killed, around ninety thousand are ~~inherently~~ internally displaced.

Nationalism is inherently exclusive and results in ethnic cleansing of minorities.

Thirdly, nations tend to prioritize the culture, language and traditions of dominant group. It marginalizes the minorities and they are victims of culture suppression. In China,

**Uyghur Muslims** are facing significant cultural suppression in order to erase their culture. The Chinese government has banned the use of Uyghur language in school and workplace. They have restricted them to practice their religion or keep their traditions. The government wants the Uyghur Muslims to comply to overall dominating Chinese culture. This contributes in ongoing tension and suppression of culture of minorities.

Fourthly, the inherent hatred, prejudice and discrimination of minorities, prevails in nationalist societies. Nationalism is driven by

(10)

mindset of 'majority supremacy' mentality. Minorities are discriminated in all domains of life: daily life, employment, education, housing and healthcare. **Muslim minorities in France**, are longrun targeted for practicing their religion. Women who wear hijab are humiliated in school and workplace. People of France believe that wearing hijab is against their values. Minorities are often victimized on the basis of prejudice and discrimination.

Fifthly, minorities face exclusion from national identity in nationalist states. They are excluded and alienated from national identities which results in social fragmentation and unrest. The prevailing Hindu nationalism in India - **Hindutva**, has excluded minorities from national identities. They believe that India is a Hindu nation and there is no space for other religion such as Christians and Muslims. In 2019, **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** was proposed. It provided citizenship to larger group of Hindu communities and neighbour countries, excluded Muslims to seek citizenship. Minorities are often alienated from national

identities through marginalizing them as second-class citizens.

Sixthly, nationalism drives the nation towards social segregation of minorities. This ultimately results in physical and social separation of minorities. They are forced to peripheries, where lesser opportunities are available to them. Social segregation results in unequal access of resources and services to people. **Palestinians** live in segregated communities with unequal access to basic necessities of life. Similarly, in US, racial segregation still affects many **Black Americans**, mainly, in terms of availability of education, residency and healthcare. Presently, according to world bank report, around 60% of black communities reside in poorer neighborhood with restricted opportunities.

Lastly, the exclusive nature of nationalism pave ways for power politics to be under command of dominant groups. Power politics is concentrated in the hands of majority groups of a nation. It restricts full representation of minorities in governance. General people do not support leaders from minority groups. They

(12)

believe that leaders from minority groups are incompetent to lead as a leader. In reference to minorities of Myanmar, the **Rohingya Muslims** are systematically excluded from political life. They are not allowed in participating in elections, which makes them stateless. Ultimately, minorities of ~~are~~ a nation are politically marginalized and deprived of political rights.

It seems idealistic to completely change the exclusive nature of nationalism to inclusive nature. However, few approaches should be adopted on larger scales to eliminate the surge of exclusive nationalism. ~~These~~ The approaches should incline to facilitate minorities in a nation.

Government should ensure equal representation of minorities in government. There should be a proper platform for minorities to express their cultural, values and traditions. It helps them to make their voices heard and concerns to be addressed. Minorities should be given **constitutional and legal security**. It guarantees equal representation for minorities, such as reserved seats in legislature and

Safeguard against discrimination and anti-hate laws.

In addition, State should move towards promotion of intercultural understanding. This reduces stereotypes and prejudice of minorities. Inter-cultural understanding promotes inclusivity of minority culture in dominating culture. It fosters respect and cooperation among all people. Minorities feel valued and accepted, which ultimately reduces social tension. Inter-cultural understanding of inclusivity can be promoted through **social festivals or ~~education~~ cultural-exchange programs**. It helps the people to accept each other with different backgrounds under the umbrella of nationhood.

Furthermore, minorities should be economically strengthened by providing them economic opportunities. It provides minorities equal access to jobs, businesses and financial opportunities. State should adopt economic policies, such as, **Employment Equity Act** or **Equal Pay Act**. It reduces poverty and social inequality, making a country better place for minorities to live. Government should enforce

and strengthen laws against minority discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or minority status.

At last, state should ensure that education systems should be inclusive and should offer equal opportunities to minorities. It helps the minorities to improve their social mobility, access better jobs, and contribute fully to national development. It could be fostered through, **educational exchange programmes** or **Student Scholarship programs** exclusively for minorities. It helps to break cycle of poverty and leads towards social and national integrity.

To sum up the whole discussion, it is evident that being a minority is a fate which no one wants. Minorities face challenges in every sphere of their lives. They are often deprived of basic necessities. Furthermore, the exclusive nature of nationalism marginalizes and alienates minority groups. The suppression faced by minorities spread hatred and social fragmentation. **Mahatma Gandhi states that, "When the state is strong, it is easy to forget the rights of minorities!"** In this statement he argues that strong

nations often result in ignoring the rights of minorities. It justifies the "majority dominance" mindset of people. Nationalism<sup>is</sup> inherently exclusive which leads to exacerbated inequality and perpetual social tension. Carrying an ideal path between pragmatism and passion, nation should adopt to strategies which determine inclusivity of minorities. State should move ahead to promote intercultural understanding, ensuring equal representation in government and providing inclusive opportunities in economy and education. Last but not the least, nationalism can not be fully inclusive, however approaches should be adopted to alleviate exclusivity in nationalism.

---