

HS8.101 Making of Contemporary World

Assignment 2

Q:

Answer ANY ONE:

1. How does the migration of people change social/political/cultural attitudes in the modern era?
Discuss in the context of the following:

- a) France (football, citizenship, etc.)

OR

- b) The Basil D' Oliveira episode in cricket

Tips: Pick up case studies. Link episodes/events to migration and its impacts. Talk about citizenship and ideas of *who* qualifies to be a legitimate and honoured citizen in modern democracies, capable of 'representing' nations. What is migration doing, in the long run, to modern societies?

2. Using examples (from India or elsewhere), explain how food habits, customs, rituals, language and religion can define 'national' identity.

Word Limit: 800-1000 words

Ans:

Regarding identity, nationality is part and parcel of legal identification in international law, establishing the person as a subject, a national, of a sovereign state. According to Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to a nationality", & "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to choose his nationality".

All in all, one's national identity is the foremost basis for self-identity as it instils a sense of identification with a particular group of people, their culture, customs, rituals, religion, language, food habits, social status etc. The ethnic group itself consists of information related to one's social background. However, our concern is regarding how food habits, customs, rituals, language, and religion define someone's 'National' identity.

Over time, a set of ethics, traits, habits, clothing styles, festivals, flavours and values readily get transferred to the successor generation. And after an extended period, these characteristics become synonymous with the culture of that place. For instance, the way we greet someone varies from place to place. In India, we join our hands and say 'Namaste'. In Albania, men shake hands. Japanese bow down, and Zimbabweans clap their hands to greet one another. Although no rules exist for greeting someone, those mentioned above are widespread ways to pay gratitude across different countries. There may be, or rather we can say there are, various socially accepted gestures across all states and regions of a particular nation that relate the person to that nation.

Similar is the case with languages which have their place within a broader set of values linked to religion and social status. Classification of nationalities based on speech is the most prominent way to identify someone's place of origin. Language signifies your native, cultural and social identity. The chances of a person's nationality being different from what can be conceived from their speech are few and far between. Moreover, our accent suggests our native identity, and whatever language we speak, dialect variation reflects the effect of globalisation on human beings. For example, the British dialect is very different from that of Americans, making it easy to distinguish between nationalities based on their accent.

Another example of language being the basis of national identity is the long-running dispute between the Tamilians and Sinhalese people in Sri Lanka, where Sinhalese tend to gain supremacy because of their language, creating a disastrous situation in Sri Lanka. The tiff between these two to be the country's first citizens is purely on the basis of language.

However, in today's world, religion has become a significant part of one's identity. After the massacre of Jews by Hitler, all the Jews around the globe came together and resided in the country of Israel. Shia Muslims are one of the most suppressed communities of Islam. In many Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Shia Muslims are tortured on many levels as other religions. However, with the migration of Shia Muslims from different parts of the world, Iran is now home to Shia Muslims. The community is suppressed worldwide, but directly Iran identifies Shia Islam as its official religion and makes life more comfortable in Iran.

Other example may include Hinduism and Sikhism. Even though India is a secular state but a person wearing a turban anywhere across the globe is expected to be a Sikh from India. And Hindus are also likely to be Indians because of India's rich history and the glory of famous Hindu texts such as Mahabharata and Ramayana across the globe.

Besides language and traits, food habits are also helpful in recognising the ethnic group to which people belong. It is also part of a person's cultural identity. Immigration across the borders helped flavours to travel abroad, but they're connected with initial stages due time. Food is an integral part of cultural heritage and

national identity and is considered to be multidimensional. As uniform specifies are occupations, food habits specify our social and national backgrounds. Tomato, Basil and Mozzarella cheese on Pizza signify a taste of Italy.

For example, Chicken Tikka Masala is one of the most popular dishes in Great Britain, but it originated in the Indian subcontinent. India is known as the country of spices. In Germany, harmony is vital in almost every aspect of life. Each plate has a special place in the culture to which it belongs. Food is a portal into the culture and should be treated as such.

In history, food has also become a way to preserve the culture of a place. For example, when the number of south Indians in Bombay was increasing, the popularity of south Indian dishes such as Dosa and Idli was gaining popularity as the city's breakfast. Popular Maratha leader Bala Saheb Thackrey insisted all the restaurants serve the indigenous pav bhaji more to complete the south Indian dishes. The reason behind it was to maintain the supremacy of the Maratha people over others in Bombay with the help of food.

Apart from food, the other things that define people are the customs they follow. What is considered auspicious in one culture may not be a good sign in another. Let's take the example of Wedding ceremonies. Different kinds of rituals and customs are followed in various nations and religions. Wearing red is considered auspicious in Hindu weddings, wearing white is considered favourable in Christian marriages, and Muslim women wear black dresses. In contrast, white is not seen with good eyes in Hinduism and black in Christianity. This infers that nationality can be identified by customs and rituals, provided one is aware of different beliefs and practices.

Inference of the above discussion is that if one is in a fix regarding the national identity of someone, then they can quickly identify their native identity or ethnic group by just observing their language, rituals, customs, religion and food habits; however, knowledge and awareness about various cultures are the warp and woof of this identification thing.

References:

- a. <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/UN/1998/Res048.html>
- b. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Reduction_of_Statelessness