

To ensure health services to the citizens, more than four crore people's health screening was done in health camps, and more than 2 crore Ayushman Bharat health cards were issued to eligible citizens (Iqbal, 2024). Initiatives like sharing success stories by the beneficiaries in VBSY programmes, collecting feedback from the citizens on implemented welfare programmes, will be helpful to both citizens and the government functionaries for better planning and implementation of welfare programmes. Pledge taking for developed India and the Prime Minister's direct interaction with beneficiaries generated confidence among the unreached needy people.

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National Integration: Social and Ethical Issues in India

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Abstract:

National integration in India refers to the unification of its diverse population, encompassing various religions, cultures, regions, and languages, into a single cohesive nation. This process is challenged by several social and ethical issues that disrupt the country's peace and unity. These include religious and communal divisions, caste-based discrimination, regionalism, linguistic diversity, economic disparity, gender inequality, and political corruption. Each of these issues perpetuates divisions and undermines the principles of equality and justice necessary for national cohesion. Addressing these challenges is crucial for achieving true national integration, which requires fostering a sense of shared identity, respect for diversity, and inclusive policies. For India to realize its vision of a united nation, it is essential to confront these issues collectively, ensuring that every individual, irrespective of their background, enjoys equal dignity, opportunity, and respect. Only by tackling these complex social and ethical issues can India move toward a more integrated and harmonious future.

Key Words: National Integration, Caste-Based Discrimination, Regionalism, Ethical Issues.

Introduction:

National integration in India refers to the process of uniting people from various diverse backgrounds, regions, cultures, and religions into a single, cohesive nation. India is often referred to as a "subcontinent" because of its rich diversity, which

spans not just geographical boundaries but also social, economic, and cultural differences. As a result, achieving national integration remains one of the most significant challenges the country faces. However, this challenge comes with several social and ethical issues that, if not addressed, can disrupt the peace and unity of the nation. The idea of national integration is critical to the survival of a unified India, especially in a country with a long history of regionalism, communalism, caste divisions, and linguistic differences. In this article, we will explore some of the social and ethical issues related to national integration in India and their implications.

1. Religious and Communal Divisions:

India is home to various religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and others. The diversity of faiths has been a source of cultural richness but has also given rise to communal tensions. The ethical issue here arises when religious groups foster animosity towards one another. The rise of religious intolerance, hate speech, and religious-based violence threatens the fabric of unity in the country. Instances such as the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, communal riots in Gujarat in 2002, and ongoing tensions in Kashmir have posed serious questions about religious coexistence and the ethical responsibility of citizens and leaders in fostering harmony. National integration cannot succeed unless individuals and communities make a conscious effort to rise above religious differences and uphold the secular fabric of the nation.

2. Caste System and Social Inequality:

The caste system, though constitutionally abolished, continues to be an enduring social issue in India. Discrimination on the basis of caste leads to social exclusion and economic disparity. The lower castes, particularly the Dalits, face severe social discrimination, which impedes their ability to achieve social and economic mobility. The ethical issue here revolves around the practice of untouchability, violence against lower-caste communities, and unequal access to education and employment. Despite legal protections and affirmative action policies, caste-based discrimination still exists, causing division and undermining national unity. National integration will be achieved only when these deep-rooted social inequalities are addressed, and every citizen is afforded equal dignity and respect, irrespective of their caste.

3. Regionalism and Linguistic Diversity:

India's vast geographical expanse results in significant regional diversity. Each state has its own unique culture, language, and traditions, leading to a sense of regional pride and identity. While regionalism is natural, it can sometimes morph into chauvinism or secessionism, as

seen in movements for statehood or independence in places like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Jammu and Kashmir. The linguistic issue is another layer of complexity. The imposition of Hindi as the national language, while aimed at unifying the country, has sparked protests in states like Tamil Nadu, where people feel that their regional language and culture are being threatened. National integration can only take place if regional identities are respected, and the government fosters policies that celebrate India's linguistic and cultural diversity, rather than imposing one culture or language over others.

4. Economic Disparity and Social Stratification:

India has made impressive strides in economic development, but wealth distribution remains highly unequal. The urban-rural divide, income inequality, and unequal access to resources such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure continue to exist. The ethical issue here is the disparity between the rich and the poor, leading to a sense of alienation and resentment in marginalized communities. Economic disparity has significant social consequences. People from underdeveloped regions, such as tribal areas, often feel neglected and excluded from the benefits of economic growth. For national integration to be meaningful, there needs to be a concerted effort to address the social stratification and ensure that the benefits of development reach all sections of society.

5. Gender Inequality:

While India has made notable progress in women's rights, gender inequality continues to be a significant social issue. The deeply entrenched patriarchal culture often leads to discrimination against women in various spheres, including education, employment, and decision-making. Violence against women, such as sexual assault, dowry-related violence, and female foeticide, remains a persistent problem. The ethical issue in this context is the denial of basic rights and opportunities to women based on their gender. The lack of gender equality creates divisions in society and undermines the idea of a just and inclusive national integration. It is essential to promote gender equality as part of the process of national integration, ensuring that women have equal access to opportunities and are treated with dignity and respect.

6. Political Corruption and Ethical Governance:

Corruption in India is a pervasive problem that hampers national integration by eroding trust in institutions and hindering the equitable distribution of resources. Ethical governance is essential for creating a just society, where every citizen has access to equal opportunities. Political

leaders, when motivated by self-interest or personal gain, often make decisions that benefit a particular group or region at the expense of others, deepening divisions. The fight against corruption and the promotion of ethical governance are vital in building a united nation. Transparent and accountable institutions that serve the interests of the entire nation, rather than specific political or economic elites, are essential for fostering national integration.

Conclusion

National integration in India is a complex process that requires addressing several social and ethical issues that continue to divide the nation. While India's diversity is its strength, it also poses challenges to the creation of a harmonious society. To achieve true national integration, it is essential to overcome religious intolerance, caste-based discrimination, regionalism, gender inequality, economic disparity, and political corruption. Citizens, political leaders, and civil society must come together to create an inclusive environment where every individual, regardless of their background, feels a sense of belonging and equality. Only then can India achieve its vision of a united and integrated nation where diversity is celebrated, and unity is the guiding principle.

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लोक साहित्य तथा शिष्ट साहित्य का स्वरूप

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सारांश-लोक जीवन की गरिमा को प्राचीन काल से ही स्वीकार किया गया है। वैदिक विधि निषेधों के समानान्तर लोक व्यवहार की धारा निरन्तर प्रवाहित होती रही। यद्यपि लोक शब्द का प्रयोग जिन अर्थों में प्राचीन काल से हुआ है, लोक साहित्य में समग्रतः उन्हीं अर्थों में नहीं प्रयुक्त है। आजकल लोक शब्द जन जीवन तथा लोक व्यवहार की ओर अवश्य संकेत करता है। इसलिए 'सहितस्य भावः साहित्यम् हितेन सह सहितम् सः साहित्यम् की व्याख्या के अनुसार साहित्य में हित का भाव स्वतः निहित है। इसलिए लोक साहित्य का महत्व शिष्ट साहित्य की अपेक्षा कहीं अधिक है, क्योंकि लोक साहित्य की रचना लोक के हित के लिए है जबकि शिष्ट साहित्य अधिकतर स्वान्तः सुखाएँ और परोक्ष रूप से लोक हिताएँ होती हैं।

मुख्य शब्द-अन्तरंग, समग्रतः सर्वकालिक, प्रसुप्त, प्रांजल, नैसर्गिक, अवसाद, साधारणीकृत, स्फुटित, देदीप्यमान, उपजीवी

जीवन से सम्बन्धित अनेक बातें शिष्ट साहित्य में छूट जाती हैं किन्तु लोक साहित्य में जन-जीवन का अन्तरंग और पूर्ण चित्र चित्रित होता है। लोक साहित्य सर्वकालिक, सर्वदेशीय और सर्व जनीन होता है। इसमें मानव मात्र का चिरन्तन और चिर प्रसुप्त भावनाएँ समाहित रहती हैं। लोक साहित्य में पूर्व से लेकर पश्चिम तक और उत्तर से लेकर दक्षिण तक का समस्त मानव समुदाय अपनी भावनाओं, कामनाओं, इच्छाओं और अभिलाषाओं को प्रतिफलित होते देखता है। जीवन का ऐसा कोई भी पक्ष नहीं है जो इससे अछूता रह जाए। सभी को अपनी सीमा में समेट लेता है।

लोक साहित्य और शिष्ट साहित्य में दोनों का अन्तर स्पष्ट करते हुए ताराकान्त मिश्र कहते हैं 'लोक साहित्य समस्त जनता का साहित्य होता है किन्तु शिष्ट साहित्य शिक्षित एवं संस्कृत व्यक्तियों का साहित्य है। लोक साहित्य के प्रणेता अज्ञात होते हैं, शिष्ट साहित्य के रचयिता ज्ञात। लोक साहित्य मौखिक और परम्परागत होते हैं परन्तु शिष्ट साहित्य की भाषा प्रायः ललित प्रांजल और परिष्कृत होती है। लोक साहित्य और शिष्ट साहित्य के सम्बन्ध में लिखा है कि- 'लोक साहित्य मानव समाज के उन लोगों का साहित्य है जो आधुनिक सभ्यता, संस्कृति एवं नागरिक संस्कारों से दूर अपनी आदिम अवस्था से आबद्ध सहज अवस्था में जीवन व्यतीत करते हैं। इस साहित्य में समस्त भाव धारा विरामहीन एवं अन्तहीन रूप में प्रवाहित होती रहती है। परम्परा इस साहित्य का आधार है और जनभाषा इसकी अभिव्यंजना का माध्यम। श्रुति एवं स्मृति के द्वारा यह जन जीवन में संचित और सुरक्षित रहता है। यह जनता के नैसर्गिक उदगारों की सहज, स्वाभाविक तथा मौखिक अभिव्यक्ति का साहित्य है जिसमें उसकी सम्पूर्ण आशा, आकांक्षा, उल्लास, अवसाद, चिन्तन-मनन तथा धारणाओं को वाणी मिलती है।' इसमें कोई भी दिखावटीपन नहीं रहता है बल्कि स्वतः स्वरूप में रहता है। लोक साहित्य के प्रधान गुण, स्वाभाविकता, स्वच्छन्दता और सरलता के विषय में डॉ. कृष्ण चन्द्र शर्मा ने कहा है- 'लोक साहित्य वह साहित्य है जो जंगल में खिलने वाले फूल की तरह स्वाभाविक, आकाश में उड़ने वाली चिड़ियों की भांति स्वच्छन्द गंगा की निर्मल