NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND SECULARISM

L.No	Title of Lesson	SKILLS	Activity
24	National Integration and Secularism	Self Awareness, Inter-Personal Relationship	Understanding Secularism & National Integration

Meaning

India is a Nation having great diversities. People of different races, communities and castes who reside in different geographical regions of India speak different languages, practice and profess different religions and have varied styles, still feel that they are all Indians and firmly believe that their national identity is supreme., Therefore, for a large country like India with various diversities, we have to co-exist peacefully and respect the culture and religion of fellow Indians. This is called national integration.

National Integration and the Indian Constitution

Just after independence India had to face multifaceted problems due to partition of the country, communal violence, integration of princely states and many more factors.

Therefore, the Constitution of India lays great emphasis on national integration, protection of sovereignty, unity and integrity of India. It is with this purpose that India has opted for a strong Central Government along with the State Governments.

Challenges to National Integration

1. Communalism

- Excessive affinity to one's own religion and hatred towards other religious communities.
- Dangerous for the unity and integrity of the country, and is responsible for most of the communal riots.

2. Linguism

- Opposition of Hindi as an official language of India.
- Wide-spread protests by the people of non-Hindi speaking regions.
- English was allowed to continue as official language for unlimited period.

3. Extremism

- Movements by naxalites or maoists.
- Quite often such movements cause violence, create fear and lead to loss of life and property.
- Mostly the youths participate and get misguided.

4. Regionalism

- Promotes regional interests at the cost of national interest, and gives rise to regional demands.
- Highlights imbalance and neglect of a particular region.
- Compels the governments to fulfil regional aspiration.

Factors Promoting National Integration

A. Constitutional Provisions

- The Constitution of India has many provisions which promote and ensure national integration.
- Fundamental Rights empower the citizens where as Fundamental Duties create a harmonious atmosphere to live together.
- Directive Principles of State Policy direct the governments to promote equitable economic development, eliminate social discrimination and endeavour for peace and security.

B. Governmental Initiatives

- National Integration Council has been set up.
- Planning Commission prepares plans for the equitable development of the whole country.
- The Election Commission of India conducts free and fair elections

C. National Festivals and Symbols

- They act as a very strong unifying force. Many of them like Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti are celebrated regardless of language, religion or culture
- Our National Symbols like the National Flag, National Anthem and the National Emblem also bind us and act as a unifying force.

D. All India Services and other Factors

- All India Services like IAS, IFS and IPS act as a unifying force since they are recruited centrally but work in States.
- Unified Judicial System, Radio and Television, Postal and Communication network etc also promote unity and integration.

Secularism

Secularism implies equality of all religions and religious tolerances It does not mean being irreligious or anti-religious.

Secularism stands as one of the basic pillars of Indian Democracy.

Secularism in the Constitution

Various provision of the Indian Constitution ensure India to be a secular State. They are:

- Preamble declares India a Secular State.
- Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Principle of equality, non-discrimination and social and economic democracy.

Secularism: Its Significance

India is a land which has given rise to four of the world's major religions. Despite many constitutional provisions and various safeguards, India has witnessed communal tension and violence. Under these circumstances, secularism is essential not only for maintaining communal harmony and peace, but for the very existence of India as a nation.

Evaluate Yourself

Q. How did the Freedom Movement of India create an atmosphere of national integration?

Q. Why is communalism considered a major threat to the national unity? Suggest ways and means to establish peace and harmony in the country.

Q. Assess the factors which really promote national integration?