

Invites you to a Public Talk

“Mahatma Phule and Dr. Ambedkar's Response to Hegemonic Nationalism : Articulation of Alternative Nationalism”

Nationalism, as 'the congruence between culture and power' manifested in India, in the form of cultural hegemony of caste-class and patriarchal forces. In response to colonial governmentality different conceptions of nation and nationalism emerged in India. Early revolts in Maharashtra comprising tribal communities like Bhils, Mahadeo Koli, Ramoshi etc. and other social groups like peasants, artisans and untouchables were against local exploiters and oppressors including British machinery. It marked people's loyalty to their land and their community but without the idea of India. It was the first expressions of proto-nationalism. Conversely, English educated class conceived the idea of Indian nation and nationalism. They envisaged cultural and economic nationalism of India. Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, an ardent exponent of cultural nationalism built the idea of India resting on magnificent imagination of Hindu past where he equated his caste pride with national pride and candidly ushered caste-patriarchal hegemony. Reformer like M. G. Ranade advocated the version of composite nationalism where he invoked egalitarian, progressive and syncretic tradition to ground the idea of India. Composite nationalism became the legacy of Indian National Congress where several ideological versions of nationalism blended. Nonetheless, by privileging Vedic-Brahmani tradition to be central to the idea of India, these varieties of cultural and composite nationalism built hegemonic discourse of nationalism. Correspondingly, early intellectual like Dadabhai Naoroji propounded economic nationalism. This notion of economic nationalism envisioned unity of economic interests of Indian people in contradiction to colonial interests. Moreover, by subordinating and neglecting the interests of subaltern caste-class it presented the interests of caste-class elites as national interests of India. In response, Jotirao Phule, Dr. Ambedkar, most leading caste subaltern thinkers of India have unpacked hegemonic designs embedded in these versions of cultural and composite nationalism. They unravelled the embedded tendency of privileging of the interests of caste-class elites. Their criticism of history, culture, economy and power not only exposed hegemonic agenda of caste-class elites but did build the version of Alternative nationalism cherishing the anti-caste democratic revolution. In this lecture I will broadly bring out Phule-Ambedkar's criticism of hegemonic nationalism and will discuss Phule-Ambedkar's conception of alternative nationalism



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