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Reassessing the Idea of Nationality

A thought-provoking seminar on the topic of 'Reassessing the Idea of Nationality' was held at the Department of Studies in Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Mysuru on January 25, 2023 at 11 am. The speaker was Dr. R. Suresha from the Department of Studies in Sanskrit, University of Mysore. The lecture began with an engaging story from the Ramayana, where Lord Rama, questioned by Lakshmana, states that the grandeur of Lanka holds no appeal for him compared to his motherland, Ayodhya, as he feels that his homeland is superior to even the heavens.

Dr. R. Suresha conducted a survey among young students to gather their perspectives on the concept of nationality. He meticulously collected and analyzed the responses, and during his lecture, he shared his findings with the audience. He began by summarizing the students' answers, stating that the concept of nationality is multifaceted and encompasses many different elements.

He went on to say that when we think about nationality, we must consider all the blessings that our nation has bestowed upon us, including access to education, various facilities, a sense of identity, culture, water, shelter, and freedom. He emphasized that these are the things that make us feel connected to our nation, and they are what gives us a sense of belonging. He then added that true nationality is not just about being born in a certain country or having a specific passport. It's about the unconditional love and affection we have for our nation. He said, "Nationality is not just a legal or political term, it's an emotional and spiritual bond that we share with our homeland."

Dr. R. Suresha also highlighted that Nationality is the foundation of any nation and without the sense of nationality, a nation cannot be built and sustained. He further added that we must be proud of our nationality and should not be ashamed of it. He encouraged the students to cherish their nationality and to take pride in their country, its history, culture, and achievements.

In conclusion, Dr. R. Suresha stressed that the concept of nationality is not just about the physical boundaries of a country, but it's about the emotional and spiritual connection that we have with our homeland. He urged the students to value and cherish their nationality and to strive to make their nation a better place for all its citizens.

During his lecture, Dr. R. Suresha delved deeper into the topic of nationality and its significance by posing the question "Why is nationality needed?" He encouraged the students to share their thoughts and perspectives on the matter.

The students provided a variety of answers, highlighting the importance of nationality in promoting unity and nation-building. They noted that having a shared sense of identity and belonging to a specific country helps to bring people together and create a sense of community. They also emphasized that nationality plays a crucial role in fostering peaceful co-existence among different groups within a society, by providing a common ground for understanding and cooperation.

Furthermore, some students mentioned that nationality is necessary for the preservation of culture, tradition and heritage of a nation. They pointed out that having a shared sense of nationality helps to keep the culture and history alive and to pass it on to future generations. They also highlighted that nationality gives people a sense of pride and belonging to their country, which can be a motivating factor to work for the betterment of their country.

Other students mentioned that nationality is needed for providing legal and political rights and protections. They stated that nationality gives individuals the right to participate in the political and economic life of their country, and also protects their rights as citizens.

During his lecture, Dr. R. Suresha delved into the topic of whether nationality constrains one's identity. He explained that some individuals and scholars argue that nationality limits an individual's identity by defining them based on their country of origin or citizenship, disregarding other aspects of their identity such as ethnicity, religion, culture, or personal experiences.

He also discussed the idea that nationality can sometimes be at loggerheads with humanity. He explained that some individuals and scholars argue that the concept of nationality can be divisive and lead to conflicts, as it can create a sense of "us versus them" mentality. They argue that placing too much emphasis on nationality can lead to nationalist ideologies, fostering a sense of superiority and inferiority among different groups, and resulting in discrimination and exclusion.

Dr. R. Suresha went on to say that humanity is a holistic concept, and nationality is just a part of it. He stated that for humanity to thrive, all its parts must be doing well. He argued that while nationality can be a source of identity and pride for some individuals, it's essential to remember that it's just one aspect of an individual's identity, and should not be the only defining factor. He emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting the diversity of identities and experiences within a society.

In his presidential address, Prof. N.S. Harinarayana, the Chairman of the Department of Studies in Library and Information Science, discussed the concept of nationality and how it can be defined using the seven "vibhakti" (cases) of the Sanskrit language. He emphasized the importance of Sanskrit as the mother language for many Indic and other languages, and highlighted the benefits of studying Sanskrit, such as developing the right goals in life, learning the art of speech, controlling the mind, and cultivating magnanimity. He also provided examples of "subhashitas" (aphorisms) that beautifully depict mother India in the Sanskrit language. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Sunil Kumar M. of the Department of Studies in Library and Information Science.