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- ❖ **India-Russia Relations**
- ❖ **Relevance of Gandhi**
- ❖ **Nehru's Contribution**
- ❖ **Unemployment**
- ❖ **Environmental Jurisprudence**
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Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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National Interest!

Almost all political parties swear by safeguarding India's national interest. Preservation of national interests in the realms of defence and foreign affairs are governed and nurtured by the well-defined and set norms established over the years since the attainment of India's independence and all political parties are almost unanimous on it. However, domestic parameters of national interest are defined by each political party according to its own whims and fancies. Recent developments in country's prestigious institutions and the response of the ruling dispensation to these developments has given new perspectives to the national interest which has come to be construed in terms of 'national versus anti-national' and it has given rise to the debate on nationalism. Viewed in a broad spectrum, the terms "national", "nationalism" and "nation-state" came into vogue in Europe after the Westphalian Peace Treaties in the 17th century. According to some experts, the European concept of "nationalism" was never inclusive of the entire population even within the territory of the "nation" and it always invoked an "enemy within". The imperialistic nature of European "nationalism" has led many analysts to brand it as an aggrandizing nationalism.

The post-independent India adopted, what many experts have described, 'democratic nationalism', which developed in India during the national freedom struggle. Since India's freedom struggle was against the colonial rulers, it had to be inclusive, to mobilise every possible segment of the population for the cause. Likewise it had to develop solidarity with other such struggles, and for that reason had to have a fraternal rather than an aggrandizing relation with other Third World countries. According to one opinion, the contemporary Indian leadership, while adhering to 'democratic nationalism', had to put the welfare of the "people", as distinct from the greatness of the "nation" *per se*, as its central focus, a fact poignantly expressed by Gandhi when he said that the objective of freedom was to "wipe away the tears from the eyes of every Indian".

Thus, the concept of nationalism that developed in post-independent India was essentially a democratic and egalitarian nationalism as opposed to the aggrandizing European nationalism. Tolerance, accommodation and negotiation in the event of differences, not the use of brute force to enforce silence and assert hegemony are the salient traits of democratic nationalism. However, with the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the national mainstream politics, especially from the 1990s onwards, efforts were underway to redefine the parameters of nationalism. Much greater political space was provided for the affirmation of Hindu identity, which according to BJP zealots, couldn't be separated from Indian nationhood.

During 1999-2004, when BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was the ruling dispensation at the Centre, it always flaunted its Hindutava nationalism and the emphasis has become more louder after Narendra Modi-led government was installed at the Centre in May 2014. The recent incidents in JNU, Hyderabad University and other institutions of higher education have been turned into debate over 'national' *versus* 'anti-national.' Some experts are of the view that the revival of the Hindutva plank in the name of nationalism *versus* sedition is perceived across the Sangh Parivar as an important political and ideological achievement in the early months of 2016, particularly in view of the significant reverses suffered by the BJP in the Assembly elections in Bihar and Delhi in 2015.

The BJP-led NDA government finds itself cornered over its economic and political failures in the past couple of years. Rising unemployment, economic distress across vast stretches of the rural hinterland, price rise, recent electoral failures, and a policy paralysis has put the government on the back foot. Following Rohith Vemula's suicide, the government was also perceived as anti-Dalit. The increasing social cleavages, worsened by the economic distress, perhaps forced the BJP to deflect public attention from the major issues, even at the cost of civil liberties ensured to Indian citizens in the Constitution. The nationalism debate has reportedly given a fresh lease of life to the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to energize its cadre and distract public attention from serious problems plaguing the country. Concurrently, these developments have also brought together secular political organizations like Left parties, the Congress, the S.P., the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) etc as never before. Self-interest of the parties seems to have superseded the national interest and it abodes ill for the country.

— BK