**9 Major Differences between State and Nation:**

In common usage, the terms State and Nation are often used as synonyms. For example, when we say ‘Western nations’ or ‘Asian nations’ or ‘African nations’, we do not mean nations but States. Similarly, the ‘United Nations’ is in reality an organisation of nation-states. Each modern state is a Nation State; nevertheless there exist some important distinctions between the State and the Nation.

**1. The elements of State and Nation are different:**

The State has four elements—population, territory, government, and sovereignty. In the absence of even one element, a State cannot be really a State. A state is always characterised by all these four elements. On the contrary, a nation is a group of people who have a strong sense of unity and common consciousness.

Common territory, common race, common religion, common language, common history, common culture and common political aspirations are the elements which help the formation of a nation, and yet none of these is an absolutely essential element. The elements which go to build a nation keep on changing.

**2. State is a Political Organisation while Nation is a social, cultural, psychological, emotional and political unity:**

The State is a political organisation which fulfills the security and welfare needs of its people. It is concerned with external human actions. It is a legal entity. On the other hand, a Nation is a united unit of population which is full of emotional, spiritual and psychological bonds. A nation has little to do with the physical needs of the people.

**3. Possession of a Definite Territory is essential for the State but not for a Nation:**

It is essential for each State to possess a fixed territory. It is the physical element of the State. State is a territorial entity. But for a nation territory is not an essential requirement. A nation can survive even without a fixed territory. Love of a common motherland acts as a source of unity. For example, before 1948 the Jews were a nation even though they had no fixed territory of their own. When, in 1948, they secured a definite and defined territory, they established the State of Israel.

**4. Sovereignty is essential for State but not for Nation:**

Sovereignty is an essential element of the State. It is the soul of the State. In the absence of sovereignty, the State loses its existence. It is the element of sovereignty which makes the state different from all other associations of the people. It is not essential for a nation to possess sovereignty.

The basic requirement of a nation is the strong bonds of emotional unity among its people which develop due to several common social cultural elements. Before 1947, India was a nation but not a State because it did not have sovereignty. (State = Nation + Sovereignty).

After her independence in 1947, India became a State because after the end of British imperial rule it became a sovereign entity. However, each nation always aspires to be sovereign and independent of the control of every other nation.

**5. Nation can be wider than the State:**

The State is limited to a fixed territory. Its boundaries can increase or decrease but the process of change is always very complex. However a nation may or may not remain within the bounds of a fixed territory. Nation is a community based on common ethnicity, history and traditions and aspirations.

Obviously its boundaries can easily extend beyond the boundaries of the State. For example in a way the French nation extends even to Belgium, Switzerland and Italy because people in these countries belong to the same race to which the French claim to belong.

**6. There can be two or more Nationalities living in one State:**

There can be two or more than two nations within a single State. Before the First World War, Austria and Hungary were one State, but two different nations. Most of the modern states are multinational states.

**7. Nation is more stable than State:**

A nation is more stable than the State. When sovereignty ends, the State dies, but not the nation. A nation can survive even without sovereignty. For example, after their defeat in the World War II, both Germany and Japan lost their sovereign statuses and outside powers began to control them. They ceased to exist as States. But as nations they continued to live as nations, which after some months regained their sovereign statuses and became sovereign independent states.

**8. A State can be created while a Nation is always the result of evolution:**

A State can be created with the conscious endeavors of the people. Physical elements play an important role in the birth of a State. For example, after the Second World War, Germany got divided into two separate states West Germany and East Germany. But Germans remained emotionally as one nation.

Ultimately in Oct., 1990 the Germans again got united into a single state. In 1947 Pakistan was created out of India as a separate State. A nation is a unity of the people which emerges slowly and steadily. No special efforts go into the making of a nation.

**9. The State uses police power (force) for preserving its unity and integrity, the Nation is bound by strong cultural and historical links:**

State has police power. Those who dare to disobey it are punished by the state. A nation does not have police power or force or coercive power. It is backed by moral, emotional and spiritual power. A nation survives on the power of sense of unity of the people. A nation appeals, the State orders; a nation persuades, a States coerces; and a nation boycotts, the State punishes. State is a political organisation, while the nation is a unity.

State and nation do not have the same boundaries, and yet there is a tendency for a nation and state to be one. Most of the nations today stand organised into different states. Most of the modern States are multinational States. The modern state is called a nation-state because all the (nationalities) living in one state stand integrated into one nation.

A state continuously pursues the objective of national- integration. The State tries to secure this objective by securing a willing blending of the majority nationality and all the minority nationalities, through collective living, sharing of all the ups and the downs in common and development of strong emotional, spiritual and psychological bonds. Unity in diversity or more really, unity in plurality stands accepted as the guiding principle by all the modern civilised multinational states like India, USA, Russia, China, Britain and others.