



THE MAKING OF THIRD WORLD: THE IMPACT OF COLONIZATION

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ABSTRACT

In today's literary scenario, there is very bleak line of demarcation between 'postcolonial' and 'Third World'. One assumption regarding the usage of the term 'postcolonial' is that it refers to the colonial societies which were once colonized, but this assumption does have differences regarding its implications on certain countries. In general, 'postcolonial' is used to represent 'Third World'. This 'Third World' is not an overnight concept. It has a long history and is a result of gradual interaction of various social, political, cultural and literary factors. This research paper is an attempt to trace the historical background of colonization and its impact on postcolonial societies or in the making of a distinct 'Third World', and also to study the status of the Third World countries in today's political and literary scenario.

Keywords: Colonization, postcolonialism, Third World, Diaspora.

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Colonization is usually referred to a historical event which has been in practice since times immemorial. Theoretically, it implies to establishment of authority by more powerful over less over less powerful ones. Historically, colonization is divided into two periods. First, the period of Merchant Capitalism (1497-1762) and second, the period of Industrial Capitalism which starts from 1762 onwards. During the first period, the prime focus was on adventurous expeditious for certain products. In this period no attempt was made either to intervene in the social and cultural systems of the natives. It was like barter system of exchanging goods between the travellers and the natives. The second period began in 1762 and witnessed the advent of Industrial Revolution. With industrialization, the colonization acquired a totally

different form. The colonizers altered their motif of travel from exchange of goods to search for cheaper raw material and also new markets to sell their machine-made products in new territories. This obviously was not always amicable and thus required forced occupation of territories. Barter system of exchange was replaced by transaction of money. The natives were compelled under the violent threats by colonizers to buy their products rather than selling their indigenous things. During this period many significant changes happened in the process of colonization. The colonizers entered into the very core of the social, cultural and even legal system of the natives. They manipulated the natives forcibly according to their own requirements. Missionaries played significant role by supporting the planters and settlers in exploiting

native population. On the whole, colonization can be described as a historical concept where people from one continent i.e. Western Europe forcibly subjugated the people of other four continents of the world.

There has been several theories formulated to explain colonization. Firstly, the economic theory which justifies colonization as a need rather than forcible occupation. This theory claims that colonization was necessary for providing an outlet to human and material resources. The colonial exercise of most of the European countries since fifteenth century was because of economic motifs. Karl Marx in the first volume of *Capital* declared:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre.

In the 19th century, colonialism took a more brutal and barbaric turn. Karl Marx comments on the industrial growth in Europe and its forced implication on other colonies as to "create a world after its own image".

Some of the recent social critics see colonization more of a political strategy to overpower than limiting it to an economic factor only. The second theory is based on concept of morality. This theory rationalizes the European rule over Asia and Africa, to justify "the Whiteman's burden" of Kipling. It proposes that it was the moral duty of the superior British population to rescue the coloured colonies from the darkness of uncivilized life. Colonized people were compared to animals and to control animals, brutality was required. Thus violence was very much involved to rule the colonies.

Edward Said in his landmark work, *Orientalism* (1978), challenges this moral theory of colonization:

I doubt that it is controversial, for example to say that an Englishman in India or Egypt in the later nineteenth century took an interest in those countries that was never far from their status in his mind as British colonies.

Said argues that the image of the Oriental as inferior, sullen, eccentric, effeminate or backward, was only created and maintained by the Occident for the sake of authoritative maintenance of power and rule over the Orient:

The important thing was to dignify simple conquest with an idea to turn the appetite for more geographical space into a theory about the special relationship between geography on the one hand and civilized or uncivilized peoples on the Other...

Mohandas Gandhi, proposed the Third theory of colonization, the epistemological theory. According to this theory epistemological colonialism is accompanied through the imposition of colonial, political, social, legal, and even educational systems. Apart from these three basic theories, there are also other factors which contribute to complicate colonization as a phenomenon.

Colonization is sometimes argued to have also a positive impact on the colonies which got freedom from colonizers. This positive effect can be measured in terms of modernizing the ex-colonies. Technological advancement, educational, communication and some of the liberal notions of Western world helped the natives to come out of their superstitions. This positive impact does have other negative side also. In giving knowledge through education by the colonizer, can be seen as a strategy to impart a sense of inferiority in the native's mind for his own culture and traditional values. The natives were made to look up to their colonizing masters for any guidance or help. This mentality is still prevalent in the minds of the people of the ex-colonies. As independent countries, these colonies have shown visible signs of growth and development in almost every field but these countries seem to have failed in solving their prime and basic problems like poverty, illiteracy, overpopulation, unhygienic living conditions etc. Therefore, colonization not only affected the

geographical, political or economic areas of the colonies but, they have also paralyzed the morality and personality of the native. The impact of colonization was so forceful on the consciousness of the native that he is still maimed and doubts his own traditional values. So much so that even after attaining freedom or decolonization of the colonies, the master-slave relationship continued.

Decolonization was only a physical reality to perceive but mentally and practically, it never happened for the ex-colonies. These ex-colonies which attained freedom from colonization were termed as the Third World because they were not aligned to the First World (USA) or to the Second World (USSR) and also, because they are underdeveloped, poor and have economic dependence on other countries. Kumkum Sangari argues that it is:

a term that both signifies and blurs the functioning of an economic, political, and imaginary geography able to unite vast and vastly differentiated areas of the world into a single 'underdeveloped' terrain (1990:217).

After independence the natives faced the harsh realities of running a government and governing a country. The problems of political unrest, corruption, nepotism and many more factors, psychologically handicapped the native. He was shattered and was totally incapable of solving these problems. Migration was the only escapist way out for them to escape from joblessness, hunger and other difficulties. In 1950s, it led to large scale migrations from West Indies, Asia especially the Indians and the Pakistanis to the West. The working conditions in the West were different and better from the East. The immigrants were surprised to see the Whiteman doing manual labour. They began to enjoy their high standard of living. This encouraged hundreds of their countrymen to migrate England. The first batch of immigrants also suffered discrimination but they did not come back to their motherland because they could not afford the travel expenses and also they were ashamed of accepting the realities of discrimination.

The first generation migration involved many writers who migrated from colonies or the Third World in

search of a better intellectual atmosphere in the West. Another reason for the migration of the writers was that the native colonized people were thought to be incapable of writing of their own. As Nandy says:

This colonialism colonises minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonised societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process, it helps to generalise the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside, in structures and in minds.

Most of the West Indies writers and also the earlier Indian writers like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand had to move to London or Paris to get their books published. Many Indian writers also stayed on in India and continued to write. In the twentieth century, many non-European writers who have equal command over English as well as native language, produced a vast literature. This resulted in the internationalization of literature from all over the globe. The writer from the third world found markets and readers in the First world. As a matter of fact, the Third world serves as a commodity for marketing and selling in the first world.

Ironically, the Third world texts are not judged for their aesthetic dimension but for their ideologies, authenticity and political aspect. Earlier issues of the third world writers included only the colonial histories and cultures of their native countries. Gradually, issues related to refugees and immigrants seeped into the 'First World' nations. Leela Gandhi points out:

"Deleuze and Guattari's" revolutionary manifesto *The Third World becomes a stable metaphor for the 'minor' zone of non culture and underdeveloped.*(84)

Today many of the Third World Countries have progressed and have undergone tremendous development but even after this, the basic problems like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy remain unresolved. People of the Third World still look up to their former colonizers' countries for a better place for a living. Still the people of the third world

cannot come out of the cocoon of the colonial impact which made them maimed as if forever.

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