

Colonialism: A Strategic Domination in Indian Context

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Abstract

Colonialism is a process of establishing a colony or several colonies by having gradual control over the people by subsequently gaining control over the polity, economy and administration of any state or the society. The process of gaining control over the administrative mechanism is most of the times gets gradual if not supported by instant brute force. Motive of colonialism is drain of wealth that is purely capitalist in nature as done by British in all over the world. The power which is dominating any colony is only concerned about the welfare of elite sections of their company and the government. They did not even thought of welfare of their people as is evident from the Industrial Revolution in the 17th century. In Industrial Revolution, people of Britain were also involved in labour in the industries and their working conditions were miserable, violating the human rights. There were no labour laws as such. Children of age having 3 or 5 were involved in the cleaning process to clean the chimney by tying them in a long wooden rod and then using it to clean narrow chimneys at great heights. So, colonialism's main aim was ever increasing profit which was achieved by the authorities by forgery, flattery and force. The regime was concerned in polity and administration because colonialist knew that to have full-fledged control over business in any region is only possible if they will have control over the administrative functioning of that region. Colony which is being subdued, have a lot of natural resources and potential to yield a lot of valuables in different forms.

KEYWORDS: Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Mercantilism, Renaissance, Reformation.

Freedom is natural. Independence is emancipation from dependence of others. Modern period is considered from 1757-1947. In 1498, with Vasco De Gama, advent of European occurred. It was rejected as medieval period was considered between 1206 to 1857 by some historians. 1707 was rejected as the greater Mughals were over but disintegration took place not instantly but gradually. Later Mughals occupied the region. Battle of Plassey, 1757 in which biggest province slowly went to East India Company whose director was Joshua Child. Modern India is characterized by following concepts of freedom, positive or progressive change, industrialization, improvement in standard of living, surplus agricultural output, organization, citizenship rights and constitutional rights, nationalism and socialism. 1757-1947 was the age of famine. It was man made and not natural. This was said by Amartya Sen.¹ With rare exceptions British authority's contested the status of Indian invoice rejecting the credentials and tempting to classify most of them as political agents without diplomatic standing most Indian deputations over however conducted by trusted courtiers are hired experts experienced in dealing with the British. None of modern features in India was found between 1757 to 1947 so it was called colonial period instead of modern period. Beyond colonial period, the present time should be called as post colonial period and not clearly as modern period. It must be called post colonial because many features of the colonial regime remains like problem of

women, empowerment, tribal groups, depressed classes. Only transfer of power, little challenge to institution of colonial period can be seen. History is an ongoing process. Colonial administrative history was written by Britishers for their administrative convenience and maintaining legitimacy of the rule. East is East, West is West was written by Rudyard Kipling in white man's burden. British periodization of Indian history consisted of Hindu period, Muslim period and the British period which was criticized by Romila Thapar, Bipin Chandra saying it as communal periodization. Now the accepted periodisation of Indian history is ancient, medieval and the so called modern. It is scientific, secular periodization which draws inspiration from Marxism. The basic idea is that major changes in the economy leads to major changes in social formation for example from hunting, gathering to settled agriculture and so on. Liquefied petroleum gas brought changing social pattern along with economy, women started going out to work. History does not stop in 1947, only it continues in present. Contemporary history refers to the phase which an individual has personally experienced. After 1991, neocolonialism started.

Colonialism derived from the word colony. The simple meaning was a human settlement or the settlement of surplus body of the people of a country in another country. Peaceful acquisition of settlement are there by and large. Examples of setting up of colonies by the use of force are colonization of America by European immigrant decimated by native Indian and indigenous population and capturing 13 colonies, Spanish in South America, Dutch and English in South Africa, British in India. ⁱⁱ Native resistance was as important as British colonialism orientalism in creating the new India. The colonial territory is totally subordinated to the conquering country in various ways and the people try to adopt the culture and ideology considering the dominating colony superior in all aspect. In India westernization came after colonialism, its human tendency to adopt material and culture from the one he/she adores. According to M.N. Srinivas, colonialism manifested itself in two ways: 1) imitation of the material expect to the white rule, imitative westernization. It did not lead to mental transformation, 2) type of westernization was that where the Indians who had acquired modern education imbibed the ideas of humanism, freedom, rationality and secularism. They thus constituted India's middle class and from that emerged the first generation of socio religious reformers and from them emerged the nationalist leaders. Subsequently, it involves drain of resources. The First Phase of colonialism in Indian context, started from 1757 and continued till 1813 and the second phase, started from 1813 and continued till 1857. Third phase started from 1858 and continued till 1947. The first phase was mercantilist phase, second phase was laissez faire economy and the third phase was rule of the supreme. They have a control over polity and administration. In 1867, Dadabhai Naoroji gave the concept of drain of wealth. In London, East India Association was founded by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1866. He presented the well researched paper named England's Debted to India. This was supported by RC Dutt, Mahadev Govind Ranade and G Subramaniam Iyer. Also moral drain of qualified Indians by not been given there deserving parts, unequal exchange was there in colonialism. Political domination and subordination has also ethnic and racial dimension, ethnicity based on region and regional disparity based on color caste. In the words of Andre Gunder Frank, the metro city experiences the development of development and the periphery experiences development of underdevelopment. Colonialism deteriorated the economy of the colony growth and development is at stake

and increasing inequality. Colonialism is marked by capitalism and it refers to the resources or factors used for production. Free capital which is invested in diverse activities for profit and specialised capital which is invested in only one type of productive profit ensuring activity.ⁱⁱⁱ There were five major manufacturing industries in Bengal during the earlier colonial rule namely cotton textiles, silk textiles, indigo dye, salt manufacturing and shipbuilding. In capitalism, means and factors of production are privately owned by the few who are called capitalist/bourgeoisie who are rational enterprise which employs a rational capital for ever increasing profit for a small class of people rather than catering to the needs of larger number of members of society. It is this competition and profit seeking tendency which makes capitalism intrinsically dynamic. In state capitalism, ownership by state (Lenin). In welfare or protected capitalism, society is protected as in the case of India from 1947-1991. In Post capitalism or managerialistic capitalism, responsibilities of the owner are different. He depends on experts from various fields of management for his enterprise. Hobbson in his influential work imperialism has used 3 Ps to characterize imperialism those were Pride, Pugnacity and Prestige.

Seeds of colonialism with respect to India was sown through 14th century renaissance and the geographical discoveries. Portuguese in 1498 came here in India. Development of mercantilist, economic, political philosophy in Europe from 16th to 18th century. This meant that in the context of India, foreign traders used Indian products but not making payment with their own gold and silver and this was later strengthened by acquiring political power in India so as to control the economy. Portuguese could never create an empire because 16th century Roman catholic corruption.

Dutch created first Joint Trading Company to trade with the East. They were interested mainly in south region of India because of Spice trade. The Dutch enterprise came to an end with their defeat with error by East India Company. Next to come was the English East India Company, it was purely private enterprise and Queen Elizabeth was also an investor in the company in her individual capacity. East Indian Company had headquarter in Adden Hall Smith. First president was Thomas Smith. Next to come over French and the French Trading Company was purely state enterprise. The French ruler showed confidence to traders that in case there was a loss, the state board would bear it and if there was a profit the trader would also share the percentage of profit. The dream of establishing a French empire in India was formed by a French, especially, Dupleix but it was the English East India company which succeeded in establishing the Empire, since company had to be at loss as well as profit that is why it was more active and alert.^{iv} The creation of a modern bureaucratic administration also called major social transformation and new sector of employment developed in which Indian state to adopt European professional quotes of behaviour. Participation was very active. French lost because of their state enterprise and the lethargy. There was no dynamism, capitalistic system was having inherent dynamism and motivated. Socialist system was not motivated and was having inherent staticism, no regular meeting in French but in the case of East India company of British, there were regular meetings and independent decision making.

Conquest of Bengal by Battle of Plassey, Battle of Buxar, Treaty of Allahabad: between 1) Clive and Nawab of Bengal Najm-ud-daulah and Shah Alam mughal ruler and 2) Clive and Shuja-ud- daulah changed the scenario of India very much.

Company got formal entry into the administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The company acquired Diwani that is right of revenue collection without any responsibility while Nawab was responsible for Nizamat that is administration and he had to bear the cost of the salary of officials and administrative procedures by the pension of 57 lakh rupees granted to him by the Britishers and he had no right over the revenue collection. With this begun what is called dual system of government. It was clever tactic to create those economic and political condition in which Nawab would lose respect and credibility among his subjects. The final reason of resentment among people against mughal ruler was great famine of Bengal which was started in 1769 and it had not only discredited the Nawab but also made people obnoxious of new and effective administration perhaps the most decisive action.

The company wanted monopoly of trade with India and no European competition whether it was Indian merchant or a European company. The struggle took place in Bengal and subsequently in other parts of India, the company also did not want the Indian merchant to compete with it for purchase in India or sale abroad. Their dastaks or permits for free trade, became their privilege. The East India Company therefore had two ways, long and fierce war to achieve its aim with French and Dutch as well as with Indian rulers. This process of territorial expansion that is imperialism achieved its climax during the tenure of Lord Dalhousie. Post 1857, imperialist expansion was stopped the new policy was consolidation of Empire. Observations of foreign travellers in Mughal period about India's proverbial wealth inflow of Bullion and no outflow can be recalled and India was famous as the golden bird which employees the potential of India as an economic power this potential of India in comparison to other British colonies remained on priority in India was given independence after acquiring Diwani the company was now in a legal position to grab accumulated wealth of local rulers and zamindars then the wealth drained out of India from mercantilist phase layered pioneering contribution in framing capitalist industrialization. Train in India contributed to person to person. Britain's national income at that point of time got strengthened with each subsequent phase and increased its political power. Also the company violated the basic and fundamental operational principle of capitalism that is free trade and competition.^v In the context of India, the opium linseed oil combination was all you need to Malwa further confirming that poppy cultivation had historical developed along separate trajectories in the Ganga region and western India. Company avoided both these rules. Indian merchants were gradually squeezed out while craftsman and other merchants were compelled either to sell their products at an economic rate. People to hire out at company workshops at extremely low wages. A very important feature of company's rule at this stage was that no basic or fundamental changes were introduced at this stage in administration. Gradually system of communication, transport and business, education got upgraded. Bipan Chandra concludes that it was not very different from the traditional empire from India which basically collected agrarian surplus from their territory. The big difference in the efficiency of company is administration because it was reinforced by rationality, accountability. Accountability not to the Indian but to the company and to Britain this

was also the period when the company administration felt no need to directly penetrate to the rural areas so long as economy circulated so successfully appropriated by traditional machinery of revenue collection and from 1793 the zamindari system sustained the economy. Whatever administration or administrative changes were made, they were applied only to the office structure of revenue collection and give to the sole aim of making revenue collection more efficient and 100% certain number of experts were made from 1765 till the time permanent settlement was established in Bengal. The most famous one was made by during the tenure of Warren Hastings. Hastings constituted Amini commission which is considered to be the landmark in land and revenue system in India. This was the first systematic reform to collect authentic data about area under cultivation and the crops grown, type of land tenure and revenue realization. In 1893, East India Company established its first Formula One system known as permanent settlement also known as Bengal regulation. Land belongs to state. Peasant was not the owner of land and to be taken through Zamindars. British assumed that Zamindar would invest and enhance condition of agriculture as they would earn more which did not come true. R.C. Dutt in his classic, "Economic History of India" coated the efforts of the parliamentary selection committee of 1812 which was to discover how Indian manufacturers could be replaced by British manufacturers and how British Industries could be promoted at the expense of Indian Industries. It shows the vision of planning Second Phase of British colonialism. By the demise of the power of East India Company, trader and the merchant and the rapid ascendancy of the British capitalist and industrialist class which show that even in Britain there was competition between early mercantilist and the new capitalist. Industrialist the state support capitalist Industrialist then mercantilist because in general, capitalist were the member of British Parliament and they were going to support the election expenses. By 1813, the Industrial revolution had almost being competent and by the mid of 19th century the remaining countries of the Western Europe experienced capitalist industrialization but no country is in position to compete with Britain capitalization. The colonial administration and its policies were now necessarily directed to serve the interest of the new class of Britain. Logically the situation was very different from the one which existed in the period in the first stage of British colonialism in which the East India Company was only a trading corporation. The British Industrialist had no interest in the monopolization of export of Indian handicraft but would be need of increasing outlet for their goods in order to increase the profit and this was because the internal market of Britain had virtually be retained the surplus. India has resources but no entrepreneurship. Britain had entrepreneurship but scarce of resources. ^{vi}Even after the end of the physical presence of the British from India, they remained present in the laws, rules, regulations, culture and traditions. The transformation of Britain as the workshop of world for creating world's largest empires can be explained as it observed all gold and silver. Life was easy and no innovation and no struggle, no risk seeking tendency rather resorted on traditional ways of living and not concerned about the profit. ^{vii} Once the industrial revolution overtook the countries of the Western Europe, capitalism entered into the second phase which Lenin described as industrial capitalism the distinguishing mark of industrial capitalism was that industrial goods started being sold to the colonial countries and latter were turned into the producer and supplier of raw materials. Thus, there was a paradigm shift from trade to industry and major capital investments were started being made in industrial production, instead of trade and commerce. Name and

structural problems of India begin from this stage onwards and India is yet to emerge out of that colonial exploitation and distortion. The economy was no longer feudal but capitalist. The colonial rule gave primacy to its selfish interest. It had the features of Indian federalism which suited its interest, brought in some modernity which suited its interest. For this, a new term was coined called colonial mode of production. Feudalism is a characteristic of an economy which has paucity of currency. Here the rulers pay his courtiers and functionaries not in cash salary but by assigning them the revenue in the form of piece of land which is already under cultivation by the peasant.^{viii} Almost from the Inception of their trading awards in India the British headshot legitimacy and production from Indian rulers primarily the Mughal emperor. The state functionary did not become the owner of the land but collected the revenue and paid a certain percentage of their duty which used to go to the state treasury directly. Their state functionaries are called feudal lords and the system is called feudalism as the requirements.

Cheap import of raw material for industry and export food grains of good quality for British consumers. This import of rice is continued even when industries were starving the most. Growing example of the modern failure of colonial state was in 1943 when Bengal experienced the most disastrous and fatal famine but export of rice continued to British country even in the situation of crisis. The entire settlement in the first stage of colonialism was oppressed with the permanent settlement in 1793. In the second phase, ryotwari and mahalwari land revenue settlement was introduced. These names were not new but their practice was colonial. In ryotwari system no intermediary was there and no permanent realization but realization after 10 years. Mahal was known as village or a group of villages which were in contract with the British government for the revenue realization.

Civil services:

It was the first pillar of the British administration and all the responsibilities of day to day functioning of the British Raj was carried on by the District Collector. He acted as the liaisoning officer between the government and the people.

Army:

Second important pillar of British Regime in India was the army which fulfilled several functions. It was the chief instrument through which Indian power conquered it. It freed British Empire in India from foreign rivals like Russia. Russia wanted Afghanistan as a buffer state between India and itself. Professor Nandalal Chatterjee established that resentment was the main reason behind establishment of Congress. The army safeguarded the British rule from ever present threat of internal rebellions and suppressed internal threats from tribal revolt, peasant revolt and sometimes collaborative efforts of tribal and peasant against the British Raj. Great revolt of 1857 was suppressed only by the help of army. Quit India 1942, was the most brutal repression of all time. It was the chief instrument for extending and defending British Empire in Asia and establishing and securing it. Greatest contribution in reform in army of India was done by Lord Dalhousie. Due to territorial expansion of Lord Dalhousie, maintenance of army and necessary reform was needed. Lord Dalhousie adopted the policy of doctrine of lapse and war to annex the territory and this is the only reason why Lord Dalhousie took great interest in

promotion of telegraph, post and railways so that connectivity could become much better for the exchange of information and deployment of army in those areas where it is required. According to Lee Warner, it was Dalhousie who dreamt of Asian Empire and converted it into a reality. Empire created, needed effective and strategic control over extensive areas and this necessitated more rational distribution of company's success. Headquarter of Bengal artillery was shifted from Calcutta to Meerut, permanently. East India Company's army headquarter was also shifted from Calcutta to Shimla. Process was completed only in 1865. The hill station of Shimla became increasingly important and went on to become the seat of Government of India for the major part of the year. Governor General's summer residence was established in later years called as Vice Regal lodge (now it is Indian Institute of Advanced Studies). This was also followed in Uttar Pradesh as during the time of summer, governor's office shifted to Nainital. Dalhousie had foreseen danger in the numerical entries of the Indians in the army and consequently he proposed deduction in Indian element which despite reduction stood more than 2 lacs Indian soldiers in 1856 as against only 45000 Europeans. He impressed upon the authorities regarding necessity of increasing strength in India so that equipoise could be established between European and Indian troops in the house. He described, European force in India has the essential element in our strength. The bulk of company's army consisted of Indian soldiers recruited chiefly from area present under Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This is why the term poorabiya was also used. Most striking part was that the soldiers were from Brahmin community. Awadh was called nursery of sepoys, one thing remains unchanged in the last from that time of Dalhousie that all the officers at high positions were only Englishmen. Highest post in context of army for Indians was Subedar and the reason responsible for employing Indians in the army was that the employment of Englishmen, obviously was very expensive. In addition, the population of Britain was too small to have a population surplus to report in the army as a counter measure. Army was lead entirely by Englishmen and a certain number of British troops were especially meant in to keep Indian soldiers under control and in discipline, that was a plane strategy. Commitment and the pride in the nation is a lesson to be learnt that how a handful of foreigners dominated and controlled a region and population for a long time. This is important because it shows in the great revolt, idea of nationalism and nationalism was not present in India. India was the geographical expression and word nation was used with reference to one's own limited territory like Begum Hazrat Mahal was limited to Luck now, Nana Sahab was limited to Kanpur. Indians are not exposed to modern nationality, rooted in the times immemorial and loyalty for the salt.

Police:

The third pillar of British was police. The creator of police was Lord Cornwallis. He releaved Zamindars of their police function and established a regular police force to maintain law and order. Even in the rural area in distant places, thanas were made. India was way ahead of the time while in Britain modern Police System was yet to be established. The system of thana, daroga and circle officer was well established in the time of British which is still continuing in the present time in India. Later, the post of district superintendent of police was created to head the force of the district. In some areas, village headman was given the responsibility of internal security. The police was

also successful in preventing the organized crime like internal conspiracy against foreign rule. The rule was not got infected but increased with the time.

Judiciary:

In 1726, first law commission was established which recommended the establishment of courts at local levels. Later, during the rule of Warren Hastings, in 1774, first Supreme Court was established in Calcutta. There were two courts in the district: one was District Diwani Adalat and other was District Faujdari Adalat. Diwani adalat dealt with the civil procedures and the Faujdari adalat dealt with the criminal matters. Appellate court at that time was Sadar Diwani Adalat. Sadar Nizamat Adalat was authorised to give final nod over the decisions taken by District Faujdari Adalat in criminal cases. These courts were headed by District Collector who was assisted by Qazi and Maulvi. Faujdari adalat was governed by the muslim law where as in Diwani adalat, Hindu law for Hindus and Muslim law for Muslims. Lord Curzon established the circuit courts and later, these courts were abolished by Lord William Bentick and gave the supreme control under the Governor General.

Railways played an important role in deployment of army and police along with the communication. Agriculture was utilised wisely as the revenue machine. Cheap labour, post and telegraph for communication, educated middle class for clerical purpose, Indian National Congress as the safety valve acted as the instrument of convenience for British rule.

Colonialism is marked by the intention of capitalism and the imperialism. The quest of attaining and retaining the control over political, economic and cultural aspect gives rise to the regime of dominating the colony by brute force or sheer intelligence and at times by both.

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