

2. European Colonialism

2.1 Colonialism : Meaning and Nature

2.2 Colonialism

2.2.1 Causes of the Rise of Colonialism

2.2.2 Consequences

2.3 European Colonialism

2.3.1 America

2.3.2 Australia and New Zealand

2.3.3 Asia

2.3.4 Africa

Colonialism is a form of imperialism. The act of a developed nation occupying the land of a less developed, distant nation and establishing their rule on the occupied country is known as 'colonialism'. Countries like England, France, Portugal, Spain, etc. gradually occupied the nations in Asia and Africa and established their colonies there. India was one of the colonies of England. One of the main characteristics of colonialism is to transport the raw material from the colonies to one's own country and use the colonies as marketplaces for selling their final products.

Colonialism, indeed gives rise to political and economic slavery but it also causes psychological slavery. The racial attitude of the colonialist countries and subsequent treatment given to the native people creates sort of inferiority complex among them. They develop an apologetic outlook for their own culture and history. They begin to feel unworthy. It was said that, "the sun never sets on the British Empire." It was the way to indicate the worldwide spread of British colonies. The British Empire encompassed the continents of Asia, Africa, America and Australia.

There was a commercial revolution in the 15th century Europe. As a result of the discoveries of new lands by various seafarers, the traditional ways of commerce changed radically. European traders began to establish

themselves firmly in Asia and Africa.

2.1 Colonialism : Meaning and Nature

Europeans reached all over the world with various intentions such as the urge for adventures, to earn name, to discover unknown lands, to search for gold mines, etc. Later, the trade and commerce increased to a great extent and the European countries began to compete with each other.

Wherever the Europeans went, they established their colonies. There was a competition to gain economic, social and political supremacy among them. Extreme nationalism, feeling of racial superiority, industrialisation, aggressive approach, etc. are some of the factors that led to the growth of colonialism. Europeans went to America, Australia, New Zealand. They found the climate of these regions favourable for them. However, it was not easy for them to adapt to the climate of Asia. Despite the climatic conditions, favourable or unfavourable, Europeans displaced the indigenous people in their own lands. The British, the Dutch, the Portuguese and the French, all devised several ways for demoralising the indigenous people.

Europeans needed to capture newer marketplaces for selling their surplus goods, which were increasingly accumulating as the result of mass production, caused by the industrial revolution. Besides, they also needed additional sources that would provide ample raw material. In the latter half of the 19th century England had built a very flourishing trade as a result of the industrial revolution. The British with the help of their naval forces, had established supremacy in Asian and African countries. Earning surplus profits, investing surplus profits, increasing trade with the colonies for good investment, profit on the investments – this was an unending chain. France, Belgium, Italy and Germany were the countries, who, like England strove to establish colonies.

2.2 Colonialism

2.2.1 Causes of the Rise of Colonialism

Industrial Consequences : Colonialism was a result of Industrial Revolution. Production increased enormously because of the new machines. However, the rate of local consumption was much lesser compared to the surplus production. Hence, the immediate need of the Europeans was to find new marketplaces for selling their products. It was also necessary that those marketplaces be dependable and easy to dominate.

Requirements of Raw Material : It is necessary to maintain low costs of production compared to competing nations in the market. The desire to create monopoly in the market and the need to procure raw material at cheaper rates were two major factors, which made it essential for the European nations to establish clear supremacy.

Investing Surplus Capital : The Industrial revolution added to the wealth of the European capitalists, who were already rich. They started searching for secure markets to invest their surplus funds. The markets in the less developed countries were quite secure from this point of view. Thus, the availability of surplus capital facilitated the rise of colonialism.

Sources of Minerals : The countries in Asia and Africa had rich sources of minerals like gold, diamonds, silver and coal etc. This attracted the European merchants to various regions of Asia and Africa.

Geographic Importance : European nations had realised that the geographic location of some regions in Asia and Africa are advantageous for trade. Malta, Gibraltar, Aden, Singapore, Andaman and Nicobar were some such regions, where the British established their hold.

Availability of Labour : European merchants needed large number of labourers at a very cheap rate. The colonies fulfilled this need. Later, it contributed to the boom in the slave trade.

The Feeling of Racial Superiority :

The European colonialist claimed it to be their responsibility to civilise the people in Asia and Africa. This assumed role of the Europeans resulted in the conversion of many Asian and African people to Christianity. This also helped the growth of colonialism.

2.2.2 Consequences

The People in Asia and Africa were economically exploited by the Europeans. The people in the colonies lost their independence. Their economic exploitation pushed them into poverty.

At the same time, we may also note some constructive things that happened during the colonial period. A new awareness emerged in the political, social, economic and educational fields. Common people became conscious of democratic systems and its inherent modern values like liberty, equality and fraternity. They got introduced to principles like administration based on a fundamental legal system, judicial system, availability of education to all. People became aware of the need to shoulder the responsibility of solving their problems, which eventually led to the independence movements in many colonies.

Try to do this.

Locate the following regions under British domination on the map: Gibraltar, Malta in the Mediterranean sea; British Guyana, British Honduras, British West Indies, Bermuda and Falkland islands in the Western Hemisphere; Aden, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Hongkong, India; also the countries in Africa.

2.3 European Colonialism

2.3.1 America

While studying the history of the colonial period in America it becomes apparent that the stronger European countries dominated the weaker countries by establishing colonies there and pushed them into subjection. The European migrants seized the lands of original

inhabitants in America and at times massacred them. They destroyed the local kingdoms in Peru and Mexico. The original inhabitants were forced into slavery.

Portugal and Spain were on the forefront in the competition among the European nations to establish colonies. Portugal brought Brazil in the American continent under their

rule and so did Spain by taking hold of Mexico. There they discovered gold mines. Spanish colonisers brought slaves from Africa to cultivate sugarcane and tobacco in the American fields. However, once the Spanish discovered the mines of gold and silver in Peru, Mexico and Venezuela, they concentrated more on mining the precious metals than



agriculture. They established control over the entire coastline of South America. The coastal region from Florida to California was held by the Spanish. Here, they engaged the native Americans and the African slaves in farming. Farming and mining earned them enormous wealth. Spain appointed governors to administer these regions. The King of Spain was the supreme authority. An organisation, called 'Council of the Indies' was established to rule the colonies. This council was also in charge of the Spanish trade in the colonies. Essential raw materials were exported out to Spain and the finished goods used to be imported for sale in the local markets of the colonies. The trade of gold and silver acquired from these colonies earned huge profits for the king. Witnessing Spain's prosperity England, Holland and France also began to establish their colonies in America.

During the reign of Elizabeth I, the queen of England, explorers were encouraged to undertake marine expeditions. Establishing colonies was the prime intention. In 1496, John Cabot was granted permission to establish colonies on the American land. He established the British as the ruling authority in North America. In 1607 the British built Jamestown, a colony on the banks of river 'James'. Later the same colony was renamed as 'Virginia'. Afterwards, England established its colonies in the coastal region of North America stretching from New England to Carolina. Along with earning commercial benefit, welfare of the home country was added to the colonial intentions during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

To suit its colonial interests, England began to impose restrictions on the colonies. The Maritime Law was a step in this direction. This law authorised only British companies for the sea transport.

The 'Stamp Act' (1765) made it obligatory to purchase special stamps for important documents. British colonies in America like Virginia, Massachusetts put up resistance against the Stamp Act and also

other restrictions imposed on the colonies. On 5th March 1770, some people were shot down by British soldiers, in Boston, a port city in Massachusetts.

The British parliament had granted monopoly to 'East India Company' to import and sell tea to the colonies. People in the colonies had started demanding removal of the restrictions imposed on them and autonomy. When the British government refused to yield to these demands, the American colonies declared boycott on British goods. In 1773, as an act of resistance, the local residents of Boston dumped the boxes containing tea in the sea belonging to East India Company. This event is known as the 'Boston Tea Party'. A federation of the colonies known as the 'Continental Congress' was established. In 1774, a meeting of the congress was called at Philadelphia. In this meeting known as the 'First Continental Congress' a strong opposition was expressed to the import of British goods. It was also decided to boycott British goods. These events ultimately gave a momentum to the American independence movement against European powers.

Thirteen colonies in America came together and declared independence from Great Britain. On 4th July 1776, in the meeting known as the 'Second Continental Congress', a document known as the 'Declaration of Independence' was adopted. This document was drafted by Thomas Jefferson. The crucial point of the document announced that the 13

American colonies were independent sovereign states. The key point of this document is the statement about three basic human rights, namely, 'Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness'. It was stated that these three are the natural rights of all humans, which nobody can be deprived of.



George Washington

The conflict between the colonies and the British army continued for some time resulting into several battles after the colonies declared independence. Finally, at Saratoga the colonies got a decisive victory over the British army. This victory proved to be a turning point for the colonies as the French agreed to support them in their conflict with the British. Eventually in 1779, Spain also joined the colonies in their struggle for independence. On 7th October 1780, George Washington defeated the British army. On 19th October, the British general Lord Cornwallis surrendered and America became independent. The American revolt for independence, is also known as the 'American Revolution'. It was a war tantamount to Americans fighting one's own king to get back their independence. Americans proved to the world that the subjects have a right to fight the rulers who deny them their natural rights. It is said that 'State without a King' is a phenomenon, which is a gift to the world from America.

Canada, a country adjacent to America was acquired by the British by the Paris Treaty in 1763. Later, the British accorded the status of a federal state to Canada and established a bicameral parliament. They had also appointed a Governor-General in Canada.

2.3.2 Australia and New Zealand

In the 18th century the first colony of the prisoners deported from England was established in Australia. Later in the 19th century other regions in Australia were colonised. The British also established their colonies in the Island of Tasmania and New Zealand. In the year 1900 the island of Tasmania was included and the Republic of Australia was created as an integral nation of the British Empire. A bicameral parliament was established. A Governor-General was appointed in Australia by the British king as the viceregal representative. Only European immigrants were allowed to enter Australia.

In 1907, New Zealand was accorded the status of an autonomous state integral to the

British empire. The European settlers in New Zealand adopted democratic system of administration. The measures of public welfare such as common right to vote, public railways, fire and accident insurance, pension for the old, compensation to workers who got injured or died on duty, etc. were implemented in New Zealand long before 1900 C.E. Only European immigrants were allowed to settle down in New Zealand.

2.3.3 Asia

To protect their colonies in India from other colonialist European nations and to boost their trade in India and the neighbouring regions were the main objectives of the British rulers.

Myanmar : Myanmar is India's neighbouring country on its northeast boundary. Earlier it was known as 'Brahmadesh' (Burma). The British wanted to establish their control in Burma because it was rich in natural wealth and was also a potential market.

The royal dynasty of Myanmar had successfully consolidated the country under their rule. It also conquered Manipur. Later they attacked Assam. The British were alerted by the Burmese attacks. Hence, Lord Amherst, the Governor-General of India declared war against Myanmar. The war continued for two years. It is known as the 'First Anglo-Burmese War'. The British navy conquered the port of Rangoon (Yangon) in this war. It ended with a treaty between the British and the Burmese king. Manipur was returned to the British. The coastal region, the forests and mines there, came under British control. The British collected a large sum as compensation against military expenditure from Myanmar. They also appointed their Resident in Inwa (also known as 'Ava'), the capital of Myanmar at that time.

The 'Second Anglo-Burmese War' was fought during Lord Dalhousie's tenure. Two British individuals staying in Burma were asked to pay a fine by the Burmese administration. This minor incident was used as a pretext by Dalhousie to plan an attack

on Myanmar. He declared war and sent an army to Myanmar with Commodore George Lambert at its head. The Burmese army was defeated. The cities of Rangoon (Yangon), Pegu (Bago) and Prome were captured by the British. This region was merged in the British Empire. With this victory the British influence in the coastal region of Myanmar was firmly established. The British army fighting this war was comprised of Indian soldiers. Not only that, the expenditure of this war was also borne by the Indians.

The French had already created considerable influence in Vietnam (Indochina). There was increasing contact between the Burmese king and the French. In addition, King Thibaw of Myanmar tried to strike a pact with Italy and Germany. These were reasons enough for the British to feel alarmed. They got a pretext to declare war against King Thibaw when he levied fine on the

Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, a British company. Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General and Viceroy of India took this opportunity and sent army to attack Burma. The 'Third Anglo-Burmese War' was fought around 1885 C.E. The British conquered the city of Mandalay. King Thibaw surrendered and the entire region of North Myanmar became an integral part of the British Empire. In 1935 an act was passed to separate Myanmar from Indian territory.

Myanmar was inspired by the 'Indian Freedom Struggle' and gained independence in 1948.

Nepal : Nepal was a small kingdom in the Himalayan region. The British had sent their representatives to Nepal but they did not receive any reciprocal response. It led to two Anglo-Nepalese wars.

The Gurkha army had mere 10-12



Do you know?

The British imprisoned King Thibaw after his defeat. So as to ensure that he would not be able to rise against the British or to have any contact with his subjects, he was brought to Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. A three storeyed palace was built there. King Thibaw was kept under house arrest in that palace. The ground floor of the palace has a large hall with marble floor. The roof is decorated with beautifully carved wooden panels. The windows are

hemispherical having panes of colourful Italian glass. An image of Lord Gautam Buddha brought by the king from Myanmar, is installed in the precincts of the palace.

You may note, that the British adopted similar policy when they sent Emperor Bahadur Shah to Yangon after the 1857 Independence War. He could never return to India and died there.

Lokmanya Tilak, who was born in Ratnagiri was kept in the jail at Mandalay in Myanmar with a view to keep him away from the Indian Movement of Independence. Tilak wrote 'Geetarahasya' in this prison. Later, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was also sent to Mandalay jail.



Thibaw Palace, Ratnagiri

thousand soldiers while the British army was much larger having more than 30 thousand soldiers. The British attacked Nepal. The Nepalese army brought the British army to the point of desperation. Nepal was defeated by British Nepal at Makwanpur in 1816. The British took over the regions of Terai, Kumaun and Garhwal. A British Resident was appointed at Kathmandu. In 1923, the British accepted the sovereignty of Nepal.

Sikkim : The British goal was to gain control over India's neighbouring regions. Sikkim was a small kingdom on the north border of India, which was surrounded by Bhutan, Bengal, Nepal and Tibet. In 1815 the King of Sikkim handed over the region around Darjeeling to the British. In return the king was granted certain amount as a privy purse. Later Lord Dalhousie sent army to Sikkim and took hold of some more regions of Sikkim. This threw open the Sikkim markets to the British traders and authorised the British to collect octroi on the India-Tibet trade. In 1886 the Tibetans tried to capture Sikkim. The British immediately took action against them. In the 1890 treaty between the British and China it was agreed that Sikkim will be a British protectorate. In this way the British could ensure the security of the tea gardens in Darjeeling. Sikkim was made a buffer zone and the British took control of the internal administration and foreign policies of Sikkim. However, the sovereign status of Sikkim was maintained.

A plebiscite was held in 1975 and the people of Sikkim voted for merging in the Indian Republic. Thus, Sikkim became a constituent state in the Indian federation.

Bhutan : Bhutan is a neighbouring country of India, located near its northern border and to the east of Sikkim. Lord Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India had recognised the geographic and economic importance of Bhutan. Hence, he established friendly relationship with the country. It helped to open the trade route from Bengal to Tibet for the British. In 1841,

Ashley Eden took an aggressive stand against Bhutan. There was a war between Bhutan and the British in 1865. The war was concluded with a treaty, according to which the king of Bhutan surrendered the territories conquered by Bhutan to the British and the king was granted an annual subsidy. Later, in another treaty in 1910, the British agreed not to interfere in the internal matters of Bhutan and Bhutan agreed to be guided by the British in their external affairs. In 1949, the treaty was signed on 8th August 1949 between India and Bhutan, according to which India assumed a position of an advisory to Bhutan in the matters of defence and external affairs.

Tibet : Tibet was under the influence of Dalai Lama. The British wanted to have hold on Tibet for arresting Russian advances and to increase their own trade. During Lord Curzon's times the British military had reached 'Lhasa', the capital city of Tibet. In 1907, as per the treaty between England and Russia, the political rule of China in Tibet was principally acknowledged. It gave a leeway to China to claim Tibet as an integral part of China.

2.3.4 Africa

European travellers reached Africa also. However, the African territory with its dense forests, widespread lakes, swamps and deserts was unfamiliar to them. Leopold II, the king of Belgium had Congo under his dominance. He convened a Geographical Conference in Brussels in 1876. European geographers and researchers had gathered in this assembly. It was decided there to establish an institution called 'International Association for the Exploration and Civilisation of Central Africa', for the purpose of dissemination of knowledge in Africa. In 1884 a conference of European nations was organised in Berlin to explore the opportunities in Africa available to them. The true purpose of this conference was to discuss the possibilities of dividing the African territory amongst themselves.

In the Berlin Conference the Belgian supremacy in Congo was acknowledged by all and Congo was renamed as 'Congo Free State'. It was also decided in this conference that if any of the European nations fails in utilising the natural resource in the colonies under their charge, then that nation should give it up to another European nation.

George Taubman Goldie was a British citizen who founded 'The National African Company' in England. A charter was issued to him by the British government permitting to conduct trading operations in Nigeria. Later, the company was acquired by the British Government. Nigeria became a colony governed by the British government.

Bismarck, the Chancellor of Germany established the first German colony in West Africa in 1883. It was named 'Togoland'. Germany also established its colonies in Cameroon and southwest Africa.

France established their supremacy in Senegal, Gambia and in the region to the north of Congo. In 1883, Ivory Coast also became a French colony. Later France acquired the region of Dahomey from Portugal. Till 1914, France had established their control over the region from Sahara desert to Ivory Coast to the west and French Guinea.

Cape Colony and Natal in East Africa were held by England while Mozambique was under Spanish control. England, France and Germany were interested in the regions of East Africa. These three nations made a pact to protect each other's interests. Accordingly, the Sultan of Zanzibar was given Pemba island and the coastal region of east Africa, while Madagascar was given to France, the coastal region of north Africa to England and the south region to Germany. In 1897, Germany took over the east African region from 'German East Africa Company'. England declared Zanzibar, Pemba island and Nyasaland (Malawi) as their protectorates and it came to be known as 'British East Africa'.

Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli (Nubia) and Egypt were part of the north region of Africa. In 1830 France had already established control over Algeria. Italy, France and England wanted to occupy Tunis. In this competition France was successful, and got hold of Tunis from its Turkish Sultan. Thereafter, France took hold of Morocco as well. Italy conquered Tripoli and Cyrenaica.

Both England and France wanted to gain hold over Egypt. The British built railway from Alexandria to Cairo. Suez Canal that joined Mediterranean and Red Sea was built under the supervision of the French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps. In the beginning Egypt bore the expenditure for this project.

However, later the expenditure for Suez Canal got so escalated that Egypt had to seek loans to meet it. It became impossible to repay even the interest on the loans, so Egypt put up the shares of 'Suez Canal Company' for sell. England purchased a number of shares and thus gained part ownership of the company and the Suez Canal. Egypt became independent in 1922.

Sudan to the south of Egypt was its vassal state. England, by the virtue of Egypt being deemed as British protectorate, had also assumed the same role in Sudan. Sudan was important for England because the Nile, the lifeline of Egypt, originates in Sudan. England, without paying heed to local opposition established its supremacy over Sudan. To facilitate the moving of British army in Sudan, the British began to build a railway track from Uganda to Sudan. France accepted England's claim on Sudan and in exchange asked for some facilities in the western parts of Africa.

Cape Colony and Natal in the southern parts of Africa were under British control. Orange Free State and Transvaal were under Dutch control. Gold mines were discovered in Johannesburg and it attracted European nations to South Africa. By 1909, resulted in England's decision to consolidate its colonies in the southern region and name it 'Union

of South Africa'. At about same time the Portuguese gained control over Angola. Some islands in the Guinea Coast, some part of Morocco came under Spain's control.

Thus, we learnt about the history of European Colonialism. In the next lesson we will learn about the influence of European colonialism in India.

Exercise

Q.1 (A) Choose the correct alternative and rewrite the statement.

- 'Declaration of Independence' was drafted by
(a) George Washington
(b) Thomas Jefferson
(c) Lord Amherst (d) Lord Cornwallis
- The Second Anglo-Burmese War fought during the times of
(a) Lord Amherst (b) Lord Dufferin
(c) Lord Dalhousie (d) Ashley Eden

(B) Find the incorrect pair from group 'B', and write the corrected one.

Group 'A'

- Togoland
- Egypt
- Orange Free State
- Ivory Coast

Group 'B'

- German colony
- British colony
- Dutch colony
- Portuguese colony

Q.2 (A) Write the names of historical places/ persons/events.

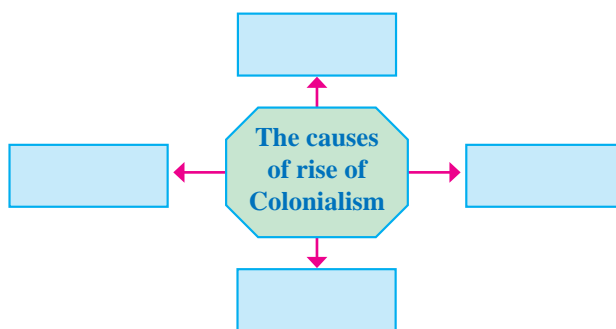
- The region from Florida to California on the southern coast of America was under the control of –
- The sea voyages for exploration were encouraged in the reign of Queen –

(B) Choose a correct reason and complete the sentence.

- The British wanted to gain control over Myanmar, because
(a) they wanted to expand their empire.
(b) it was very important for them to control the natural resources and the market in Myanmar.

- they wanted to be on the forefront in the colonial competition amongst the European nations.
- they wanted to teach a lesson to King Thiba of Myanmar.

Q.3 Complete the concept map.



Q.4 Write short Notes.

- Nature of Colonialism
- American War of Independence

Q.5 Explain the following statements with reason.

- The Industrial revolution gave a momentum to colonialism.
- European nations established colonies in America.

Project

- Examine the map of African continent with the help of internet.
- Collect information about the biodiversity and sources of minerals in the African continent.

