

Chapter-1

Structural Change

Facts That Matter

Colonial experience for comprehending modern India

- The colonial rule has had a tremendous impact on Indian society in all aspects- railways, industries, postal system (social, cultural, economic, political).
- Understanding of colonial experience while comprehending modern India is of significant importance as many modern ideas and institutions reached India through colonialism.
- It is also because such an exposure to modern ideas was contradictory or paradoxical. For example, Indians in the colonial period read about western liberalism and freedom.
- Yet they lived under a western, colonial rule that denied Indians liberty and freedom. It is contradiction of this kind that shaped many of the structural and cultural change in modern India.

Colonialism

- Colonialism simply means the establishment of rule by one country over another. In the modern period western colonialism has had the greatest impact.
- India's past has been marked by the entry of numerous groups of people at different times who have established their rule over different parts of what constitutes modern India today.
- The impact of colonial rule is distinguishable from all other earlier rules because the changes it brought in were far-reaching and deep.
- History is full of examples of the annexation of foreign territory and the domination of weaker by stronger powers. Nevertheless, there is a vital difference between the empire building of pre-capitalist times and that of capitalist times.
- Apart from outright pillage, the pre-capitalist conquerors benefited from their



domination by exacting a continuous flow of tribute.

- On the whole they did not interfere with the economic base. They simply took the tribute that was skimmed off the economic surplus that was produced traditionally in the subjugated areas.

Use of English

The use of English language as an outcome of changes due to colonialism has many sided impact and yet paradoxical. English is not only widely used in India but we now have an impressive body of literary writings by Indians in English. This knowledge of English has given Indians an edge in the global market.

However, English still continues to be a mark of privilege and not knowing English is considered a disadvantage in the job market. On the other hand, those who were traditionally deprived access to formal education such as the Dalits, knowledge of English may open doors of opportunities that were formally closed.

Colonialism led to considerable movement of people. It led to movement of people from one part to another within India. For instance people from present day Jharkhand moved to Assam to work on the tea plantations.

A newly emerging middle class particularly from the British Presidency regions of Bengal and Madras moved as government employees and professionals like doctors and lawyers moved to different parts of the country.

People were carted in ships from India to work on other colonised lands in distant Asia, Africa and Americas. Many died on their way. Most could never return. Today many of their descendants are known as people of Indian origin.

Capitalism

- Capitalism is an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and organised to accumulate profits within a market system.
- Capitalism in the west emerged out of a complex process of European exploration of the rest of the world, its plunder of wealth and resources, an unprecedented growth of science and technology, its harnessing to industries and agriculture.
- Capitalism has global nature with its dynamism, its potential to grow, expand,



innovate and use technology and labour in a way that best assured to ensure greatest profit.

- Western colonialism was inextricably connected to the growth of western capitalism that became the dominant economic system.

Nation State as dominant political form

- Territory, population, administration, sovereignty. Educated Indians wanted sovereignty (governing their own country), taking own decisions.
- Industrialisation requires setting of factories and employing labour.
- Manchester: Industrial city in England. Cotton from India was sent to Manchester, processed into silk made cloth and sold in India for cheaper prices.
- Along with Surat and Masulipatnam, Dhaka and Thanjavur were ruled by kings and they too lost their courts.
- Artisans, painters, dancers, singers lost their importance. (working class) had to look for alternative jobs.
- Where there were industries, population increased and people from rural areas migrated to urban areas.
- They realised that life in urban areas and factories was tougher (social and economic reasons).
- All castes were the same, felt their culture was getting encoded.
- Madras (coffee, indigo, spices)
- Bombay (cotton) first established as price capital counter for trading.
- Calcutta (jute)

Role of cities

- Cities had a key role in the economic system of empires. Coastal cities like Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai were favoured as from here primary goods could be easily exported and manufactured goods could be cheaply imported.
- Colonial cities were the prime link between the economic or core centres in Britain and periphery or margins in colonised India.
- Cities were the concrete expression of global capitalism. For example, Bombay during British India was planned and re-developed so that by 1900 over three-quarters of India's raw cotton were shipped through the city.



- Urbanisation in the colonial period led to decline of some earlier urban centres and the emergence of new colonial cities. Kolkata was one of the first of such cities.
- Cities were also important as a trading post, for defensive purposes and for military engagements

Urbanisation and Industrialization

Tea Plantations

- Tea grows in hilly areas and requires rain, hence, Assam was ideal for tea plantation.
- Disadvantage of Assam ~ low population, therefore people had to be moved from Bihar, Maharastra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Life of Labourers

- Harsh weather conditions caused diseases.
- Moved away from hence culture shock (adjustment).
- Living and working conditions were poor.

Low wages

Penal laws made by the British to punish the offender or workers if they did not report on time, try to run away or went against them.

- But their laws were in favour of the plantation owners.
- Industry was privately and publicly owned.
- Either plantation owners or planters and management was done by employing managers.
- Had a luxurious life and large bungalows with gardens which were maintained by the labourers.
- Industrialisation and urbanisation in independent India.
- Nehru and ministers felt a 'drain of wealth' as Britishers left us in a difficult position.
- Had to recognise the economy and led to develop industries.
- Nehru called 'dams' the temples of modern India as they provide employment, control floods and hydro electricity.

Urban-Rural Areas Impact

People move from rural to urban areas in search of jobs, better standard of living, sense of



anonymity.

1. Migration

- Social reason sense of anonymity, ability to choose one's own job.
- Economic reason, better job opportunities, standard of living.

2. Classes between immigrants and residents; where immigrants move to urban areas, the residents resist this because they feel that they have to show housing facilities, job opportunities.

3. Metropolis: city + suburbs, suburbs because part of city e.g. Chennai, Bangalore, Suburb areas had to reach because they were far away.

4. Megapolis: Suburbs of city because part of the city and also belong to other states e.g., NCR-Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Noida, Bombay, Calcutta Megapolis > Metropolis .

