

# INTELLECTUAL COLONIALISM VIS-A-VIS PSEUDO DEVELOPMENTALISM: IRONY AND AGONY OF THE THIRD WORLD \*

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The phenomenon of intellectual dependence is one of the most sinister legacies of colonialism and ... it imports, it likes it or not, a particular type of thought and mentality, a social model.<sup>1</sup>

— A UNESCO PUBLICATION.

...the modern world has produced only great boots for the big feet of the rich... If you throw these big boots at the poor countries, then only the rich people there can wear them...<sup>2</sup>

— ERNEST SCHUMACHER.

'Colonialism' is quite an ambiguous term in political lexicon, and it is very often synonymous and co-terminous with 'imperialism', 'neo-colonialism' and other sub-varieties like 'dollar imperialism' and 'yankee imperialism'.<sup>3</sup> While 'developmentalism' as a thinking or thought and instrument of social transformation comprises 'development theory' and 'development ideology' and goes beyond them even.<sup>4</sup> Then, what does 'intellectual colonialism' imply? How does it coincide with 'pseudo developmentalism'? Speaking with ontological, epistemological and teleological implications, intellectual colonialism is not a mere manifestation of colonialism; it is the subtle, sinister and sophisticated instrument of (neo) colonialism to control and dominate the non-western world politically, economically, socially, culturally and psychologically by producing and exporting pseudo developmentalism. Being the profound off-shoot of scientific and technological superiority of the West, the magnitude of the problem lies in both conceptual and practical domains.

To Marx, colonialism was the design of the industrial bourgeoisie to create "a world after its own image."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, a Third World author remarks: "The world we live in and the images of the future we carry are largely a product of western initiative."<sup>6</sup> A resolution on neo-colonialism adopted by the All African Peoples Solidarity Conference (1961) reads pertinently: "the survival of colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means."<sup>7</sup>

According to Dependencia School, capitalism has developed into a planetary system in which there is a metropolitan sun around which move the peripheral societies. The prevailing dominant-dependent syndrome fosters and

reinforces unequal relationship between the centre and the periphery countries. It strengthens the position of the centre and weakens the position of the periphery giving the former a disproportionate share of the benefits of interaction at the expense of the latter. Among other things, the disparities between these actors are caused by the following factors:

- i) the tendency for periphery countries to concentrate on a few partners and commodities in their foreign transactions;
- ii) the absence of lateral ties that would enable the periphery countries to articulate their common interests and co-ordinate their policies;
- iii) the pivotal position of the core countries as gate-keepers in international communications-a position that gives them particular importance as purveyors of values and information; and
- iv) the tacit agreement of core countries to refrain from interfering in each others sphere of influence.<sup>8</sup>

During the colonial era, the Pax Britanica model was exported to most of the developing countries. The in-built tendency of this system was law and order maintaining and revenue collecting activities. But, there has been no fundamental re-snape in the inherited system even after independence. This alien-elite dominated-centralized system is totally unsuitable to the developing societies where the rural population and agricultural economy are predominant.

After the World War II, Americans have become self-appointed preachers and promoters of democracy and development and global policemen to protect the interest of the free society. Following the inception of three major American Schools in the 50s and 60s - 'Comparative Politics', 'Comparative administration' and 'Comparative Management' - new theories, models, strategies and rubrics on development mushroomed in social science disciplines. These theories mainly based upon "the experiences of administrators and advisors attached to the new American thrust in foreign policy", and heavily loaded with American superiority complex and anti-socialist tendency-view development as the growth of a system closely resembling the American pattern.

Thus the ironical situation has emerged. The Third World countries have obtained a Pax Britanica cum Pax Americana super system for their nation building and development. Almost all the agonies of the Third World stem from this morbid matrix itself. Development had lost its logic and reality due to the invasion of perversive institutions, ideas and practices.

In such an exploitative and oppressive set-up, intellectual colonialism becomes a logical and natural necessity to maintain the status quo. In a book entitled *Intellectual Colonialism*, the author Abdur Rahman argues that science and technology are part of the social and political framework and that both have been used as instruments of domination.<sup>9</sup> The colonizers projected science and technology as a Western phenomenon. The sustained effort of the colonizers this way had a three-fold impact. According to Rahman they are;

- i) the Third World countries began to look to the West for ideas, knowledge and technology;
- ii) the Third World countries began to look one another from the standpoint of value system advocated by the Western scholars and
- iii) the Third World leaders began to look at their own Past in accordance with the philosophy and concepts of colonizers.<sup>10</sup>

This type of tendency has led to a paradoxical situation. "Given the vast potential of the developing world", observes Margaret Biswas, "it is an anomaly that 95 percent of all research and development is conducted in the industrial world."<sup>11</sup> La Mond Tullis writes that if a Third world leader says "we are socialist, nationalist, developmentalist, most Americans may not exactly know what he means".<sup>12</sup> Some attempts of the developing countries on new model making were branded by the West "Conspiracy syndrome."<sup>13</sup> It is ridiculous that Edward Shil's advice to intellectual of the Third World that the "latter should keep their hands off from creative research and concentrate only on adaptive, imitative exercises..."<sup>14</sup> James Coleman too opines in a discordant manner, "Anglo-American politics most closely approximate the model of a modern political system."<sup>15</sup>

Curiously enough, in the present era, colonialism and developmentalism had become so to say a single unified phenomenon that serves the ends of the First World at the cost of the Third World, in a complex, integrated and structural situation. In simple language, 'colonialism is developmentalized and developmentalism is colonialized.' The real motto of Western developmentalism is that the Third World must be poor so that the First World may be rich. The Western theories of development deliberately overlook the negative influence of colonialism in the non-western world which has been playing significant role in the tragic emergence and existence of underdevelopment. Gunder Frank's devastating and explicit attack on the Western theories of development is as follows:

On critical examination, these models of development and modernization are found to be empirically invalid when they confronted with reality: theoretically inadequate in terms of its own classical social scientific standards; and policy wise ineffective for pursuing its supposed intentions promoting the development of the underdeveloped countries... These models are incorrect primarily because, they do not correspond at all to the past and present reality of the Third World... any serious attempt to construct theory and policy has to be based on the examination of the experience of the underdeveloped countries themselves—that is, on the study of their history and of the world historical process which has made these countries underdeveloped.<sup>16</sup>

We are living in an era of colonial dissemination and indoctrination which entombs the truth and justice of development by contradictions and mystifications. According to Western theories, underdevelopment is the effect of underdeveloped structures and not vice versa. The structure therefore need to be modelled on the Western prototypes. In Marxist term, this has been described

as mere production of the metropolitan capitalist system at the periphery. While challenging the logic of the western developmentalism, Basil Davidson puts thought-provokingly: "If the now underdeveloped countries were really to follow the stages of growth of the now developed one, they would have to find still other peoples to exploit into underdevelopment as the now developed countries did before them."<sup>17</sup>

As part of its overall strategy, capitalism exports ideas and institutions to the developing countries, and its aim is significantly to keep the latter underdeveloped which has been the historical necessity of capitalism in the epoch of monopoly capitalism or imperialism.<sup>18</sup> The less developing countries, according to capitalist theories have no scope for development without undertaking massive capital intensive project, for which the developing countries are at present incurring heavy debts. What is actually needed in the developing countries is 'production by the masses rather than mass production.' The so called 'intermediate technology', 'self-help technology' or 'appropriate technology' is more suitable to the requirements of the Third World. That is why one author argues aptly that "...commercialization of science has to be replaced by humanization of science."<sup>19</sup>

Another inherent weakness of western developmentalism lies in its cynical attitude toward (eastern) tradition.<sup>20</sup> Tradition is characterized as particularism, ascriptive nature, less creativity and innovation, precedence of conventions, less emphasis on technology, greater conformism and less openness to change.<sup>21</sup> American culture is considered to be the ideal for the developing societies. Conversely, Pascallon holds: "Culture is a process of community identification, a particular way of living and producing, of being and living to be."<sup>22</sup> What distinguishes industrialized Japan from her Western counterparts is its culture. Challenging the western view that technology is the prime tool of social transformation, Skolimowski puts significantly: "Science is useful in dealing with problems of simplicity. But in the problems of complexity, culture is unsurpassed and irreplaceable."<sup>23</sup> True development can only take place when science and technology become part of culture or at least respect it.<sup>24</sup>

Rural people constitute more than 75 percent of the population in the Third World countries and in the words of Holnsteiner they are "the poor majority with little access to resources and power."<sup>25</sup> Justice to all, especially to the poor, is said to be the corner-stone of development. But, distributive justice is not built into the western development theories. The free market model development of the west has "reduced justice to a mechanical concept of maintaining the market equilibrium."<sup>26</sup> As a result, 'social welfare' is substituted for 'capitalist welfare' and the concept of 'welfare state' tends to take the form of 'ill-fare state.' No doubt, the alien models have provided the basis for external dominance and correspondingly for internal dependence and decay. Rajni Kothari's melancholy discovery in the Indian Context goes:

.. in our enthusiasm to shape ourselves in the image of a modern industrial society... we went for a model of industrialization, the logic of which was to replace men by machines, to produce for a limited class, to

exploit the lower strata of the society, to ignore agriculture, and to give rise to a consumer oriented society based on the Western model. It gave rise to a parasitic middle class, filled the coffers of an even more parasitic business class, and in course of time' corrupted the administrative and political structure of the country.<sup>27</sup>

Capitalism successfully creates a pro-western elite class in the Third World by education, training, scholarship etc., to uphold its interests and domination. Perroux puts systematically: "The west was on the whole, a not particularly scrupulous colonizer. It did not use its military and economic superiority to impact its science and technology to the colonized people and to give elites selected by them the means of gradually bringing about the form of modernization of their choosing."<sup>28</sup> It has been a common practice of the elite of the Third World to leave the door open to the invasion of the developmental mythology of the US ideologues. Consequently, developmental activities in the Third World are dominated by negative elements such as, excessive centralization, heavy industrial bias, a rarian stagnation and general lack of people's participation. Thus the mythical belief that there is no problem that cannot be solved, no obstacle that cannot be overcome through the marvels of science and technology of western intellect has inevitably created a miserable situation in the Third World.

The contextual realities in which the western systems became developed and the Third World countries are endeavouring to develop are quite different. Samuel Huntington speaks of America as being "historically a new society but an old state."<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Clifford Geertz speaks of "Asia and Africa are old societies but new states."<sup>30</sup> These differing historical evolutions are the basic cause for the failure of western models in the Eastern societies. It is argued that the very version of the world into strata of developed and developing countries has proved conceptually and empirically misleading.

Gunnar Myrdal, in his celebrated work, *Asian Drama*, extensively criticizes the psychic blindness of Western development models. In the words of Hans Singer "they are developed in the industrial countries, by the industrial countries, for the industrial countries and based on the concepts that are relevant to the industrial countries."<sup>31</sup> They are not only ethno-centric, reductionist and a historic but conservative, status quoist and reactionary too. They remain ecologically blind, ideologically biased, and insensitive to the issues. Moreover, the capitalist model has failed to solve some of the basic problems of the western society too. For instance, Marcuse argues that consumer economy and corporate capitalism create a second nature of man.<sup>32</sup> To Huntington, the experience of the industrial society are "simply unpleasant."<sup>33</sup>

To sum up, much of the development theory is a rationalization of the dominant interest of the industrial West. Capitalism in the epoch of imperialism does not only export capital but also ideology. And the task of this ideology are not merely to prepare the people of the Third World to believe in the 'rational' virtues of capitalist development, but to condition them both mentally and physically to serve capitalism. For this purpose, capitalism made an all

out attempt to condition the thinking of the Third World. Without this, capitalism could not dream of its survival. This mental reorientation is total. Its aim is primarily to keep the less developing countries persistently underdeveloped which has been the historical necessity of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism. An in-depth study of UNESCO reads:

Modernization isolated the fields in which it intervened and the people who belonged to them from the so-called traditional sector. Conversely, it attached them to the outside world through links of all kinds, not merely in the political and economic terms, but also in terms of training, values, attitudes, behaviour and consumption. While economic and political dependence was visible, cultural dependence was far less obvious and much more insidious and was to survive for considerably longer and today constitutes one of the principal factors which prevents the Third World from taking its destinies into its own hands.<sup>34</sup>

Nowadays, we witness a serious soul-searching attempt going on in most of the Third World countries, following the disappointed experiences with Western models. In the recent past, there has been abundance of literature challenging the relevance of Western experiences in the development of the Third World. The trend of the counter-thinking is a shift from 'blue-print approach' to 'learning-process approach' and from 'production-centred approach' to 'people-centred approach.'<sup>35</sup> Instead of economic growth, indigenous thinking emphasizes on greater equality, self-reliance and people participation.

The overall scenario - intellectual colonialism and pseudo developmentalism as well as the corresponding irony and agony of the Third World - ideological domination, psychological indoctrination, cultural assimilation, economic penetration and subsequent dependence of peripheral societies - can be epitomized certain postulates as under:

- i) The analysis of development requires an analysis of real interests and of the ideologies which sustain it. Development dilemmas can fruitfully be analysed, understood, and interpreted in the global framework itself with historical - structural perspective.
- ii) Colonialism is an abiding, global phenomenon. The informal colonialism has been effectively substituted for the formal colonialism - the Pax Americana edifice stands erect on the Pax Britanica matrix.
- iii) Development and underdevelopment are not fragmented entities; forces, structures, and dynamics, operating from outside, colluded with internal ones, establish and intensify underdevelopment at home and dependence abroad.
- iv) Ethnocentric view of development is neither possible nor desirable. Models cannot easily be transferred across different cultures and socio-political systems, and Western models lead to 'decay' instead of 'development' in the Third World.

- v) Development is less an economic and more a socio - psycho - cultural phenomenon; and as such, science and technology without indigenous and humanized base would aggravate the issues of development rather than solving them.
- vi) In the contextual realities of the Third World, genuine development could emerge only from below through effective diffusion of power and active participation of the people, coupled with the strategies of self-reliance and self - development.
- vii) In the post war neo - classical literature, 'colonialism is developmentalized and developmentalism is colonialized', and hence, the decolonization of social sciences is the urgent and utmost necessity to dismantle 'intellectual colonialism' and 'pseudo developmentalism'.

## Notes and References:

- \* I am grateful to Prof. N. Pant of BHU, India, for her path - breaking comments and criticisms as to the embryo of this analysis on an earlier, enlarged draft.
- 1. Huynh Cao Tri, Le Thanh Kohn, Roland Colin, Ceestem and Luo Yuan - Zeng, *Strategies for Endogenous Development* (New Delhi, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., UNESCO, 1986) p. 52.
- 2. Shumacher quoted by V. A. Panandiker, "Administration for Endogenous Development" *Administrative Change*, Vol. 13, No. 1 - 2, July 1985 - June 1986, p. 33.
- 3. While clarifying term 'colonialism' Twitchett remarks: "The problem of definition is made particularly difficult owing to the nebulous and emotive sense in which the term is frequently used. Indeed, 'colonialism', 'imperialism', 'nineteenth century imperialism' and 'neo - colonialism' are often used as interchangeable and derogative terms for describing any Western activity in the underdeveloped regions of the World. The problem of definition is made even more difficult in that neo - colonial relationships can originate from either custom or domination (whether political, economic or cultural) and can be endowed with veneer of legality in so far as they derive from either a formal treaty or from a general informal association" (Kenneth J. Twitchett, "Colonialism: An attempt at Understanding Imperial, Colonial and Neo - Colonial relationships", *Political Studies*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, 1965, p. 315). Another writer Perham says: "It (colonialism) is generally used.... in the context of an attack upon the West by most of the colonial and ex - colonial peoples (and) .... tends to put the coloured world on the one side and the white World,

- or at least the western part of it, on the others." (Margery Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning* London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1963, p. 1).
4. S. P. Varma, "Models of Development, Search for Alternatives", in Iqbal Narain (ed), *Development Politics and Social Theory*, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Etd., 1989) p. 32. Developmentalism emphasizes problems of transition from one type of political system to another, and how innovation occurs, its effects distribution, who benefits, how imperialism works, problem of instability etc. It belongs to empirical school rather than normative.
  5. Marl Marx and Frederich Engels: *The Communist Manifesto* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977) p. 43.
  6. Satish Arora, "Pre - emptied Future? Notes on Theories of Political Development.", in Rajni Kothari (ed), *State and Nation Building*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1976) p. 23.
  7. As Quoted by Brain Crozier, *Neo - Colonialism* (London: The Bodley Heed Ltd., 1964) p. 21.
  8. See Steeve Chan, "Cores and Peripheries: Interaction Patterns in Asia", in *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Oct. 1982, pp. 315 - 316. Despite of inherent dificiencies, as an analytical tool, dependency theory is hailed by several writers, since it provides certain profound insights into the understanding of the concept of development.
  9. Abdur Rahman, *Intellectual Colonialism*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1983) p. 143.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 50
  11. Biswas quoted by John W. Forje, "Conceptual and Policy Framework for Technological self-reliance in Afiica" in Meeki Meewa(ed.), *Contemporary Issues in African Administration and Politics* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Ltd., 1990) p. 147.
  12. La Mond Tullis, *Politics and Social Change in Third World Countries*, (New York. John Willey & Sons, 1973), p. 76.
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. Shils Quoted by S. M. Atlas, "Erring Modernization: The Dilemma of Developing Countries", in Yogesh Atal and Ralph Pieris (eds), *Asian Rethinking on Development*, (New Delhi: Abhinab Publication, 1976), p. 137.
  15. James S. Coleman "Conclusion: The Political Systems of the Developing Areas" in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman (eds). *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) p. 533.
  16. Andre Gunder Frank, "Sociology of development and underdevelopment of Sociology" (a reprinted Article) in Rajendra Pandey (ed.), *Modernization and Social Change*, (New Delhi: Criterion Publication, 1988) pp. 212 - 135.



17. Basil Davidson quoted by Andre Gunder Frank, *Op. cit.*, p. 242.
18. This aspect is widely emphasized in the Well - known works of imperialism, (e. g.), V. I, Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, N. D.); and J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A study*, 3rd ed., (London: Unwin Hymen Ltd., 1988)
19. Jayaprakash Narayan, *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, (Banaras: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakasan, 1959), p. 53.
20. Cf., "What Asia has to give her priceless stores of wisdom garnered from her experience of ages, we refuse to take, the much or little which we could give we spoil by the brutal manner of our giving. This is what imperialism has done, and is doing for Asia", J. A. Hobson, *Op. cit.*, p. 327.
21. Daniel Lerner, *The passing of Traditional Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1958), p. 401.
22. Pascallon quoted by Huynh Cao Triet. al., *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
23. Skolimowsky quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 13.
24. *Ibid.*, P. 14.
25. Holtzsteiner quoted by B. Abrahamson, *Bureaucracy and participation: The Logic of organization* London: Sage Publications, 1977, p. 201.
26. O. P. Gauba, *Dimensions of Social Justice* (New Delhi, National Publishing House, 1983), p. 26.
27. Rajni Kothari, *Democratic Politics and Social Change: Crisis and Opportunities*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1976) p. 58.
28. Perroux quoted by G. Krishna Kutty, *Colonialism in India: Roots of under-development*, (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1983), p. 143.
29. Huntigton quoted by La Mond Tullis, *Op. cit.*, p. 3.
30. Geertz quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 3,
31. Singer quoted by S. P. Varma, *Op. cit.*, p. 19.
32. See for some worth critical assessment, Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964):
33. Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay", in *World Politics*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, April 1965. p. 398. See his much more detailed treatment of this probl:m, *Political Order in changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).
34. Huynh Cao Tri et. al., *Op. cit.*, p. 35.
35. See Arvind Singhal, "Evolution of Development and Development Administration Theory" in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, Oct. - Dec. 1989, p. 847.