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Rethinking Colonization, Decolonization and Education

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In the current dispensation as we have been hearing about Rising India, Shining India, Make in India, Digital India, Increasable India and so many new terms. I think this is the right time to begin with a new slogan i.e. *Research in India and the Research of India*.

1. Understanding the Colonial Narrative

The process of colonization involves one nation or territory taking control of another nation or territory either through use of force or acquisition. Whenever any nation is colonized the colonials change the narrative of that place, otherwise the precolonial narrative of that place is quite different then what is perceived after colonization. Unfortunately what is read or what is perceived by the world about the colonized nations is what is written by the colonizers and over a period of time this perspective gets repeated and the world understands the narrative as real. Today when the world

through their writings has become the reality of these places for the world. It's important to give a thought to what the colonials described us to be. Just think is it possible for a nation known as a nation of snake charmers, today is a nation that is 6 th most economically sound nation in the world, where 66 percent of life span has increased, poverty is reduce to 21 percent mortality rate is down to 17 percent and child mortality is down to 41 percent. So where are we justified as a nation of snake charmers?

Here let me discuss the concept of *white man's burden*. It is something what the white's feel or perceive about a place. Without even knowing about the place or visiting that place they conclude that what they write is truth e.g. if a white man sees a lady in muddy dirty clothes carrying vegetable basket on her head they will conclude that all Indian rural women are suppressed, oppressed and live in pathetic conditions. Not knowing that lady is the owner of the farm and has gone to the farm to collect some vegetables for the evening dinner and working in farm made her clothes look muddy. But she is the owner of the house and the husband and son keeps their earning in her hands. In fact she is the decision maker for the family and is empowered in true sense of the word. But this fact hardly get a space in their writings. This is what we call white man's burden. We need to shed this and come out from such narratives and write our own real narrative.

Even today British think that their stay in India have made India grow and progress. After centuries of their rule the colonials claimed their regime to be a success colonialism, but the problem is they never took responsibility of any failure. Let's take an e.g. of the great famine of Bengal, when approx. 3 million people died. A statement was given to the press by then British officer which stated that "These deaths in India is not our fault or our responsibility but it's their own responsibility as Indians are *breeding like rats"*. It was shocking that this statement was not made by a layman but the statement was given by a legendry statesperson of that time Winston Churchill. This is what colonialism is. You take all the credit for success but no responsibility for your failures. In fact the British did what was best for their regime, colonial hypocrisy was to safeguard their vested interest and then think on the question of equality fraternity freedom for India.

2. Colonial Contribution to India

In fact it is Development and Education that are two important factors that determine the status of people in any society. Empowerment in any section of a society is a myth until they are conferred equality before law, they have greater access to knowledge and resources they have greater autonomy in decision making, they have greater ability to plan their lives or greater control over their circumstances. But this was not the case during the British rule, they hardly made any contribution on the economic and social development of India, instead after two centuries of their rule they brought down India's potential economic contribution to the world from 24 % to 4 %. (Shri Shashi Tharoor in the oxford union speech).

Today it appears as if only Europe begin thinking during enlightenment after dark ages, and there

origin. Though the British claimed that their government is rational government and they understood the veins of India but they simply romanced with Indian identifies, knowing very well that in India there are IDENTITIES, they never tried to clear the road blocks. If we see the role played by the British it's clear that they made India a base for their economic interests and political security, as India proved to be a key element in the *world power structure*, in terms of geography, logistics and military manpower. Therefore it would not be wrong to say that Colonialism in fact brought with it a whole new gamut of problems for the Indians in fact the years in between had not alleviated their position to any extent, if anything, it had made it worse.

3. Colonizing Theory

The Colonizing Theory model is based on political economic and cultural hegemony of the colonials on the colonized lands. Here let me bring forth the work of Franz Fanon a psychiatrist, who described the four phases through which classical colonialism worked. According to him educational curricula and content was a key tool in enabling and enforcing the power and control of colonial regimes. These four phases made it easy and proved to be useful in understanding the role of curriculum in enabling the assumptions of colonization theory. The first phase was one of forced entry into foreign lands and exploitation of the natural resources of the colonies. The second phase entailed the establishment of a colonial society that degraded indigenous culture, practices, and knowledge while elevating that of the colonizing nation. In order to cement the difference between the superior colonizer and inferior colonized relationship, The third phase had to portray the colonized peoples as savage, inhuman, and in need of being civilized via colonial impositions. (What happened in Africa). The first three phases resulted in a race-based system that was established during the fourth phase of colonization. Thus the Educational curricula and content was a key tool in enabling and enforcing the power and control of colonial regimes and it was in fact designed to privilege the colonizer and to ensure the subjugation of the colonized. Hence, for the colonials education became a powerful tool to propagate this superiority–inferiority complex. When we look into the contemporary colonization theory we find that it also include what is referred to as "internal colonialism". It is very unfortunate that in India colonization still continues in one form or the other even after 72 years of independence. The Internal colonialism mirrors the ideology of classical colonialism in its social inequities particularly based on racism and cultural domination and it thus expands colonial theory to be inclusive of internal domestic oppression

4. Decolonizing Theory

Frantz Fanon, remains a key thinker on decolonization theory also. Decolonizing efforts sought to redress the doctrine of White supremacy. In India contemporary 'decolonisation' theory dominates the thinking of the 'progressive intelligentsia'. One of the basic fundamental facets to achieve true decolonization, is, we must learn to decolonize our minds. This essentially means that we must stop thinking like our colonials and thereby stop trying to fit a round nail in a square hole. There is a need to develop curriculum materials that worked in the effort to decolonize the prevailing Eurocentric epistemology and to decenter the realities of indigenous knowledge within postcolonial societies.

5. Colonization and Education

It's a fact that as a byproduct of colonization the colonizing nation implements its own form of schooling within their colonies. The education system which developed by British in India was a very pale reflection of that in UK, though three universities were set up in 1857 in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, but they were merely examining bodies and did no teaching. In fact Higher education in India was carried out in affiliated colleges where the Drop-out ratios were always very high and the emphasis was on rote learning and examinations. Then came the Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Education that also promoted English education and brought a Western approach to Indian civilization. Otherwise the (language of masses was Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu etc. There was no official effort by the British to translate western literature into the vernacular, nor was there any standardization of Indian scripts. In fact British did very little to promote analytic capacity or independent thinking and produced a group of graduates with half-baked English knowledge, and sufficiently Westernized to be alienated from their own culture. We accept the fact that in education we got the formal structure from the colonials but at the same time they made it a commercial industry and they were successful to prove to be superior with the methodology and medium of instruction and unfortunately even after independence we are still reproducing their culture systems. Today we have no other tool to better our education system then spending more money to get quality education. So time has come that we decolonize education. So in the contemporary times it is important that on societal level, the act of raising awareness of how colonialism has impacted the lives of the colonized and granted unearned privileges to colonizers is a fundamental and first step in decolonizing education.

6. Research and colonization

Unfortunately the contemporary times Globalized world is ruled by western world, its dominance is present in the constructs of social sciences. (Even the modernization means west is the best). Fundamental grand theory is all European theory and there is no Asia or Africa in the scene. It remains a fact that what the western scholars write, becomes the hard core subject but there are no theories that we can own as our theory or Indian Theory. The Fundamental grand theory is all European theory and there is no Asia or Africa in the scene. We forget that in Indian history, Indian glory transpire colonialism, it was a parallel case then. We had our own knowledge base, our science, social sciences, and our methodologies. But today they have lost their sheen be it Nalanda or Takshila. Today in India we have many researches happening in all the fields but the format is western be it Chicago style or American Psychosocial style. We have no Indian quoting system. We have not made any other system parallel to APA style, no other mechanisms no other tools. Though, right from Radha Krishnan commission to the present (HECI) Higher Education Commission in India, there has been an emphasis on creativity and innovation in education but we are unable to come out of the shackles of colonization in research. This is as the innovative index of India is low. The Global Innovative Index ranks 126 countries based on 80 indicators ranging from intellectual property to creativity, research and development etc. India is behind many nations in innovative

We have almost 8000 universities in India but we do not have 8 people who work on theory, except for Bharat Ratna Shri Amrtiya Sen how many people from India have developed their own theories is a question to ponder on. There is a need that we replace colonial approaches with Asian discourses and it's time we develop our own theories, new methods, parallel identification and clear paradigm and stop depending on the western theories. Any work that is indigenous but has quality will definitely be recognized by the world, it's not English that is important as a language. Take e.g. of Karl Marx the famous sociologist who wrote in German language, his ideas were indigenous, he wrote in native language but his work got translated in all the different languages. The legendry Rabindra Nath Tagore's Gitanajali was not written in English but still it fetched him Nobel prize in literature. So its quality of work that will always get recognition language must not be a barrier. Thus, we have to rise from ashes and make a difference. How long can the colonialism keep expressing in different forms be it Direct colonialism, Neo colonialism, Imperialism, neo imperialism, People from land has to rise up and tread by developing Indian research paradigms,

Let me give an e.g. to prove it is possible for the young minds to come up with novel ideas and concepts. I know a young researcher who has developed his concepts like "fake respondents, fake research and fake rapport". He is a lead reference for his paper in established universities. These universities have kept his paper as first reference. In fact he is contesting the researches in conflict zones and reinvestigating who were the respondents who were the sample. His argument is why not challenge the research, when we can challenge the already established articles in the court of law.

7. Decolonizing Research Fundamentally why do we need to decolonize our research, first and foremost the objective behind decolonizing research is to disconnect from the colonial base of thinking or colonial narratives and to flourish and give a new sense of meaning and identity to the indigenous ways of thinking, indigenous ways of discovering, and indigenous ways of writing and indigenous ways of researching. The basic aim when we talk of decolonizing research methodologies is actually to offer new context out of the already existing contexts, Which is our context, talking about new methodologies is talking about new research methods, talking about new theoretical constructs, new validities, new subjects and new objects. Therefore, it is important to reflect on the modern theoretical knowledge and on how Colonial discourses are established discourses and then work towards our own paradigms. Need is to open up our minds to global dynamics of knowledge without rejecting the merits of western knowledge, culture, theories and epistemologies.

In this situation the question is that how do we RETHINK and REDO or build OTHER WAYS. It's a known fact that our traditional means of education convey a rich and vast array of Indigenous Knowledge, but how many of us are ready to go deep into the tradition and dig out original indigenous discourses. In fact Indigenous people do not require the approval of Western authorities to validate their own forms of education. There is no final word in research therefore we must keep

Unfortunately our perception is still English and there is lack of indignity this has caused stereotypes and these stereotypes are today established in the system itself. Indian land should have Indian theories, our data should be substantiated by our Indian theories, e.g. when we say "Understanding is deeper than knowledge" the local context gives you both (understanding and knowledge) whereas the colonial text give you the mere knowledge. It's not a one day game, I don't say we should all together give away western paradigms or research but I am trying to make a point how hegemony of Europeans subaltern replace Indian Asian, African discourses.

8. Last Word

Tipping point has perhaps come where we must go for the need of replacing social sciences with our own theories, with new approaches in conceptualization, new contextual knowledge or discourse development. If we need to bring change we have to recognize our subjectivity so we need to work with it. Hence, we must be able to shed preconceived notions, assumptions. Till the sense of being is not existing how is the change possible? The problem of the contemporary time research is that there are still papers that have almost 80 to 90 percent of similarity or are plagiarized. Indigenous research is a sort of renewal of our relationship with our community. When we are engaged in indigenous research then only we can encounter colonial narratives. The hallmark of research or the essence of research is to benefit the community with its findings, hence the research has to be collaborative, research should benefit the community and research should be community defined. So when the problem of research is selected from the community, when the field is known the context is known and is conducted by the local researcher who are aware of the context definitely it will benefit the community. There is a need to delve into methodological intricacies and as students we need to develop new paradigms of research that are compatible to our society and historical, political parlance. Here we must ask a question to ourselves. In the name of research are we actually doing survey or conducting research? The work of survey is generating data but research is developing theories, so why not young researchers come out with their own theories? I am very optimistic that decolonizing research or crushing colonials or rebutting colonialism, developing the parallel discourses, indigenous discourses is a work in progress. In this case the men at work for this indigenous project should be you me and all of us then only it will be realized and may come to fruition.

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