

DECOLONISED IN NAME, COLONISED IN MIND : CAN WE REALLY ESCAPE THE WEST FAÇADE?

The twentieth century had witnessed major changes in the global world order dominated by the two world wars acting as catalysts for breakdown and fall of some major powers hence facilitating decolonisation in the third world. Decolonisation began post the second world war in the southern continents of Asia, Africa and America which had been the victims of imperialism by the 'West'. It referred to breaking from colonial rule and reclaiming the right to self-governance and self-determination, hence paving the way for political independence and sovereignty. The Colonised countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America underwent various social and political movements accompanied by revolutions and civil wars in order to achieve what they called as 'Independence'. They vied for political independence and were able to achieve it as a result of both their efforts & external influences. Even though by the end of the 20th century, almost all the colonies had witnessed decolonisation, scholars still tend to raise questions about its relevance in present times and how it persists even today. The reason behind this is exploring the vast scope of Decolonisation as a process with wide lenses. While in the previous century, the Global South had retained its identity as independent countries on the world map, today they aim to stand out and rise up on the map, hence trying

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to overtake the 'West' in the process with the help of the 'West'. Till the previous century, decolonisation simply connoted breaking away from colonial power and gaining political sovereignty. However, now that most of the countries have achieved it, they're exploring other components of independence to place a mark of themselves on the map. Hence, Decolonisation in the twenty-first century attempts to 'delink' from the colonial matrix hence taking in consideration the economic and cultural aspects as well because coloniality persists beyond political control. It's rooted in Global Power Structures, economic dependencies and cultural influences across the world. Thus, the rising Global South attempts to make an influence on this multipolar world by filtering the ascendant of the Western Liberal World Order.

It was the colonisation by the Western world that led to creation of the artificial borders that exist as international borders today. In the 500 years of imperialism they not only imposed political control but also influenced the cultures and societies of the colonies, as a result of which their ideals and values are now embedded in our lifestyles and have become an indispensable part of our daily tea. As defined by Anibal Quijano, the 'coloniality of power' refers to the lasting social and epistemic hierarchies established by colonialism.

DE-WESTERNISATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Cultural syncretism is a welcomed output of globalisation and trade as it opens doors for new experiences and interactions and hence today, we can't claim a particular culture to belong to a specific region as they're diluted with different cultures and traditions. However what poses a problem is cultural hegemony and dwindling of native cultures in the process. As a result of spending centuries in their colonies, the Western companies not only influenced their social cultures but also inflicted changes in lifestyles like imposition of western education systems, the popularization of the English language, conversion to Christianity and liberal studies and many more. These changes were not ridden off after independence, instead they laid the foundations for further development. Today, when the Global South attempts to decolonise from within, it fails because the

the western culture is now rooted in our indigenous lifestyles. The prominence of English language as our first language above our mother tongue and no more a mere tool of prestige, the European education system that most of the countries follow, the Western pop culture dominating the entertainment sphere, as the post colonial thinker, Frantz Fanon calls it, are all a result of 'mental colonialism' which isn't hard but impossible to escape for they're rooted in the basic foundation of every step that we take today.

"THE GLOBAL SOUTH STUCK IN THE ECONOMIC & POLITICAL WEB OF THE WEST"

While we claim we're sovereign states taking our own economic decisions but even today, after almost a hundred years since decolonisation began, we unknowingly yet knowingly submit to the West when it comes to economic decisions. African nations, even today act as a supplier of raw materials and importer of finished goods from Europe. Even after the measures by Pressure Groups and organisations like NAM, ASEAN, BRICS, the first world still dominates Global Trade and has an upper hand in financial institutions like IMF & World Bank. Though certain Asian countries are living up to par with these liberal countries like Japan, China, South Korea, soon India as well, the mark left by the influential US and European Union is deep enough.

Keeping the economies aside and focusing on world economics, as we claim to move away from western influence, can we expel the Bretton Woods system holding our economies or the Washington Consensus (1989)? These western doings lay the foundation for most of the present economies along with the concept of liberalism in economics i.e. free trade, welfare state etc., the concepts indispensable for developing economies like ours.

Moving towards the political structures of the decolonised colonies, say India for example, had borrowed a bunch of provisions from other countries' constitutions that played well with its situation. The colonies had been governed and administered by the European powers for a long time according to their political systems. This led to adaptation of similar systems after gaining independence for smooth and easy functioning. What they called as 'self-rule' was merely 'self-decision making'. The ideas that formed the foundation of our political structure i.e. liberalism, democracy, constitutionalism, power etc were no different than the Western Liberal ideals. Hence the West had not only influenced our culture and economic structure but the political foundation as well.

CONCLUSION

Juggling between dependence and defiance, the Global South place a hypocrisy seeking independence from the West but operating in the systems built by the West.

It needs to acknowledge the reality that complete decolonization might be impossible but resistance could help redefine autonomy. The Identity of the Global South is hybrid in nature and shaped by both colonial legacies and indigenous roots.

"No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or Arab, or European are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience, are often misleading."

-Edward Said