

Imperialism, Nationalism, Marxism and Contemporary World

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Abstract: Capitalism and Marxism is the two opposite way of running the world order. Asian countries like China, Vietnam and North Korea has adopted Marxism, a European theory to be their governing system where as capitalism strives in European nations. Nationalism has found acceptance in Asian nation in post colonial times. Whether there is common ground between Marxism , nationalism and capitalism is what this study intends to focus. Ideologies such as violence and its role in statecraft have also been discussed.

Keywords: Marxism, Imperialism, Capitalism, Nationalism, Contemporary World Order, Gender.

Introduction

Contemporary world order is influenced by the various trends like neo-Imperialism, Globalization, Nationalism, Marxism etc. The focal point however as Marx said is to change it. The globalized world order has leaved a large section of people hungry. Though the GDP has increased but the per capita income has declined. Amidst this, does Marxism offers a viable alternative is also the question this study intends to focus. Modern political economy has been driven by various ideological currents regarding labor and proletariat and this study throws some light upon them.

Result and Discussion:

Imperialism needs no introduction as it has become one of the most pronounced word in last four or five hundred years of human history. In India communist such as M.N. Roy formulated it with proper conceptual framework. Later day communist like Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed developed imperialist theory to new grounds. Ground level activities of the communist against British imperialism contributed much to the joint opposition of the Indian masses against imperialism. One of the chief minister of the communist state, Jyoti Basu, said,

‘Imperialism revolves around the concept of colonies. The Indian communists have a proud record of dedication and sacrifices in the cause of national liberation, in defense of the interests of the working class, peasantry and other toiling millions. They were able to draw into their fold the overwhelming majority of revolutionaries and represented the best traditions of revolutionary movement in India’.¹

Marxism proposes a different world order; contrary to capitalist believe that resources will trickle down to the poor class from the rich class with growing generation of production. Capitalism gives importance in generation of production but Marxism emphasizes distribution of means of production as well. Marxism originated in Europe. Lenin, in the book, ‘three sources of Marxism’, theorized that ‘German philosophy’, ‘French socialism’, and ‘British political

economy', constituted Marxism ². But the matter of the fact that it succeeded in non-European countries as well.

M.N. Roy applied the labor theory of Marx into the Indian context. In the 21st century, capitalism has grasped the world market. Labor has become cheap, and without any political domination, imperialist powers have attained cheap labor. But the matter of the fact is that socialist policies are also adopted by the capitalist and vice versa. M.N Roy writes about labor and colonial policy, 'The tremendous strength which imperialistic capitalism derives from extensive colonial possessions rich in natural resources and cheap human labor must no longer be ignored. So long as India and other subject countries remain helpless victims of capitalist exploitation and the British capitalist is sure of his absolute mastery over millions and millions of human beasts of burden, he will be able to concede the demands of British trade unionists and delay the proletarian revolution which will overthrow him [...] Cease to fall victims to the imperialist cry that the masses of the East are backward races and must go through the hell fires of capitalistic exploitation from which you are struggling to escape ³. Marx has termed labor as 'self-conscious life activity,' What is clear is that he believes it is inconsequential to human life, and he consistently proves this point by focusing his attention on the importance of subject-object relations for the creative and productive life-activity of human beings, the only truly essential quality humans possess. For Marx, what makes us who we are is our ability to create ourselves through self-conscious life-activity (labor), a capacity that distinguishes the human species from all other animals ⁴.

Gender politics is the new catchword of 21st century politics. Every philosophy, whether theology or non-theology, cannot be said gender sensitive. Even, here, the question of culture as a whole comes. Whether Marxism or Capitalism is sensitive towards cultural aspirations of the people? "To translate Marxism from economic into cultural terms, the members of the Frankfurt School—Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Wilhelm Reich, Eric Fromm and Herbert Marcuse, to name the most important—had to contradict Marx on several points. They argued that culture was not just part of what Marx had called society's 'superstructure,' but an independent and very important variable.. working class would not lead a Marxist revolution, because it was becoming part of the middle class, the hated bourgeoisie" ⁵. So culture in Marxist perspective needs some serious reconsideration.

Intellectuals have kept a desire that social institutions can be shaped into a design and with that urge many literary persons have been attracted towards Marxism. 'Lenin in fact described Tolstoy a highly placed member of the aristocracy, as the "mirror of the Russian revolution" because of his deep understanding and realistic portrayal of the peasantry ⁶. Noted Marxist in Assam, Hiren Gohain has called Sankardeva as a progressive reformer. Further, 'Marx's cultural theory gave rise to a large number of literary writers, cultural theorists and critics including Antonio Gramsci, George Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, T. W. Adorno, Ernst Bloch and Raymond Williams and influenced even Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical thinking' ⁷.

Tribal culture has influenced the women's freedom in various part of the world, North-East India is also comes under its ambit. But treatment of tribal culture demands new interpretation which, neither Marxism nor Capitalism, hitherto, has, provided. 'Tribal mode of production has been historically different from Marxism and communism, historically the region has been a homeland to large tribal populations migrated from different part of Asia. As a result, the

Imperialism, Nationalism, Marxism and Contemporary World

legacy of tribal economy and cultural practices in this region has laid impact on the unique social position of the women of Assam'⁸.

The role of violence has been differently viewed by the various ideologues. Nationalist in India advocated violence against British imperialism. Slavic people fought against Tsar Kingdom in Russia, British justified their violence in colonies for trade, and Portuguese did so to justify spread of Christianity. 'Lenin, the chief architect of communist politics in the twentieth century, elevated the role of political volition in constructing revolutionary subjectivity, advocating the immediate seizure of state power in Russia, rather than withholding political action until society reached an 'ideal' state of socioeconomic development, a strategy supported by the Mensheviks'⁹. So violence has remained part of the historical legacy cutting across national boundaries.

Ideologies have their impact on state craft also. Plato said that philosophers are the best rulers. Joseph Stalin, a philosopher trained in Marxist philosophy, opposed capitalist policy of generation of wealth. Similarly Abraham Linton opposed socialism by saying that we cannot make weaker the stronger by weakening the strong. 'Jawaharlal Nehru said about socialist soviet Russia,' The second wonder that the Soviet performed was to transform great parts of this area out of all recognition by prodigious schemes of planning. There is no instance in recorded history of such rapid advance of a people... The most notable advances have been in education and in industry. By vast Five- Year Plan the industrialization of Russia has been pushed on at a feverish pace and enormous factories have been setup'¹⁰. However a planned economy cannot be a socialist economy, fallacy of Soviet model has already proven that.

Practical implication of ideologies has been a different story. Capitalism has pushed for a one world agenda through financial hegemony. It has advocated merger of small races into large races. On the other hand, 'The Marxism of the Indian Left has remained a kind of modernization theory. By default, even if they supported the cause of workers and peasants, the idiom they articulated these issues in, by default, made them part of a cultural elite. Cultural elitism combined with economic radicalism has today led to new kinds of binaries between Left-Brahmin and Right-Bahujan'¹¹. So elitism within the subaltern culture needs to be removed for a better society.

Conclusion

This study is of the opinion that there is much common ground to be shared by both capitalism and Marxism. Left wing parties across the world suffer from cultural elitism and Capitalism suffers from various *xenophobia*. Both Capitalist and Marxist countries strives for colony and that is a matter of fact. A nationalist country like India, where colonial legacy still dominates, is in brink of being ultra nationalist.

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