

SOCH: The Mental Colonization Of India

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India is a land of immense plurality, rich cultural heritage, and multiple forms of colonization since centuries. Though the physical colonization by the British ended in 1947, the mental colonization persists through several socio-economic and cultural mechanisms. This article discusses the concept of mental colonization in India, termed as **"SOCH" (Spirit of Colonial Hangover)**, its historical roots, contemporary manifestations, and its struggle to seek and acquire indigenous identities and histories.

India

mental colonization

colonization

indian colonization

macaulay

minutes on education

indian culture

indian

cultural studies

1. Introduction

The term "mental colonization" refers to the lingering impacts of colonial rule on the attitude and cultural identity of the colonized people. In India, despite seventy-four years of independence, the British colonial influence is still visible in various walks of life. This phenomenon, described as "SOCH" (Spirit of Colonial Hangover), describes the embedded influence of colonialism on the Indian psyche. This^{[1][2][3]} intends to throw some light on how that mental colonization operates in contemporary India and what can be done to decolonize the Indian mind.



2. Historical Context

2.1. Colonial Rule and Its Psychological Impact

The British colonization of India was not just a political and economic venture but also a cultural imposition with the objective of reshaping Indian society. Education policies, legal systems, and cultural narratives were all put in place with the aim of creating a class of Indians who were, as Thomas Macaulay famously said about education in his "Minute on Indian Education" (1835), to be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect".

2.2. The Education System

One of the most important tools of this mental colonization was the education system. The imposition of English as the medium of instruction and the preference for Western literature and sciences over native knowledge systems made people feel lesser in comparison to Indian culture and languages. The impact has been that people try to attach great importance to English-medium education and Western Qualifications. They are seen as status symbols for intellectual and social standing.

2.3. Contemporary Manifestations of SOCH of Language and Communication

The preference that people give for English in professional and social set-ups is an explicit indicator of SOCH. English is considered to be sophisticated and modern, whereas native languages are pushed to informal or domestic spaces. The gradation of languages into a kind of hierarchy has diluted the rich literary and cultural heritages of Indian languages.

2.4. Cultural Identity and Representation

Indian culture is often represented in media and academia from a Western perspective and based on Western standards. Indian art, music, and literature are often measured against Western standards. This has led to an exceedingly distorted interpretation or assessment of the indigenous tradition. There has been a cultural inferiority complex that has evolved where Western culture is superior.

2.5. Socio-Economic Structures

The bureaucratic and legal systems that were introduced in India by the British have found continuance in modern India. Today's bureaucratic practices and legal systems are also reflective of the British rule and to some extent, even the corporate structures follow suit. This has been the reason for the continuation of a system that is not entirely responsive to the unique socio-cultural traditions of India.

2.6. The Perils of SOCH

This kind of mind colonization is the reason that 99% of people know about Newton, Einstein, and Galileo. However, less than 1% of the Indian population know about Bhaskaracharya and Brahmagupta, the two mathematicians with major contributions. This SOCH is the reason that people treat English as superior and that other regional languages are meant to be entertained in the course of human life. If a person says he doesn't know English, then for most Indians, he becomes an illiterate person, even if he is educated in other languages, such as Hindi.

For example, a person might be very good in scientific or mathematical studies, but if he has done it in Hindi, he is considered less educated than those who have the same proficiency in English. On the other hand, a person not knowing Hindi numbers but knowing English numbers is not stigmatized in such a manner. This hypocrisy reflects the inbuilt prejudice that makes an English speaker educated.

Because of this SOCH, many Indians do not know about Baudhayana, who worked on the Pythagorean theorem three centuries before Pythagoras. He authored the book Baudhayana Sulba-sutra, which is one of the oldest texts on higher mathematics. The same SOCH also results in oblivion regarding the history and culture of India. India tends to glorify the Western achievements while downplaying the indigenous achievements.

Due to SOCH, regional or Sanskrit songs are termed as "OLD" songs while English songs are "MODERN" and "COOL" songs. A typical example can be that normal traditional dances like Bharatnatyam and Odissi are stereotyped as girls' dances, and the boys, if engaged in them, are ridiculed.

SOCH also results in being stuck in false historical facts. Most people believe that Vasco da Gama discovered India and that it had no history, established no universities such as those in Nalanda and Takshashila, even before Oxford and other Western universities had their feet on Earth. These universities are seldom mentioned in school books, and for most, it remains unknown if it is not for social media and individual research.

The work of Indian mathematicians like Radhanath Sikdar, who calculated the height of Mount Everest in 1852 by using trigonometric functions, is largely unheard of in large sections. Likewise, the original Sanskrit Vedic texts are seldom referred to. Their translations' accuracy is, therefore, doubtful and cannot be verified without Sanskrit understanding.

The inputs of Indian pioneers like Maharishi Sushruta, the inventor of surgery between 800-700 BC are treated as mythology. While he is acknowledged in institutions like the Royal Australian College of Surgeons his original inputs are woefully undermined in his own country. The same can be said of Shivkar Bapuji Talpade who purportedly performed the first recorded flight in 1895 using the knowledge in old scriptures. His contribution remains in the shadows of the more celebrated Wright Brothers.

| 3. Path to Decolonization

3.1. Revival of indigenous knowledge systems

Revival and integration of indigenous knowledge systems in mainstream education and cultural practices is a fundamental step towards mental decolonization. This also includes reviving regional languages, traditional sciences, and local histories jammed out by colonization.

3.2. Cultural Re-Evaluation

Encouraging an indigenous critical re-evaluation of Indian culture is a step towards reinstating pride in local culture. This also includes promoting local arts, crafts, and literature in a way that they are equally appreciated and respected in comparison with their Western counterparts.

3.3. Policy Reforms

Reform in socio-economic policy to reflect indigenous values and need is a step forward to break colonial ladder. This also includes re-visiting legal and administrative orders back from precolonial days to make them more suited to contemporary Indian reality.

| 4. Conclusion

Mental colonization of India, in the form of SOCH, thus still guides the identity and development of the nation. Recognizing and addressing this colonial hangover is essential if it aims to be a truly self-sufficient and sovereign state. Through the reclamation of indigenous knowledge, re-evaluation of cultural identities and reforms in policy,

India has the potential to be free from the shackles of colonial rule and pave the path for its future that is truly Indian.

References

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