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## Colonialization Impacts on the Inhabitants and Voices of Liberal Writers



**Abstract** *Colonialism is a policy in which a strong nation enters a weak territory and starts exploiting the inhabitants of that land for their economic interests. The colonizers dominate the colonized through violence to bring them into their subjection. Some liberal writers have written about colonialism and its impacts on the colonized slaves. Chinua Achebe has presented the realistic picture of Africa when it was colonized by the Britishers. His novel, "Things Fall Apart" presents the pre-colonial and colonial states of Africa that make it easy to understand how colonialization impacted the culture and lives of the natives. The paper justifies Franz Fanons' point of view that the colonial world divides humans into the colonist and the colonized and this difference is created by colonists to assert their superiority*

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### Introduction

Colonialism is the policy of a country extending or retaining its authority over other people or territories, with the aim of economic dominance. In the process of colonization, colonizers impose their religion, economic system, and cultural practices on indigenous people (Young, 1994). The foreign invaders rule the territory in pursuit of their interests, seeking benefit from the colonized regions' people and resources. The colonialism commenced about 1500, subsequent the European detections of a sea-route about Africa's Southern Coast (1488) and America (1492). According to Abbott (2016), by realizing, subjugation, and defrayal, these states lengthened and occupied through the biosphere, scattering European organizations, and nations. Currently, the world comprises of 194 countries and more than 90% of them were colonized.

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Most nations in the world celebrate their independence day with great zeal and enthusiasm because independence is a great blessing. National identity is the source of national pride for every individual that is why it is natural that everyone wants to stay free. Most nations have their history in which different people have influenced their territories and affected their culture and traditions. Each nation has suffered the insolence and injustice at the hand of some strong a nation who dominated the weak subjects for their interests like geographical expansion, economic exploitation, etc. (Ziltener et. Al, 2016). These weak nations revolted against the injustice and dominance of their cruel masters and proceeded to get rid of slavery to enjoy the status of independent nations. Though most of these nations succeeded in achieving independence as their human right, they could not resist the elements of the culture of colonized people. Indeed, after getting independence, when new states continued to lead their lives, they could not get rid of all the impressions of colonized powers. Rather, impacts of the colonization remained forever and were reflected in the mindsets and practices of the residents of nations forever. If we go through world history, we will come to know how colonization has affected societies especially those societies that were colonized by European nations. Europe has a rich history of colonization as it was the first continent that realized the importance of exploiting weak nations for natural resources and economic interests. European countries colonized various parts of the world and left their influence on those lands. Acemoglu et. Al. (2020) argue that they extracted natural resources of the invaded lands to boost their economy at the extent of aboriginal people, they made natives their slaves and did brutality.

Campbell et al. (2010) further write that colonists consciously gave damages to the colonizers and left no chance for their economic and cultural growth. He expanded his arguments on the direct hostility of colonialism by stating that regardless of the specific colonizer, the impacts of the colonialism were same i.e. disease; obliteration of native social, political, and economic configuration; subjugation; mistreatment; land displacement; and land deprivation. It was useless to think that after the departure of colonizers the brutal national and international effects of colonialism will end soon. When nations got independence it was difficult for them to knit the remaining of their cultural and economic resources back with the limited string left by the colonizers.

During the period of domination, the colonists renewed the whole infrastructure i.e. roads, rail lines, and system for communication but the objective behind was to extract the resources available in the captured areas and left limited resources for the colonizers' future generations (Acemoglu et. Al., 2005). The colonists gave education to the colonizers to provide them just clerical jobs so to use them for communication with the natives (Campbell et al, 2010). Further, he says that in addition to the physical damages the colonists also left long-lasting effects on the political system of colonized areas, they follow the policy of dividing the natives by raising conflict among them. As per Putnam (1994), they provided them lower-level jobs and did not let them understand the system of government, therefore after the departure of colonizers the independent nations took years to stabilize the system of government but the seed of conflict which was sown to divide the people is still existing and is not letting the nation to unite at one-point agenda and after years that state was unfortunate of decolonized nations is still existing. Even now they (colonists) fix a reasonable amount in their annual budgets under the head of help for the poor countries of the third world when they send those funds and call it to help at the same time they also bound them (fund receivers) to follow their instructions and if the receiver nation deviates from the guidelines provided by them,

the first threat and then impose restrictions on them and the overall purpose is to keep their supremacy and not letting other nation to take independent decisions. This type of influence or interference is now called Neo-Colonialism. Jeff (2010) writes that interference of powerful states in the internal matters of weaker states is a Neo-Colonialism or another way to colonize the weak nations with the purpose to use their resources. The example of the USA is enough to prove it as they enter and get control of any country when they need it. According to this concept of Neo-Colonialism, the effects of colonization are still existing in the world but its form has changed and policy of free-trade agreement has strengthened this concept because through these agreement nations have the right to invest in the territory above the right of the citizenry. But the local public face transformed scarcity and exclusion to make way for international wealth's subjugation. In other words, we can say poor or weak nations are still forced to follow in disguise as international policy or when they get funds they are asked to do as directed.

Colonization has deep-rooted impacts on the nations that remain colonized by strong powers and even after weak nations get rid of their cruel rulers they remain affected because of the political approach they set for the future of the victimized people (Abbot 2016). The way the strong nations treat the weak a nation not only impacts their present but also their past and future. It is the cruelest practice of exploiting humans for satisfying the voracious urges of technologically powerful rulers to become more and more influential internationally. Desire to rule the weak and exercise power on indigenous masses make colonists go beyond all limits of brutality. Frantz (1963) writes in this connection "Colonialism is not contented simply withholding a public in its hold and draining the local's intellect of all procedure and content. By a kind of depraved judgment, it cracks to the past of the public, and twists mutilate and abolish it."

In this regard, the pre-colonial and post-colonial conditions of several nations of the world reflect that indeed, colonization has impacted nations negatively but, it has also contributed to further the advancement and development of native lands. Different backward nations of the world began to realize the worth of their natural resources and started to learn to convert raw material available to them into valuable products. Then, they started importing those valuables and consolidate their position internationally. Congo was invaded by the Belgians who used extensive force against the former to get their economic interest. But the present state of Congo in international trade is the fruit of their long years of sufferings at the hand of their despotic and cruel masters. The colonizers made Congolese work exceptionally hard to meet the target of production of rubber they had set. Indeed, the poor oppressed subjects couldn't yield as much rubber as it was wanted and demanded by their masters. They had different challenges like the land was not good for plantation and because of natural disasters like the destruction of crops and famine they would suffer badly. Despite all these issues and challenges, they were compelled to work hard as much as they could. The cruel masters made them work like beasts and on failure to meet their desired targets, they would punish them. They were so cruel that they would never hesitate to kill them like worthless creatures on the earth (Acemoglu, 2005).

After a long period of trials and tribulations, and at the cost of countless lives, in 1959 Congo was declared as an independent state. Though, the state had become independent, because of colonial impacts and the politics of the previous colonizers the state remained weak for long. They were unable to do self-governance and there were discriminations that the colonizers had created, as it was mentioned by Putnam (1994)

that the people of Belgium had created strong discriminations among the people of Congo. These were the internal conflicts that they had deliberately created in the land they had been ruled so that in the future they could use the same people and the same land for their selfish motives. They had put certain restrictions on Africans like they were not allowed to contest for any administrative position in Congo, therefore they were not inclined to work for the stability of Congo and continued to live as a separate ethnic group. This affected the stability and peace situation in Congo. Because of political disturbance that was of course, because of the previous masters, Cuba was colonized, once again, by Spain and the USA.

Therefore, colonialism imposes long-lasting impacts on nations and this is not wrong to say that once a nation is colonized it cannot regain its original state and glory again. Like different countries of the world, Africa also has a colonial history that had affected this land badly at the hand of invaders. The Britishers invaded the country and transformed the territory into a different land that was indeed a matter of disappointment for the traditions loving folks of Africa. They replaced the rich traditional culture of Africa by their own mechanized and technological culture and forced the natives to accept their newly introduced culture. Moreover, they also rejected their religious beliefs without respecting their feelings. All in all, they continued to impose everything of their choice on them. They rejected their traditions, cultural values, religion, and even language. For them, everything that was practiced in Africa was vague and Africans were primitive people without any sense of civilization. Though Africans were not willing to quit their traditions, culture, language, and religion that they had been practicing for long and they were proud of their cultural values, they were bound to obey the colonizers. They never tried to understand the values of the beliefs they held and condemned everything without bothering them to know and communicating with the natives. The poor African were helpless because the Britishers have frightened them that if they dared to go against their will, they would inflict severe punishments on them. They had already killed several native Africans who had raised their voices against their will. The cruel invaders started treating weak people badly (Jeff, 2010). They were exploiting them to work for their economic interest at low or no wages. Moreover, the slave trade had become usual practice so that maximum laborers could be engaged to work for them and they could become economically more powerful. They were exploiting the natives and were using their natural resources for their interest.

During that time of colonization and afterward, the number of writers wrote against colonization and its long-lasting effects on the colonized parts of the world. Franz Fanon was one of the distinguished and revolutionary writers of the twentieth century who wrote extensively on colonialism, decolonization, and the impacts of colonization on the colonized. His book, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) is a remarkable contribution in the field of Postcolonial Studies. Frantz F. (1961) asserts that it is only through means of violence colonized societies can have a revolution and achieve absolute change:

- In chapter-one, Fanon expresses, that the colonial world is one which has divided humans into the colonist and the colonized and this difference is created by colonists to assert their superiority;
- In chapter-two, he approaches more thematically, about national culture, culture under colonialism and fights for nationalism;
- Moreover, he describes the psychological disorder colonialism produces in both the colonist and the colonized.

## **Objectives**

The general objective of the study was to verify the approaches of colonists to dominate colonized while the specific objectives were to:

- explore the theories related to colonialism devised by scholars
- verify the points mentioned in the theory by quoting events detailed by the authors in their literary masterpieces.

## **Research Questions**

Following were the research questions which provided guidelines in completing the research endeavor:

- What were the approaches used by colonists to dominate colonized?
- What were the effects of those approaches on the native culture, psychological state, and ultimately the economy of the colonized?
- Have critics or scholars devised theories about colonists' approaches and their effects on colonized?
- Is there any literary work available for verification of those theories?

## **Research Methodology**

Keeping in view the requirement of the study content analysis a qualitative approach was adopted. It is a research tool focused on the actual content and internal features of media. It is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence objectively. The universe of the study was the theoretical books and literary masterpieces written by critics, scholars, and authors in the postcolonial era. For the present research study colonialism effects mentioned by Franz Fanons in his book 'The Wretched of the Earth' were considered the nucleus and the mentioned effects by him were approved by using the events quoted by Chinua Achebe in his novel 'Things Fall Apart'.

## **Discussion**

"Things Fall Apart" is one of the best pieces of literature written by Chinua Achebe (1958), a Nigerian writer. In this novel, the author portrays the striking period in African history when the nation was colonized by the British masters who started ruling the natives by imposing their ideologies on them. The author depicts the complexity and integrity of pre-colonial Igbo life, and the disorder resulting from British rule fantastically and realistically.

Chinua Achebe mentioned the traditional practices and norms of his country and tries to approve how these were affected because of the colonists. "Okonkwo sits with Obierika while Obierika bargains his daughter's bride-price with the family of her suitor. Afterward, Obierika and his future son-in-law's relatives talk about the different customs in other villages" (Chapter-eight) This indicates that African culture was male-dominated where females were ruled by men. Parents and elder members of the clan used to fix marriages of their children like business matters. The relatives of the bride and those of the bride-groom would meet to bargain for the price of the bride. "Uzowulu one of the characters, says that his brothers-in-law take away their sister after beating him and refuse to pay the money back which he paid to them and purchased his wife" (Chapter-ten) This statement reveals that after purchasing their women, the husbands

were treating them as their purchased property. They beat them and suppress them to prove they are superior to them. In case, the woman would go back to her parents, the bride-groom would expect his in-laws to pay him back the bride-price like in case of Uzowulu, but his in-laws beat him and took his wife, moreover they refused to return the money. These events indicate the simplicity of Nigerians, the effects of the traditions on their routine lives and the implementation of 'might is right'.

When the colonists came to African tribes, they declared all their traditions irrational and inferior and missionaries asked for a piece of land for construction to spread the teaching of Christianity, the colonized played a tricky game by giving that part of that of forest which they believe is under control of evil spirits, so to get rid of them. "But the inhabitants were very sure that the evil spirits of the forest will kill the missionaries soon (Chapter-seventeen)". It was the result of humans' superstitious nature; this was not the nature of people of the past but also we can see in this modern era of technology. When colonists got control over Nigeria, they called Christian missionaries for the preaching of Christianity, but local people were reluctant to welcome this new faith because they felt it would change their national culture or their beliefs. But, the missionaries have succeeded in converting enough people especially the outcast of the clan who were neglected like the woman whose four sets of twins had been thrown to the evil forest. As when the missionaries asked for a place where the church could be built for proper preaching of religion, the elder members of the clan recommended: "evil forest" which, according to them, was under the control of evil spirits. They were quite sure that the Britishers would not be able to construct a church on the recommended area and they would get rid of them and their new religion soon. The writer has quoted another incident in his book, "They were having the belief that they will die if they cut their hair or violate any custom of their forefathers" (Chapter-eighteen). The people of the writer's area were having a tradition of keeping long hair, they believed that if they cut their hair they will die. But missionaries told me that this belief had no reality and urged them to cut their hair. This was also signed off their national identity which was being under threat because of the colonists. "The colonists started controlling colonized through, church, judicial system and laws developed by them" (Chapter-twenty).

As Fanon has expressed in his book that the colonist was using police and army to control and assert their superiority over the local black people and an incident quoted by Achbue reflects the same circumstances. "People of Umuofia were worried and unhappy because of the increasing influence of the colonists" (Chapter-twenty-one). Means people felt that although the colonists were in minority they were influencing them which was making them unhappy, this was natural that when invaders get control of any area they are disliked by the local people, as not only they try to control them but also try to grasp their resources resulting in making the local nation poor. Achebe also quotes the positive or sympathetic nature of the missionary as, "One of the missionaries, Mr. Brown requested the local people to get an education and if their children will remain uneducated then educated people of other nations or regions will control them and their resources" (Chapter-twenty-one). Indeed, the colonists had dominated the people of Umofia and they had started criticizing their traditional values and cultural beliefs, they were working for educating the children of the natives. They had opened schools but the locals were not willing to send their children to schools thinking the white men would spoil their children. The white men, then, convinced them how education would help them and showed them the bright side of the picture that was

different from their imagined ideas about education i.e. if they will not learn to read and write then people from other areas will come to work here and resulting in getting control over them. The Nigerians were having several good traditions, “Okonkwo beats Ojiugo his youngest wife for ignoring the rules of the sacred week” (Chapter-four). The colonized can be called backward, illiterate or superstitious, but at the same time, they were also having sensible or good traditions as they were celebrating peace-week in which they were supposed not to harm anyone but during that week of peace, Okonkwo went under the control of his cruel nature he beat his wife because of a very minor mistake and Achebe has used ‘shamefully breaking’. Such incidents reveal that like all societies good and bad-natured people were living there as living in other societies of the world. Therefore, colonists cannot take advantage of this weakness to show their superiority over the colonized. Another incident quoted by Achebe describing the nature of colonized people, “Okonkwo was against the ‘*New Yam*’ a feast for ‘*Ani*’ the goddess of earth before harvesting the crops” (Chapter-five). The colonized people believe that there is some supernatural power in the universe which is having control and providing them eatables to survive in this world and they need to be thankful for that power. They named that supernatural power ‘*goddess of the earth*’ who is responsible for growing eatables for them. This was somehow the same belief as of the colonists. But at the same time as other societies, Okonkwo was a rebellious natured person who acted against this belief of people. Nigerian society was a male dominant society, where women were considered inferior as other parts of the world, an incident is quoted by Achebe in chapter-seven, “Okonkwo was making his son Nwoye to remember masculine stories and to forget the stories shared by his wife” (Chapter-seven). Okonkwo cannot be blamed the only one or only the nature of colonized’s that they love of listening violent masculine stories, in which females are disgraced but this was happening in past and still happening in this modern world, and if this was not happening in the society of colonists then it cannot make them superior. The societies were and societies are, maybe will remain male dominant but if not then it cannot give an edge of superiority to one society.

A cruel person will also have a kind heart and sympathetic nature, which sometimes makes him help others when someone in problem, as feelings of Okonkwo are expressed by Achebe, “The cries of infants left in the Evil Forest broke him internally” (Chapter-seven). The Nigerian colonized people were not only cruel by nature but were also sympathetic, as the incident quoted disclosed that Okonkwo was overcome by sympathetic human nature when he killed someone just to save his friend but at the same time Achebe says that he was also not happy when newborn twins were left in the Evil Forest to die because this was the belief of Nigerians that birth of twins could result in doomsdays for them but Okonkwo dislike this evil custom of his tribe. It means that colonists were not only sympathetic but also colonized. The colonizers always reject the culture, traditions, and religion in a colonized territory and introduce their own culture and religion. They don't care about the feelings and emotions of the natives and reject everything without knowing the reason. This selfish attitude on the colonizers' part impacts the psychological states of both. Chinua Achebe highlights how colonization had made people socially and psychologically disintegrated. This is obvious from the statement written in the novel; “He (White man ) has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart”(Chapter-twenty) When the Britishers came to Umofia, they started saying that the culture of the people there was bad, people were not civilized, their religion was bad, etc. The rejection at every level lowered their self-esteem and made them feel psychologically inferior. The colonized rule the weak people

by force and they don't respect the values of the natives' culture. They consider themselves superior and the most civilized while they always look down upon the natives as "*the wretched on the earth.*" They tried to prove the natives' culture the obsolete one by the use of force and never let them go against the values they set for them. Chinua Achebe reveals the psychological state of the colonized people and this is obvious from the statement written in the novel; The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay"(Chapter-twenty). White men were unable to understand the local language of Igbo; they were not willing to understand the reason behind the beliefs of that locals but they had declared that they were wrong. Whenever anyone would try to communicate, they would punish him to hush up. This reveals they were irrational and insane who were suppressing the clan out of their fault that is superiority complex.

## **Conclusion**

Critical analysis of Chinua Achebe's '*Things Fall Apart*' justifies the ideas of Franz Fanon. The colonial world divided humans into the colonist and the colonized and this difference was created by colonists to assert their superiority, damaged the culture and national identity of colonized. Moreover, colonialism created psychological disorders in both may be superiority or inferiority and ultimately making them poor by grabbing the resources of colonized territory and making the colonized economically weak.

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