

SUBJECT: POLITICAL SCIENCE III

COURSE: BA LLB SEMESTER III

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MODULE: MODULE VIII, IMPERIALISM, NEO-COLONIALISM AND THIRD WORLD

Structure:

- Understanding third world and its impact on International Relations

THIRD WORLD

There has been a debate on the question of the nature of the State in the Third World. Sometimes referred to as the post-colonial societies in political theory and comparative politics. It is important to understand the nature of state in the Third World as it enables us to locate the role of the Third World in international relations.

The term 'Third World' refers to a group of countries with certain common features. According to some writers the developed capitalist countries constitute the first world. The socialist countries are called the second world. The underdeveloped countries in Africa, Asia and Latin American that were subjected to colonial domination are called the third world. Some writers categorise the superpowers as the first world. The other developed countries like UK, Germany, Australia and Canada are clubbed together as the second world. The third world consists of underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Both definitions have a few things in common. In both classifications the attributes of the third world are one and the same. The third world is defined in both the classifications in relation to the developed countries. The Third World Countries are economically poor and they have a colonial past.

In the course of identifying the common features of the Third World one should not ignore variations among them. Some third world countries like the Arab countries are very rich while the others like Bangladesh are very poor. There are countries with democratic institutions. On the other hand some third world countries are ruled by military regimes. There are also differences among the third world countries in terms of social formations ranging from tribal societies to capitalist societies.

In spite of all these differences, the third world is not a meaningless category because it helps us in grouping together countries that came into being by fighting against the colonial domination. They all encounter similar problems because of their background. Hence, it is useful to study the third world keeping in mind both similarities and dissimilarities without

exaggerating one to eliminate the other. There are certain general characteristics that the state in the Third World has acquired which may be attributed largely to the fact that they have been colonised and that colonialism has introduced certain fundamental changes in their societies. There are different theoretical frameworks in which the state can be understood.

The Third World state/states are to a large extent colonial creations in the sense that their boundaries, the nature of their regimes have been deeply influenced by colonial policies. The nature of the Third World state is analysed in liberal democratic, Marxist and new Marxist frameworks. The Third World economies are integrated into the World economy, which is guided by the principles of free market, and represent the interests of the dominant sections of the society. While they are dependent on the former colonial power, they also exercise a certain independence and mediate between the state and the metropolis.

The Third World emerged in the post World War II era in the context of international relations and conditions when the world was divided into two opposite ideological blocs. During those days the process of decolonisation was at its zenith as a result of which many Asian and African countries got independence and they joined international community as sovereign entities. These newly independent countries had their own political, social and economic problems such as poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, overpopulation, economic backwardness, danger of neo-colonialism, political instability and insecurity, keeping aloof from cold war by adopting non aligned policy, social discrimination, illiteracy etc. With a View to grappling with these issues and to achieving economic development they decided to pursue their own path. They subscribed neither fully to Western liberal capitalistic system nor to totalitarian communist system of East bloc.

ROLE AND IMPACT OF THIRD WORLD IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Third World countries changed the nature and scope of international relations and made them global in true sense. They played a significant role in ending colonialism, racialism, bipolarism, military alliances, cold war etc. They influenced the course of international relations by indulging in numerous regional conflicts on the one hand and by launching regional organisations of cooperation (e.g., ASEAN, O.A.U., SAARC etc.) on the other. They evolved the concept of nonalignment and expanded it in the form of a movement (NAM). They strengthened the U.N.O and influenced its working by their sheer numerical strength. Although there were several causes for the coming of detente, yet the contribution of Third World is no less significant. Third World has also given several new centres of power. It also became first there are of neocolonialism and later a crusader against this evil

by initiating a move for North-South dialogue. To bring economic justice and equality Third World is playing its role by struggle for New International Economic Order and New Communication Order. In this respect, the Third World's role has mainly been an Opinion mobilising role, the goal of which has been to legitimise the concern that they share among themselves and to explore the possibilities of an alternative emerging out of such a legitimacy.

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