

# An analysis of colonialism



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Colonialism can be defined as a means by which a superior nation takes over the financial and radical affairs of a country usually through forceful means.

It can also be defined as the strategy or training of gaining full or partial political control of another country. Colonialism can either be physical (military) or emotional (civilizing). Physical in the sense that military efforts are highly needed in order to attain full political control of a country and psychological whereas the colonizers need to be civil with the colonies if their mission is to be successful. The concept of colonialism has some advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are stated thus:

Firstly, colonialism brought about education to the colonies. Before the coming of the whites to Africa or any other colonized country or continent, the people did not know how to read or write, all they ever knew was to go hunting, fishing and other agricultural activities, and this was the normal or everyday routine of the people from generations to generations. But after the coming of the whites, they brought the western education which after a long struggle and fights between the whites and the colonies, the colonies finally started sending their children to school which made a radical change for the colonies and as a result of that, there was organization and people started becoming literate.

Also, the slaves that were taken as a result of colonialism to the white land, majority of them were trained in many aspects and this has increased the technical know-how of the slaves worldwide. Technical know-how in the sense that, the technical acquaintance of the slaves increased, for instance, slaves who have masters that are scientists, or into invention of mechanical accessories definitely grabbed some of the methods of invention after

helping their masters. Also, other slaves that are doing the day to day job in houses that is, doing the house boy/ house girl jobs learn more about the hygiene factors and balance dieting etc.

Secondly, colonialism brought about the abolishment of some barbaric acts between the colonies that is, in ancient African societies were they believe in idol worshipping, there was a belief that if a child was born, and dies that moment, he or she was regarded as an evil child and buried in the evil forest for the evil spirit to take the child. Also, colonialism exposed the killing of twins as a primitive and horrific practice and it stopped in the name of the colonizers. Also, there was the issue of human being sacrifice that was done to appease the Gods when something or a disaster has happened and the chief priest goes to the traditional head of the society and gives a name of a citizen in the society and says he or she must be sacrificed before things become normal once again. All these were barbaric acts that after the coming of the whites into the African societies, they saw it as barbaric and an abuse of human right so after gaining control of the societies either directly or indirectly, all these acts were abolished.

Thirdly, colonialism was just an undercover name because most of the whites had a motive which was missionary that is, to preach Christianity to the black people. This was a major move to end the idol worship by the whites and it gained support because most of the people were tired of the human sacrifices in their societies to appease the Gods. So immediately Christianity was introduced, the idol believers started going for it which helped immensely to reduce the barbaric acts of the idol worshippers. For instance, in the ancient Igbo communities before colonialism, they all

believed in idol worship and as a result of colonialism, they all changed their faith.

Moreover, colonialism brought about equality amongst the people being colonized that is, in ancient primitive societies, women were not allowed to make decisions regarding any aspect in the society, all they were ever expected to do was to remain the house wives and satisfy their husbands and that was it. But as a result of colonialism, women were allowed to make decisions, participate in the politics, also sit in council with chiefs for the societal decision making and this was a major advantage of colonialism.

Furthermore, colonialism brought about organization in the government of the colonies and advancement from the traditional rulers to a firm governmental structure such as the civil service which created more job opportunities rather than just serving the traditional heads. It also brought about democracy because the appointment of the head of government involved the people choosing who they wanted otherwise known as voting. The monarchs were only ceremonial heads and their method of ruling was dictatorial in nature because like in the Hausa pre-colonial era, the emirs were believed to be the spiritual heads and very close to Allah, so, every decision taken by the emirs whether right or wrong was obeyed by the citizens with no objection. This led to some dictatorship and abuse of power by the emirs. But as a result of colonialism, all this reduced to a minimum level because the rulers only became ceremonial heads while the presidents elected were the ones with real governmental powers otherwise called “head of government”.

Colonialism, also has some disadvantages which are stated thus;

Firstly, colonialism led to economic exploitation by the whites because they gained more from the raw materials and minerals gotten from Africa than the Africans. They made the Africans do the job of mining the minerals then send the minerals to their own country and harness them into finished products but the Africans do not get anything from it. And this was a major set back in colonialism because it exploited the colonies.

Also, the white officers enforced taxes on their colonies which the Africans were not used to, and it led to some unrest in the colonies, for instance, the Aba Women Riot of 1929 was as a result of the imposition of tax in the eastern part of Nigeria which led the women to start rioting and it led to serious killings among the people and the whites.

Colonialism lead to discrimination and lack of respect and maybe racism, discrimination in the sense that the blacks were treated as savages and of no worth. The whites felt superior to them because they saw how primitive the stage of the blacks was and feeling of superiority arouse, which made the colonizers oppress the blacks racially.

Thirdly, there was a lack of admirationfor the African tradition which for instance, in the French colonial system of colonization, the policy of assimilation was a policy that wanted to change the whole African culture of their colonies. This was because they did not haverespect for African culture and tradition. That is why they neglected it and wanted to transform it absolutely.

Also, the colonizers came with a task to change the sacred views of their colonies. So because of this, Christianity was enforced on major colonies even in Nigeria, the southern part of Nigeria were thought these beliefs.

Moreover, the colonizers brought a system of management which was unacquainted for the people of the colonies. The British brought an indirect system of government which the people were not accustomed with. The southern part was not familiar with the indirect system which did not do so well. The people and old-fashioned heads found it difficult to cope with even the colonizers did not find it alright. It was only effective in the northern part which was more monocratic in nature.

In conclusion, colonialism conveyed a lot of variations to civilization of the colonies and also did some harm too. But in general we can say that it has more benefits than the detriments which made it successful. With this I can say that colonialism is one of the best thing that has ever happened to man.