

Journey of slavery



Racism has also been widespread in the United States, where for centuries ideas about racial inferiority supported slavery' (Macionis, 2006, chapter 11).

Gregory Mantios in his paper claims that the affluent class enjoys unprecedented power and privileges and the concept of an egalitarian society is nothing but eyewash. The socio political role of the poor and the minority has been marginalized so much so, that either they have become 'faceless identities' or undeserving social outcasts (Mantios, 1995). Indeed the indignities of the journey of slavery of African Americans still echoes in the corridors of free America.

America was discovered by Spanish explorer, Columbus in the 16th century, who had developed good relations with the native Indian population. But the early 17th century saw the process of colonization by the British settlers who had brought shipload of African slaves as bonded labors to work on plantation and elsewhere. They also tried to exploit the native Americans with respect to labor and sea faring activities. The indentured labor consisting of European workers, worked as bonded laborers who were freed after several years so as to payoff their passage to a new country. The slaves worked in labor intensive tobacco plantations along with Native Americans who later refused to work because they were afflicted with diseases like tuberculosis etc. which were brought by the settlers.

The slave trading was started by the Portuguese in 1572 when they had gone to west Coast of Africa where the tribal wars resulted in captives Africans who were traded as slaves in the European market (Liu). The African tribes were skilled farmers who were also known for their intricate art work on metal and wood. Thus the Europeans were able to exploit their skill by buying them and using their skilled labor for free. The slaves were denied

basic human dignity of good living condition and food. When new world was discovered, the slaves were transported to the new world by the whites. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century in America, the color of the skin played a major role in the social status. The whites maintained a racial divide within the society through deliberate use of powerful lobby of the whites and financial advantages that they enjoyed over their less privileged counterparts, the Native Americans. The blacks were not allowed to participate in social activities and even education was denied to them so that they would remain unequal socially and economically.

Turn of the century saw the raced based slavery becoming a full fledged tradition with Africans and non whites becoming slaves for life. Control over the blacks became the main concern of the white because of the rebellion from the natives. The increased trade and business activities created conflicting interests with the English settlers which escalated into war which later came to be known as ‘ seven years’ war’ that finally culminated into the famous American revolution.

French settlers brought in the concept of self governance and religious freedom which was denied in the regions governed by the British settlers who tried to impose strict rules and revenue regulations, against which the Native Americans rebelled. Thus the French indirectly promoted the cause of independence of the Native Americans. American Revolution (1775-1783) significantly changed the very dynamics of political geography of the world and emergence of America introduced a new era where empowerment of people and democratization of nations became synonym with a new order of socio-political system. American Revolution became the stepping stone for ending the long journey of slavery in the new world.

Reference

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