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Social Science

INJECTION OF NEW SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM IN AFRICA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

KEY WORDS: African Nationalism, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Madagascar.

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ABSTRACT

20th Century witnessed growth of imperialism – Africa-second largest continent – rich in mineral deposits – colonization of Africa – Resurgence of Africa – exploited by the colonial powers – Racial inequality – disseminate the feeling of independence – Pan – Africanism – Movement for African unity - confederation of African countries – struggle for freedom – Egypt, Tanzania - Madagascar – undeveloped African countries – Political instability - not successful.

INTRODUCTION:

The closing years of the 19th century and the opening years of the 20th Century witnessed an unparalleled growth of imperialism throughout the world. Africa is the second largest continent having an area of 11,700,000 square miles. It has a population of about 748 millions. Areas of very low population and density are found in Sahara, Kalahari and in Namibia deserts. These deserts have below 1 person per square kilometer. The discovery of gold on the one hand and the advantage of slave trade on the other attracted the attention of the European powers to this continent. It enjoys a wide variety of climate and soil. This continent is rich in mineral deposits such as diamonds, gold, copper iron ore. Because of its immense size and hostile climate, its interiors remained unexplored for a very long time. Gradually colonial powers began to occupy more and more territories in Africa. Colonisation of Africa by the countries of Europe began in 1870. Ultimately the whole of Africa had gone under the influence of the European powers in the beginning of the 19th century.

Causes of Resurgence of Africa

Extreme Nationalism was the fundamental cause of discontentment of the Africans. It began to take an extreme shape due to expansion of education in Africa. The Africans realized that they were being exploited by the colonial powers. They saw with their own eyes that they were being deprived of their wealth. They were ill-treated by the White minority. They were controlled and humiliated. Western people were adopting policy of imperialism in Africa and trying to capture as many areas of Africa as possible whereas Africans were aspiring for independence. Moreover the expansion of communism in Africa injected a new spirit of nationalism among the people of Africa. Colonial powers thought that it was beneath their dignity to have social intercourse with the African races. They regarded them as inferior, uncultured and less civilized. The principle of 'Racial Equality' inspired the extreme nationalism and they started a movement to free themselves from the foreign yoke after the Second World War.

Favourable circumstances also helped disseminate the feeling of independence in the countries of Africa. After the Second World War, the imperialists and the colonial powers grew weak. Hence when the nations of Asia began to free themselves from the clutches of the imperialist powers, the African nationalists also followed in their footsteps and the freedom movements received impetus. The African officers who served in the army of Britain and France after the Second World War was returned to their respective countries and contributed a lot to the development of nationalist feelings among the African peoples. All these reasons contributed to the resurgence of Africa from 1951 to 1956. They realized that Pan-Africanism was the only alternative to cross all the hurdles and to achieve the mission of establishing their independence.

Movement for African Unity:

After the Second World War, the aspiration for the African unity had become quite strong among the leaders of Africa. Pan-Africanism or the All-Africa Brotherhood Movement was the most ancient movement to establish the unity of this continent. In this

movement no man is considered superior or inferior on the basis of his colour or creed. According to Pan-Africanism the feeling of co-existence can be established among the people of different castes. First of all in 1900 Pan-African conference was organized in London. After this such conferences continued to take place from time to time in which discussions took place for the emancipation of Africa. This led to the formation of Confederation of African Countries. They decided that a confederation could be organized on regional basis also viz., North African Confederation, West African Confederation, Central African Confederation. African countries had long been aspiring for their unity which later led to the conference of Addis Ababa and the Conference of Cairo. Anyhow it may be remembered that each colony received complete independence only after a protracted struggle for freedom.

Egypt:

Egypt is one of the advanced countries in Africa. It was under the British Control till 1882 A.D. The British policy of economic exploitation and cultural domination promoted national awakening in Egypt. During the first World War, Egypt was ruthlessly exploited by the Britishers. The Nationalist forces in Egypt were united under 'Zaghol Pasha'. They demanded complete freedom. The British Victory in the First World War made the latter indifferent to the nationalistic demands of the Egyptians. They crushed national uprisings ruthlessly. Many freedom fighters were put to death. Zaghal Pasha was imprisoned. The Britishers soon realized that the National awakening could not be ignored. Hence they made agreements with Zaghal Pasha under which Egypt was granted independence in 1922 A.D. Zaghal Pasha became the first Prime Minister in 1924 A.D. Anyhow after some turmoil and revolts finally Egypt was declared as a Republic in 1952 A.D.,

Tunisia:

France had established her protectorate over Tunisia in 1881. In 1922, the people of Tunisia gained a political concession in the form of a Consultative Assembly. When the French members dominated the assembly, the Nationalists protested and carried on their agitation under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba. As the Nationalists became impatient and violent, the French government forced the Sultan and Habib Bourguiba into exile. The Neo-Destour party led by Bourguiba was proscribed. The struggle for freedom continued after the Second World War. In December 1952, the issue came up before the United Nations and it recommended bilateral negotiations. In 1954 negotiations were started between the nationalists and the French premier, Pierre-Mendes-France and finally France granted independence to Tunisia in 1956.

Morocco:

France had established a protectorate over Morocco in 1912. Spain also had established its control over the northern tip of Morocco. After the Second World War, the tide of nationalism had swept through the whole of Northern Africa. The Sultan who had given his support to the nationalists was forced to go into exile. The French appointed his meek uncle as the new ruler. But the nationalists made it almost impossible for the French to govern

their country effectively. Therefore, the French government was forced to invite the exiled Sultan, Mohamed Ben Yousef in 1955. In 1956 France granted independence to Morocco.

Algeria:

Between 1870 and 1914 thousands of French Citizens came to Algeria and settled there. The native Muslims were given a measure of self-government. But they were not happy and they rose in rebellion against the French in 1954. France maintained four hundred thousand troops to suppress the frequent rebellions of the natives. In 1958, the French President appointed Charles De Gaulle as the premier and the latter promised the Algerians a status of equality with the French settlers and also self rule. The Algerian independence issue was brought before the U.N. in 1957. However the French premier granted independence to Algeria in July 1962. After the establishment of the Republic, they chose Ben Bella as their first President.

Ghana:

Ghana was previously known as Gold coast. It came under British colonial control in 1872 A.D. The country suffered heavily under the British rule. The people were illiterate tribes. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah spear-headed the revolution in that country. In March 1957, Gold Coast became free. It was renamed Ghana.

Nigeria:

Nigeria was under British Control till 1960 A.D., As in other areas of Africa, there was national ferment in this region also. She won her independence in 1960 A.D., and attained republican status in 1963 A.D.,

Congo:

Congo got inspiration from the independent Ghana. The territory was the personal property of Belgian ruler. The people suffered a lot under the ruthless exploitation of the Belgian imperialistic forces. Though National movement started early, it gained momentum only in 1950 A.D., Bloody riots broke out in the region. The Belgian Government tried to divide the native ranks. Economic depression of 1957 further worsened the situation. It was in June 1960 that the Belgian Government withdrew from Congo on U.N. intervention. Thus Congo became a Republic. Anyhow, chaos and confusion prevailed for a while.

Kenya:

Kenya was also under the British domination since 1887 A.D. Britain firmly controlled all the means of communication and transport in that region. Thus the British had a strangle hold over Kenya's economy. The Black natives of Kenya formed a secret society called Mau Mau. It was lead by a great leader called Jomo Kenyatta. Soon it attracted the support of the masses. The British granted independence to Kenya in 1963. Jomo Kenyatta was released from prison. He became Kenya's first Prime Minister.

Uganda:

Uganda's freedom was not achieved till 1962 on account of the non-cooperation of a very small native Kingdom, Buganda. It was ruled by Kabaka. The issue of Buganda's self-government within the sovereignty of Uganda was settled. Kabaka became the head of the sovereign state of Uganda in 1962 and Milton Obote became its Prime Minister.

Tanzania:

Tanganyika was under foreign control since 1884 A.D. Like other parts of Africa, national movement became vigorous here also. This was recognized by the League of Nations. Hence they placed Tanganyike as a mandate territory under the supervision of England. After the Second World War, the U.N.O extended recognition to the national awakening there. In 1961 A.D., she was declared independent. Zanzibar was another country in the region. Due to the peculiar geographical circumstances that prevailed in the region, both Tanganyika and Zanzibar were integrated into a single nation and renamed as 'Tanzania'.

Somalia: After the Second World War, British who had conquered Italian Somaliland returned it to Italy. Italy hold it as a Trust

territory. The Italian Somaliland became independent on July 1, 1960. The British Somaliland was governed by Britain as a protectorate. After an election, the British agreed for the Union of the two Somali Lands. The two somalilands came to be merged and known as Somalia.

Madagascar:

Madagascar was under the control of France. She suppressed frequent revolts here which were organized by the extreme nationalists who desired independence. In the meanwhile, a moderate nationalists Philibert Tsiranana organized a moderate party and won a large number of seats in the subsequent election. France granted independence to Madagascar in June 1960 and it later became Malagasy Republic.

CONCLUSION:

Almost all the countries of Africa have attained independence while the remaining few are on their way to achieve independence. Most of the African countries are undeveloped due to Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, conflicts and feuds and political instability. Though the organization of African unity was established long before, yet all the efforts of unity have so far not been successful.

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