

Imperialism means subjugation of one country by another country by fair or foul means. Under imperialism the dominated country possess her independence. The dominated country is subjugated politically and socially. The native people are dominated and exploited by the Imperialist power. Under imperialism, the life of people is not directed according to their interest but according to the interest of the imperialist.

In short, Imperialism I the story of deception, brutality and armed might. The imperialist powers exploit the resources and the trade of the subjugated country for the benefit of their industrialists. They spread their language, religion and culture in the occupied lands.

**CONDITIONS THAT HELPED THE GROWTH OF IMPERIALISM:-**

The conditions that existed in the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century favoured the growth of imperialism. The imperialist countries took full advantage of these conditions and easily justified any and every conquest that served their interests. The conditions that were responsible for the growth of imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were:-

- (a) **THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION:-** The industrial revolution led to the establishment of large scale industries, which began to manufacture goods in large quantities. It created the capitalist system of production under which maximum profit went to the capitalists. For obtaining maximum profit, the imperialists required markets to sell their products. Therefore it was necessary for the capitalist countries to go in for colonies so that they were able to find markets for their goods. The European countries became industrialist. As such, all European states shad surplus production. They could not sell off their surplus goods to one another. It was natural that each country should have to go the create new markets. The industrialist Europe needed not only markets for the sale of its goods. It was natural that each country should have to go to create new markets. The industrialist Europe needed not only markets for the sale of its goods. It also needed new sources of raw materials so that it was able to feed the industries. The raw materials were available in abundance in the countries were there was not Industrial Revolution. Thus, Asian and African countries became easy targets for the industrialized countries. Also, the European had earned enough capital and was not ready for investment in the colonies so that it was able to obtain maximum profit and exploit the resources if the colonies for its own benefit.
- (b) **IMPROVEMENT IN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION:-** Industrial revolution also brought about great changes in means of transport and communication. It gave an impetus to the imperial countries of Europe to establish their colonies in other countries. Steamships could carry goods between home countries in Europe and the acquired territories in Asia and Africa much faster. The Imperialist countries built railroads and inland waterways in conquered areas. On these they could get raw materials out of the interior of the continents and send their manufactured products onto new markets. Thus, every area of the world was brought within easy reach of the industrialized countries.

- (c) **EXTREME NATIONALISM:-** Extreme Nationalism means having blind-faith for one's own country along with hatred for other peoples and countries. Nationalism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century came to be associated with chauvinism. Many nations developed myths of their superiority over other people each nation felt that it must have more colonies to add to its prestige and power. Some writers of England, France and Germany opened institutions to promote the idea of imperialism. European countries took great pride in calling their territories empires. This led to competition among European powers on the one hand and imperialism of the colonies on the other. Imperialist countries took over some places in Asia and Africa because of their military or strategic importance. For example, England occupied Port Said, Aden, Hong Kong and Cyprus and established her naval basis and coaling stations and became a great sea power. Other imperialistic countries also followed this policy and occupied places of military importance to protect their conquered lands and flourishing trade. Overseas possessions were also useful because they added to an imperialist country's manpower. Some of the people of the colonized countries were taken into army others were contracted to work on plantations and mines in some other colonial possession for a specified number of years.
- (d) **THE CIVILIZING MISSION:-** Many scholars of Europe thought that imperialist expansion was very noble. They considered it a way of bringing civilization to the backward peoples of the world. Some prominent writers like Jules Ferry of France and Rudyard Kipling of England preached that the so-called superior races of Europe were morally bound for civilizing the inferior races of Africa and Asia. Such ideas urged the European imperialists to expand their empires.
- (e) **CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES:-** Christian missionaries, dedicated to spreading Christianity, also played their part in promoting the idea of imperialism. They had a mission to baptize the people of other lands and spread Christianity there job easy. These missionaries established schools and spread European languages literature and culture. This also helped in spread of imperialism.
- (f) **ROLE OF EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS:-** Explorers and adventurers also helped in spreading imperialism. They went into unknown or little known territories and brought back reports that often indicate opportunities for trade and development. The explorer's home government would arrange to take over protection of the entire area around the trading post. Then this government would proceed to claim the entire territory.

**EFFECTS OF IMPERIALISM:-** Imperialism is associated with exploitation, misery, power, cruelty, conversion, degradation and racial segregation. The bad effects of imperialism were as under:-

- (a) **ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION:-** The imperialist countries were interested only in profiting themselves. They brought the raw materials from these countries at cheap rates and flooded their markets with their own manufactured goods. In this way, they destroyed their indigenous industries. They extracted high land

taxes. They employed unscrupulous method or unethical means to drain wealth to their own countries. The practice of importing more than they were allowed to export turned the conquered countries to paupers. Exploitation led to even greater poverty and backwardness.

**(b) RACIAL DISCRIMINATION:-** The imperialists treated the Asian and the African people as inferior. They believed that they belonged to a superior race whom God had destined to govern. They hated and kept aloof from the inferior races of these countries, they would not allow them to enter their hotels and clubs and even forbade them to live near them. They never allowed the people of the colonies to come up by debarring them from holding high positions either in business or government. Thus, the colonial people were discriminated in every sphere of public life.

**(c) INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS:-** Imperialism led to better rivalry among the European powers. Germany and England desired to surpass each other in the race for colonial possessions. Thus hatred and jealousy were generated among imperialist powers, and they piled up ornaments to measure their strength with each other. Wars and conflicts became the order of the day. In the race to get control over more and more lands, imperialist powers waged wars with one another. Their supporters joined them. Thus, the confrontation assumed the shape of world wars and caused destruction of wealth and manpower in the world.

**SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:-** By 'sphere of influence' is meant the extent of influence a country can exert over another country for the furtherance of its own interests. The country under 'sphere of influence' is required to serve the economic interests of the dominating country even though they may remain politically free.

**EXTRA-TERRITORIAL RIGHTS:-** The term 'extra-territorial rights' refers to power of right of a powerful imperial country to impose her own laws upon the weaker country.

**PROTECTORATE:-** When a strong state, instead of occupying weaker state pledged protectorate to the latter in return for some concessions, the latter country becomes a protectorate of the former.

**Conditions that favoured imperialism in Asia and Africa?**

**Or**

**Why were the Asian and African countries so easily dominated by the western powers?**

Ans. The conditions favoring the imperialistic conquest of Asia and Africa were the following:-

**(a) LACK OF INDUSTRIES:-** The most important conditions favouring the imperialist conquest of Asia and Africa was that the industrial Revolution had not come to this part of the world. The craftsmen produced goods with hands and the production was minimal. The methods of production were backward. In European countries, on the other hand, industry had changed the very life of the people. The goods produced were qualitatively better and quantitatively more than these in Asia and Africa. The Europeans

had newer scientific methods and were able to sell their goods more easily than their counterparts in Asia and Africa.

- (b) **MILITARY BACKWARDNESS:-** The European countries had developed science and technology. They had produced sophisticated weaponry. The African and Asian countries were not able to stand against the European powerful countries because they still relied on old and out-dated weapons. The European had disciplined armies and used their guile to outwit their counterparts.
- (c) **LACK OF STRONG NATION STATES:-** The Asian and African countries were still following the ways of governing even though they had outlived their usefulness. Strong nation states had not developed. The people's loyalties were still to local princes or to tribal chieftains. These rulers cared little for the welfare of the people as a whole. The people of certain areas did not give much help to the state in case of outside attack. Even some of them used to be hostile to their rulers.
- (d) **LACK OF INSPIRING MIDDLE CLASS:-** There was lack of middle class in the Asian and African countries because of lack of industries. And it is the middle class, which always stands against tyranny and injustice. The kings had all the power. They could sell their services to western powers and many of them became stooges of the imperialist powers and were given huge pension.

#### **IMPERIALISM IN INDIA:-**

The decline of the Mughal Empire in India gave the British and the French who had come to trade an opportunity to conquer India. The conflicts between the English East India Company and the French were over establishing a monopoly of trade. After the English company gained control, the country's vast resources fell into its hands. There was no longer a need to bring money from England to buy Indian goods. These were purchased with the money made from the British conquests in India and sold in England and Europe. The British goods poured into India. This ruined Indian handicrafts greatly. Money was drained out of India to England in forms of profits. India's interests were subordinated more and more to British interests. The British conquest led to many changes in the Indian social and economic life. Privileges were given to British planters while as the Indian farmers were neglected. Indian resources both human and material were used to promote the interests of British imperialism in other countries. The Indians were not allowed to have high positions in government services.

#### **IMPERIALISM IN CHINA:-**

Imperialism domination of China began with what are known as the opium wars. The British merchants started smuggling opium into China on a large scale. The illegal opium trade was profitable to the Britishers but did physical and moral damage to the Chinese. When the Chinese resisted, Britain declared war and easily defeated the Chinese. They were forced to pay heavy damages to the British and to open five port cities to

British traders. The Chinese government also agreed the British subjects in these parts would be tried for their crimes in English courts. The Chinese government was no longer free to impose tariff on foreign goods.

France also entered into similar unequal treaties with China. On the pretext that a French missionary had been murdered, England and France fought another war with China and defeated her. China was forced to grant more privileges to France.

Japan also invaded China and defeated her. She was forced to pay heavy damages to Japan. France, Russia, Britain and Germany gave loans to China to pay to Japan but had to cede certain regions to them.

### **JAPAN AS AN IMPERIALIST POWER**

Japan started on her program of imperialist expansion in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Japan modernized her economy and became one of the most industrialized countries of the world. Japan had few raw materials to support her industries. So, she looked for other lands that had raw materials and for the markets to sell her goods.

China provided ample opportunities for Japan's imperialist designs. A war took place between China and Japan over Korea. Japan took control over Korea in 1910. In 1904-25 she defeated Russia. As a result of this war, the southern half of Sakhalin was ceded to Japan. Many more territories soon came under Japanese occupation.

### **SLAVERY AND SLAVE TRADE:-**

Slavery means the practice of selling and buying beings as commodities. Slave is the person who is bought and sold. The war prisoners were considered as slaves of the conquerors. The Europeans also raided the African villages and enslaved the people. These slaves were transported to American colonies. They were forced to work in the fields and mines. They were treated inhumanely and often killed if they tried to escape.

The trade in African slaves was started by the Portuguese. They captured the innocent African people and sold them in slave markets in Lisbon. Soon British took over. A share of the profit was even given to the queen. This trade continued up to about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Millions of African were uprooted from their homes. Many were killed en-route to America. The slaves were packed into dirty ships like sheep and goats. Abraham Lincoln abolished this cruel and inhuman trade.

### **FORMS AND METHODS OF IMPERIALISM:-**

Different imperialist countries followed different forms and methods to establish their control over various areas. Important among them are:

**(a) THROUGH MILITARY CONQUESTS:-** Many areas were captured through military conquests by the imperialist countries. As has been discussed earlier, the countries of Asia and Africa were weak and backward from military point of view. The Asians and Africans were not aware of the advancement of science and technology that had come in western countries with the advent of Industrial Revolution.

Hence, they failed to defend themselves against the imperialist powers who were laced with modern and better weapons and arms. It was through military conquests that Britain captured Canada from the French and conquered Sri Lanka and South Africa from the Dutch. Similarly, USA captured Philippines after defeating Spain and Japan occupied Taiwan (Formosa) by routing China.

- (b) **THROUGH FRAUD:-** Some imperialist countries made use of fraud to bring the innocent native leaders under their control. The so called more civilized countries of Europe used gold, severe torture or gun-powder to cheat innocent – Afro – Asian native leaders. Most part of Africa was captured by outright fraud. Unknowingly and unwittingly the native chiefs surrendered vast areas for mere trivialities. Thus Stanley purchased vast territory in Congo for the king of Belgium just for a few pieces of gold.
- c) **THROUGH TRADE:-** The imperialist countries of Europe made effective use of the instrument of trade to bring the Afro-Asian countries under their domination. The British as well as other European entered India as traders but soon they began to capture various parts of the country in a way or the other. In due course of time, the British became the masters of India and the whole country came under their ways.
- d) **THROUGH DRUGS:** the cheap way of drugging people with alcohol , opium or cocaine ,was also used by the imperialist powers to extend their political domination or to capture more and more colonies in Asia and Africa. The best example of it china. The British traders indulged in the illegal opium trade in China. It led to the opium wars and ultimately China. It led to the opium wars and ultimately China fell a victim to the imperialist designs of European powers.
- e) **THROUGH BOOTY OF WARS:** Some colonies came not the hands of some European powers as a reward for their becoming victorious in a particular war. For example, Britain was permitted to retain Malta and Mauritius which fell into her hands during Napoleonic wars.
- f) **THROUGH CONTROL OF IMPORTANT SEA-ROUTES:** The control of important sea-routes was also used as an instrument by then imperialist countries to expand their influence over various regions. To have a access to the Mediterranean Sea, the Britishers got hold of the Suez Canal and the Russians brought Dardanelles under their control. Similarly, the American Control of the Panama Canal helped her to make the Caribbean Sea an American Lake.

#### **POSITIVE EFFECTS OF IMPERIALISM**

- (i) **INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE COLONIES:** The various imperialist powers set up industries suited to their vested interests in their colonies to earn more and more profits and thus paved the way for the industrialization of the colonies.
- (ii) **RISE OF NATIONALISM:** The imperialist powers treated their colonies very badly. Day by day the people were feeling aggrieved which resulted into the rise of nationalism in the colonies.
- (iii) **INTRODUCTION OF MODERN EDUCATION:** The western countries introduced western education and thought in their colonies. As a result, the natives came in contact with the western knowledge and science, thought and political ideas. It broadened their minds and made them realize the value of self-rule.
- (iv) **DEVELOPMENT MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:** the imperialist powers introduced developed means of transport and communication in their colonies to have an easy access to the raw material producing areas and markets and to make traveling easier for the military. It proved useful to the masses also.



- (v) **POLITICAL UNITY AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION:** The colonial powers provided political unity and efficient administration to the colonies. For example, the British brought different states and kingdoms of India under their control and thus established administrative integration in the country.

#### **END OF IMPERIALISM:**

The First World War gave a setback to imperialism and the Second World War sounded its death knell. The development of education and press, growth and spread of democratic ideas, advanced means of communication, the repressive policies of the rulers, rise of nationalism and collective self consciousness etc. contributed greatly in bringing about the end of imperialism. There was a strong wave of nationalism and political awareness among the people of Asia and Africa and they began to demand self government. The nationalists launched momentous freedom struggles to get rid of the alien rule. They contributed to organize revolts and even took to the terrorist and revolutionary activities to overthrow the foreign rule. Moreover the two world wars had already weakened the position of the imperialist countries. The wars had inflicted on them enormous losses of men and material and they were confronted with many problems in their own lands. The world opinion was also turning against the continuation of imperialism. All these factors forced the western powers to grant independence to the people of Asia and Africa. The United Nations also played a stellar role in the downfall of imperialism.

#### **FIRST OPIUM WAR (1839-42).**

This illegal opium trade profited the Britishers but caused a heavy loss of Chinese both physically and morally. From economic point of view also such a trade was not at all profitable. The import of China exceeded her exports and silver started flowing out of the country. Naturally, the government was alarmed and decided to prohibit the import of opium. In 1839 a Chinese official seized an opium cargo and destroyed it. As a result Britain declared war on China which is known as the first opium war, China was defeated and was obliged to sign Treaty of Nanking in 1842.

#### **CUTTING OF THE CHINESE MELON:**

The division of China into spheres of influence is known as the 'cutting of the Chinese melon'. China was cut like a melon and almost all the major western powers got their share in it the major western powers got their share in it in the form of the spheres of influence. In fact, the sphere of influence could not rightly be termed as colonized areas. China was reduced to the status of an international colony and the various imperialist powers began to exploit its resources ruthlessly.

**Q.** What were the conditions that helped the growth of imperialism in Asia and Africa?

The conditions prevailing in Asia and Africa also helped in the growth and spread of imperialism. These can be studied under the following heads:

- Absence of the Industrial Revolution.** The Asian and African countries had not experienced the beginning of the Industrial Revolution as yet. They were using old methods of manufacturing goods. They had abundance of raw material. Hence, the European countries could earn huge profits by flooding the markets of these countries with cheap and attractive machine made goods and could get raw-material needed for their industries.
- Military Backwardness.** The countries of Asia and Africa were militarily weak and backward. They were ignorant of the advancement of science and technology that the Industrial Revolution had brought in the European countries. The European armies armed with modern arms and weapons could easily defeat them.
- Lack of strong and Able Governments.** Most of the Asian and African countries lacked able, strong and popular governments particularly in 19<sup>th</sup> century. They still followed the old systems of administration though these systems had outlived their usefulness. The common masses were not loyal to the central authority.

- (d) **Lack of Welfare States.** The native rulers cared little for the welfare of the people. As a result they failed to win the faith and confidence of their subjects. In the absence of goodwill and support of the masses, they could easily be defeated by the strong imperialist powers of Europe.
- (e) **Absence of Middle Class.** The new middle class, that plays an important role in creating awareness among the masses, had not yet been born in Afro-Asian countries. Thus there was no class to inspire the common masses to raise their voice against the foreign exploitation or resist it with all their might.

**Q. Describe the steps by which the different Imperialist countries took over most of Africa?**

Different European Countries took over Africa by taking steps from time to time as mentioned below:

(a) **Through Slave Trade:-** It was the Slave Trade which attracted certain countries like Portugal and England and later other European countries towards Africa. Portuguese were the first to start Slave Trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They had established a Slave market in Lisbon. They raided African Villages to capture people, who were sold to European traders as Slaves. Both men and women were caught and sold as Slaves to be sent to America to work in mines. The state also got its share of 20% so country after country in Europe engaged itself in the Slave trade which led to the colonization of Africa.

(b) **Role of Explorers, Traders and Missionaries:-** Explorers, Traders and Missionaries played a significant role in the conquest of Africa. The industrial revolution had forced the European nations to explore new markets for their manufactured goods and to get different raw materials from the new lands. Both these aims were easily fulfilled in Africa. Within no time, the industrialists and traders got interested in expanding the sphere of influence of their respective countries in Africa.

(c) **Political Domination and Role of Rulers:-** Different associations and companies, like the international Congo Association, were formed by different countries to establish their political sphere in Africa under the garb of Commercial traders. Thus began the scramble for Africa. Within no time, treaty after treaty was signed with the African chiefs and large tracts of land were acquired. Military force was also used in some cases. The local chiefs were suppressed ruthlessly. Thus, Africa was partitioned among the different European Countries.