



St. Joseph's Journal of Humanities and Science

ISSN: 2347 - 5331

<http://sjctnc.edu.in/6107-2/>



Colonial Manipulations: A Post Colonial Critique of Sri Aurobindo's Vision of India in 'Is India Civilised?'

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ABSTRACT

Historiography is a study of methodology of historians in evolving history as an academic discipline. It concerns any body of historical work on a specific area. The primary objective of this realm is to cover the historians who deal with the subjects employing sources, techniques and theoretical approaches and discuss topics such as historiography of America, Canada and Indian empire with different approaches and genre like political, social history. Understanding the past is a vital universal need. So the purpose of informing our future generation about the happenings of the past world in a narrative format becomes explicit. To fulfill this objective, a humble effort is directed towards a focus on Shri Aurobindo who has made the historical compilation of sporadic materials of the systems of Indian society, the perpetual force of survival and revival and secret of India's amazing persistence in the law of struggle for existence and challenges posed by Europe. Sri Aurobindo's essay 'Is India Civilized?' has been analysed so as to define the stupendous rush of change on the human world. Sri Aurobindo makes a clarion call to have sacred trust and to stand firm and faithful in the hour of ordeals of conflicting European and Asiatic culture. The scope of this research paper lies in re-reading the history of whole of Indian culture to speak of sublimity as well as the ignorance that assailed the life and culture of our nation by the forces of economic suppression of British. This research paper recalls Shri Aurobindo's proclamation on the escape of economic degradation and forces of oppression under the diabolic clutches of British alien penetration.

Keywords: Historiography, Civilization and Culture.

Historiography is a study of methodology of historians in evolving history as an academic discipline. It refers to any body of historical work on a specific area. The primary objective of this sphere is to cover the historians who deal with the subjects employing sources, techniques and theoretical approaches and discuss topics such as historiography of America,

Canada and Indian empire with different approaches and genre like political, social history. With the evolution of literary and creative productivity and the body of historiographic literature, the writers play the roles of historians, influenced by their own community and group and loyalty to their state and nation.

Understanding the past is a vital universal need. The purpose of informing future generation about events of the past world in a narrative format becomes explicit. The historical compilation of sporadic materials on the life of man and the systems of society forms a monumental life long achievement in literature. It is a treatise on specific subjects. It explores the lives and deeds of commoners and the subject of morally corrupt and dissolute society. The essays of Sri Aurobindo that make a volume under the title *The Foundations of Indian Culture* are the *Renaissance in India*, *Indian Culture and External influence*, *Is India Civilized* and *A Defence of Indian Culture*.

The chief claim of this essay, "Is India Civilised?" is to speak of a sublimity as well as confident ignorance that assailed whole life of culture of India. Everyone recognizes Indian civilization which is distinct, unique in its character. But the purpose here is to unfold the conflict of European and Asiatic culture. The peril runs on the meaning and value of Indian civilization. The preservation of it is immensely important to Mankind. A stupendous rush of change comes on the human world. The ancient Indian culture is attacked by European modernism. The material field of Europe overpowers it. Sri Aurobindo makes a clarion call to have sacred trust and to stand firm and faithful in the hour of the ordeal.

The true happiness in the world is the right terrestrial aim of man. The true happiness lies in the maintenance of a natural harmony of spirit, mind and body. The culture is to be valued because it discovers the right key of harmony. The civilization must be judged by the manner by which all the principles, ideas, forms and ways of living work together to bring that harmony. A civilization is in pursuit of the aim of mental, intellectual and spiritual progress and persistent culture of India. Its central concept involves the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality that is dharma. India's social philosophy is built upon this and philosophy of India formulates dharma. Her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits. Her art and literature have the upward look. Her dharma and law of being is founded upon spiritual progress. Self unfold process is more prosperous and the efficient material civilization. The value of her civilisation is constituted by an urge towards spiritual and eternal. Indians are hypnotized by European culture. It is the

age long clash, pressure of conflict and violent attack. The essential matter of India is the quintessence of Asiatic way of being. The spiritual motive must take the lead. The Western world has become materialistic predatory and aggressive, lost the harmony of the inner and outer man.

The efficient condition of a true progress is the true meaning of civilization. But India still retains her identity. The English rule has awakened her, she became conscious of her strength, guarded her against the forces that attempted to break her civilization. She recovered herself, defended her cultural existence against alien penetration. She preserves her distinct spirit, essential principles, and characteristic form of her salvation and the total welfare of the human race. Union, harmony, interchange are the proper temperament for the human advancement. The unified world culture is the large way of future. The conflicts and competition predominant in the past overshadow the present. Spiritual and temporal must be perfectly harmonized.

Community must represent the strong tendency of Indian life. One example is the breakdown of the joint family system, prevalent in ancient India, under the pressure of modern conditions. Undivided communal life is recommended. The old European intellectual and new European materialistic motive should not lead human nature. The law of struggle is the law of existence. Varying cultures come to conflict in the material world. A deep rooted urge in human nature compels to destroy, assimilate and replace all the disparities and opposites. If various cultures must develop freely without hatred, misunderstanding and aggression and with the sense of unity, then Indian culture must give up living separateness. Each nation is a power or shakthi to evolve the spirit of humanity. Nation embodies principles, the living energy of spirituality and fidelity. This virtue makes our nation immortal with the secret of her amazing persistence and perpetual force of survival and revival. All the immorality, weakness, static inefficient defence on the sides of India – all point to the nadir of sunset. The warning cannot be neglected. During the critical hours, India firmly seated on the eternal foundations. She has been affected by the European culture. The law of competition intensifies. India must be culturally transformed and conquered not by adhering to the material order of the world. It is

a cultural quarrel complicated with a political question. India must adhere to her own civilization, cherish a spiritual motive and cling to the spiritual principle of formation. She should be a living denial to the hideous blot upon the world. She must be administered by her cultural superior. It is a moment of her decisive change. It arises from political situation and cultural trend of humanity. Her cultural interest, the beauty of artistic motives, deep sincere spiritual longings are marred by the strain of ignorance, obscurantism, intolerance, hardness, brutality, ferocity and coarseness of British. The economic type civilization and utilitarian materialism have done crude and imperfect form to the uplifted nobler ideals of India.

Civilisation of India consists in man's endeavour to find light and support in a rationalized knowledge. This knowledge for the progressive social efficiency and well being India must labour hard to bring into realization that the science, art, social structure law, and institution must be founded upon the idea of existence. Man's spirit should grow into the full light of self-knowledge and divine inner perfection. An urge towards higher experience is yet unrealized. The ideas of foreign mentality are prevailing everywhere. It is a time for great interchanges. A strong creative assimilation responds to Indian spirit. The rash, crude, indigested borrowing, imitation, unintelligent mixture may be temporarily useful. But it is another way of submitting to conquest.

Aurobindo's essay is a wonderful illustration of how he utters that both political and spiritual change can unify within one another. The Western perception is that India is lawless, a collection of savage barbarians that require subjugation. English men have assailed the whole life and culture of India. British has even lumped together all her great achievements in philosophy, religion, poetry, painting, sculpture and epics. Sri Aurobindo establishes that political liberation and spiritual liberation will be the natural result of India without British influence. India's progress can never be seen in the light of western progress. A different position of Indian independence as a movement is spiritual and intrinsic to Indian consciousness. So it is an imperative need to awaken to the situation with the approach of wisdom and insight, original thinking, conscious action, masterful assimilation of new stuff, all these are for the peculiar power of the genius of India.

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