

Contemporary India (cont.. 5.)

Political legacy of Colonialism

As we know that a new political process of struggle began in 1947 for the newly born country who had just freed itself from the shackles of British rule. To make the process of transition easier, the architect of the nascent country decided to maintain most of the administrative and political measures of the British Raj. Let us discuss some of the important legacies in the form of political legacy of British Colonialism in India can be discussed as follows :

Unnatural partition of the country and the subsequent problems

The introduction of British policy of divide and rule and, on its basis the introduction of communal electorates in 1909 gradually led to a sharp division and conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League. Out of this conflict, there resulted the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims as advocated by the Muslim League established in 1906 at Dhaka. The attempts to secure it through direct action, the opposition that it invited from the Congress and the non-Muslim sections of the Indian society, the administrative apathy, inefficiency and the biased divisive British policies resulted in the emergence of Muslim-non-Muslim communalism in India, which ultimately led to the partition of the country on communal basis. The independence of India was granted along with the partition of India in the form of the creation of Pakistan. Since 1947, the Indian political system has been living with communalism and the problems created by the partition (the Kashmir Problem, the border Problem, the ever present chances of an Indo- Pak War etc.) as the legacies of the British rule in India.

The unwanted Communalism

The communalism in India can be legitimately described as the most harmful legacy of the British rule. The Britishers, through their policy of divide and rule and through such instruments as patronisation of the

Muslims and communal electorates, were successful in driving a block between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, particularly between the Hindus and the Muslims. The British Government in order to face the increasing challenges of nationalism followed the policy of divide and rule and actively encouraged communalism and casteism in India. The spread of communalism and the communal riots which accompanied it made the partition of India inevitable. After independence, India decided to liquidate communalism in favour of secularism but the attempts, so far, have not been fully successful. Communalism has reappeared in several forms and continues to characterise the Indian polity. So, it is an unfortunate legacy of the British colonialism.

(Cont...)