

Literary Colonialism: Books in the third World

The products of knowledge are distributed unequally between industrialized and third world countries. Industrialized countries produce and supply more and the third world countries less. Industrialized nations have benefited from this situation. Third world nations have not paid sufficient attention to these issues because they are engaged in immediate problems of development.

Third world countries are far behind in the production and supply of books because they lack technical facilities and they lack indigenous authors too. Books produced in these countries cost more.

Third world dependence on industrialized nations results from a number of interrelated factors.

1. Colonial languages have been used as a means of national unification. Ruling class elites in the third world have used the colonial language to protect their own privileged position.
2. The colonial language has been used as the medium for scholarship.
3. Libraries and institutions buy books written in European languages.
4. In former colonies like Indonesia, India and Africa material in English are widely used.
5. Publishers perceive that the largest market for books is in English.
6. The third world intellectuals tend to look towards a western audience. They publish books in London, New York and Paris. They think publishing books abroad bring money and prestige.
7. The communication between one developing country to another is mediated through advanced nation. There is little circulation of books or journals among third world nations even between those with the same language.
8. The economics of publishing is more important than cost of producing a book. Literacy rate, reading habits of the people, government policy, copyright regulations and the nature of libraries are all parts of the economic equation.
9. Book distribution is a serious problem in the third world nations. low reader density, great distances between settlements and poor transportation facilities make book distribution difficult.
10. Foreign aid programs deepen existing patterns of dependence. Knowledge, then, is a part of neocolonial relationship.

11. Commercial arrangements built up over years of colonialism persist in many developing countries. These foreign firms and their worldwide distribution network have made the emergence of indigenous publication difficult.
12. Foreign aid programs of the USA, Britain, West Germany and Soviet Union have a great impact on publishing in developing countries. Circulation of materials by industrialized countries may discourage the development of local publishing.
13. Copyright regulations have made it difficult and expensive for the third world nations to translate and publish materials originally published in the west. Western publishers have preferred to export their own books to license reprinting in developing nations.

There are some suggestions to reduce the situation of inequality in the publication and distribution of books.

1. Communication between third world nations without the mediation of industrialized nations. As a part of communication development, third world countries must create viable means of book distribution among themselves and between themselves and the industrialized nations.
2. indigenous publishing and internal distribution facilities must be strengthened. For this, an effort should be made to provide financial and technical assistance from the public sector.
3. Foreign scholars working in developing nations should publish their findings in the countries where they conduct their research.
4. Libraries, journals which review books, and bibliographical and publicity tools for publishing should be supported.
5. The governments of the third world nations should solve problems related to book publication, language of instruction in the education system and literacy. assistance to publishing in indigenous languages should be the policy of the government.
6. The third world leaders must carefully evaluate foreign aid programs to ensure that their nations benefit without any harm to publishing industries or intellectual autonomy.