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Travelers' Accounts and Orientalism: Cultural Shaping of Colonial India

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the intricate and often problematic relationship between orientalism and the accounts of European travellers, focusing on how these narratives shaped colonial discourse in 18th century South Asia. It highlights the significant role that travellers' narratives played in constructing the colonial imagination, which legitimized British rule in India. Through a thorough examination of these narratives, the paper argues that they reinforced stereotypes and prejudices concerning Indian culture and society, thereby perpetuating colonialist ideologies with far-reaching consequences for the subcontinent. The study critiques these accounts, revealing how they often portrayed Indian society unfavourably, emphasizing negative and pessimistic aspects while overlooking positive dimensions. This critical lens seeks to address the biased perceptions held by the West towards the East, aiming to bridge the divide fostered by these historic accounts. The paper explores the origins and development of imperialism, alongside various contributing factors, to provide a nuanced understanding of the traveller's narratives. Using analytical and comparative research methods, the study collects qualitative data and discusses events chronologically, painting a comprehensive picture of the cultural and societal dynamics of the time. Ultimately, it seeks to uncover the legacy of orientalism and its ongoing implications for the perception of India and its position in the global landscape.

Key Words: Orientalism, Imagination, Power Dynamics, Travel Narratives, India

Introduction

Historically, the Indian subcontinent often celebrated as the "golden sparrow" was globally renowned for its immense wealth, agricultural fertility, and economic prosperity. Its diverse geography, from massive mountain ranges to highly valued spices and manufactured goods, ensured consistent and compelling foreign interest (Solimano, 1988). As various groups of travellers including merchants, diplomats, and early explorers journeyed across the region, they produced detailed travel accounts. These writings were not mere personal records; they played a pivotal role in describing the region, its cultures, and the subjective impressions of the European visitors.

These travel writings attained significant historical and intellectual currency because they were widely perceived by contemporary European scholars as neutral, objective sources that offered "exact pictures" of foreign society, culture, and political systems (Stanley, 2011). In this era, the travelogue, derived from the author's individual, firsthand observations, was granted an epistemological authority often denied to native accounts. Consequently, later historical and literary works frequently relied upon and reiterated the perspectives originally set forth by these foreign observers, solidifying the idea that the traveller was the true, unbiased interpreter of history.

This established system of textual authority is crucial for understanding Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Said defined Orientalism not simply as a field of academic study but as a "style of thought" and a specific epistemological framework that fundamentally distinguishes and constructs the "Orient" in binary opposition to the "Occident" (Said, 2014). He argued that this representation was strategically deployed by the West to highlight the East's perceived backwardness, thereby creating a complex of inferiority and justifying the structural difference between the two worlds. The European travel accounts, with their

claimed objectivity and detailed observations, were thus instrumental in laying the groundwork for this larger Orientalist structure of representation and power.

Literature Review

George Wiessala wrote in his first chapter that European studies Asia as the laboratory to transmit the European policies and the diplomacy in east. He wrote that European people adopted the ways to control the orient, so they established the idea in their writings that oriental were uncivilized (Wiessala, 2014). He wrote in the second chapter that seventeenth century was the dynamic century in world history. It was the step towards modernity. This was the period due to which two edges of the world seemed modern and backward. Eighteenth century industrial revolution proved it. M. Ashraf, mentioned in his writings that many travellers travelled and wrote the history. They observed them and captured the events of those nations of whom they visited. But they did not know the language of those countries. Despite these limitations their accounts are very valuable, especially in one respect as true representative of society. So, these foreign travelers only saw the ugliness of society. They exposed that they considered the social institutions were ugly in India, but this type of the writing style had not been in the practice in India. It did not appear in their comments and in their notes. If anyone wants to write or take the record of the slaves, widows burning, sexual perversion, child marriages, extreme sexual indulgence one can easily view these all the facts and figures in the Indian books. He pointed out in his book the comments of different foreign writers that the did not write true in their writing only the foreign writer and travellers wrote true and provided the authentic information regarding the events (Ashraf, 2000). According to Franze Fanon's 2008 book "Wretches of Earth," European scholars prepared the group of people. He claimed that they used this tactic to subdue these individuals without resorting to violence. It was necessary to choose from them those who could assist English speakers for

this reason. For this reason, they selected intelligent members of their community and imparted to them all the crucial norms and etiquette they wished to establish in those communities. Therefore, by claiming that these people lacked manners and had no chance of advancing, these individuals fostered an inferiority complex within their countries (Fanon, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

The current study is carried out within the theoretical framework of Orientalism, a notion made popular by Edward Said in his groundbreaking book Orientalism (1978). In the past, the study and appreciation of Eastern societies, cultures, and knowledge were referred to as "Orientalism" in a generally positive sense. However, the term acquired a negative and critical connotation following World War II, reflecting Western writers, scholars, and travellers prejudiced and biased views of the East. To critically analyse how the East has been portrayed and misrepresented in historical narratives, this theoretical lens is used in the current study. This term coined by Edward Said referred to western perspective of the east as exotic mysterious and inferior. This concept as used to justify colonialism, imperialism and exploitation of eastern cultures.it played significant role in shaping the colonial discourse particularly through writing of travellers. Dark legacy of orientalism and its impacts on Indian societies and culture highlighted the contribution of the travellers to construct the colonial discourse and justified their interpretation that legitimatized British rule in India.

Methodology

Using an approach based on qualitative research, the study critically examines historical texts, travelogues, and academic writings about the Orient through document analysis. To find instances of prejudice, moral judgment, and deception, sources are examined via the prism of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism. Interpreting how Eastern societies were

portrayed in comparison to Western societies is the main goal of the study. The results are combined to show how Orientalist discourse continues to influence how people view the East.

Travelers' Accounts: Depiction of Indian Women and status

Traveler narratives from the past offered an important insight into Indian society, particularly the status and lives of women. Numerous travellers observed the dress codes, traditions, and social constraints placed on women in various areas. These narratives frequently mirror the travellers' potentially biased cultural viewpoints. They draw attention to customs like child marriage, purdah, and domestic duties. In general, these documents aid historians in comprehending women's actual experiences as well as how others viewed them. Like John Henry Grose observed that there were the dancing girls in the Hindustan. This was common in India. These girls not only go in Nawab's parties but also dance in the temples before the Brahmins for worships. It was common that these women were called by the prince and the Nawabs. These women belonged to all casts and kept their lords in peace in every distress situation. They were dressed well even adorned themselves with heavy jewellery. All the jewellery was made of gold and silver. The people took them for entertainment. The women took heavy prizes from the Nawabs due to their heavy breasts and their attraction. They used powder, eye borders, making eyebrows, and something placed round the eye lashes and the eye circle. These women lessen the blackness of their faces. In the eyes they used "Surma" or "Kagul". There women knew different tricks to please the young people. Even some of them were trained how to attract the young towards them by their frivolous attitudes

Edward Ives observed that it was common in the country and was considered the custom that the people called dancing girls on special events and parties. When European went to meet

with the Nawabs. The people for the enjoyment and for the entertainment called the dancing girls. They danced only they trembled and made gestures only. They did not know how to dance. They wore light thin dresses. They adorned their fingers and toes with rings and wore gold jewellery on heads, hair, neck, ears, arms, wrists, and feet. They filled their noses with silver and gold jewellery on both sides. They looked devil and mad instead of the dancing women. They had group of the male with them and together they sing. These women kept beetle-nut in their mouth and chewed them continuously. Due to it the saliva and their mouth become red. When they sing it sprinkled from their mouth. These women while danced then those males which come with them repeated and again a word "Tha, thai, thak, thak". These women often went to the religious ceremonies. They considered then their prayers will fulfill when these beautiful ladies make these postures. These women danced before the posture of the idols. The male who was with them had ring with doffing rigs which created high sounds and loud noise (Ives. MDCCLXXII). Eliza Fay observed that the ladies in India were very fashionable. She was so surprised that very soon fashion had reached in India and till their ladies. It was the custom of India that four men drove palkanies on their shoulders after taking the ladies in it these ladies were ornamented beautifully and expensive clothes. Dancing girls were the common source of entertainment for the people of Indians (Fay, 1817).

John Henery Grose observed that women were outspoken. they used to stand on the doors and when any person passed from the street an Indians. These women used to say them in the Punjabi Language "Dak na Mar" the translation was don't see you will die. Most of them were shy and were used to talking only with their husbands. These women were allowed to go near the Europeans, Brahmins and Banyans. Sometimes they were able to produce their families from them and the people used to say that if the Ghee is placed before the fire, then it obviously melted (Bridges & Grose, 1772). He also observed that women in Hindustan were married in small age. At the age of twelve these children had her lap. If

someone asked them how many children she had, then she answered that she was pregnant for the 10th child of her family. These women were brave then the European's women in taking birth of their child at home and were beautiful. But these women at the age of thirty lost all her bloom and the beauties due to early marriage. Sometimes these women took the birth to their child in open space in the mountains. The people felt no shame by doing so. This custom was in the moors and gentoons equally (Bridges & Grose, 1772).

In the social hierarchy women were considered the most prominent figure to lead a successful life but women status was reduced to stereotype and backward in their thinking. This was often perpetuated the notion, women were devoid of virtues, dignity or agency and were instead mere objects of pleasure or entertainment for men. These women who had the status of prominent figure in social structure had no positive quality in their possession. They were only submissive and lacking intelligence, education and powerful thoughts. Women were marginalized and created an inferiority complex by reducing the women's status in their narratives. They had no thinking ability even though these were only the pit of immortality. Their quality as only to take birth of the child but they lack in their narratives that women are the backbone of the social phenomenon who had a lot of qualities beyond the accounts being an obedient ,to be polite ,humble and organized personalities to keep the society in balance.at home omen not only were performing the household duties but also were able to maintain the social balance by maintaining good relations .the accounts lacked to highlights these positive outlook of omen in complete sense.

Lewdness/Harems

William Hodges observed that there were harems in the palaces and buildings. Nawabs and Ruler mostly spend their time in the harems. Nawabs kept hundreds of the women there and they took these women from Kashmir. These were beautiful women. (Hodges. William,

MDCCXCIII). John Henry Grose observed that there were also harems in the Mughal palaces. Rulers spend most of their time there. He also observed that these people were more luxuriant. They had only the dancing girls for their entertainment. And these women had their own separate place for living and they had separate group of living John Henry Grose also wrote that in the area there was dancing girls which were confined from all the coasts. They were fond of wearing a lot of jewellery and adore themselves with different ornaments even from head to feet. In their feet's fingers they were fond of wearing the rings necklaces round their neck, bracelets in their arms. Even they used to wear different chains of silver and gold in their ankles with precious stones in them. They were used to wearing the nose pins in their noses. they had special gestures for the men with their eyes and their faces. They used in their eyes "Surma". Even he wrote about their adoration of breasts and clothes with silk and kept half legs naked. And these dancing girls were everywhere in India (Bridges & Grose, 1772). These were not only the prostitutes or the source of pleasure for the kings, couturiers but also the queens, princes, daughters, wives' good mothers also which were neglected. only the one aspect was depicted by neglecting the positive contribution of omen. Narratives ignored the agency, autonomy and empowerment of Indian women and made them the character of submissive, powerless, inferior and immoral figure. Whole discursion was only over those women who always remained in the societies at the backside of pages and in blind alley due to their profession as dancing girls or prostitutes. The hidden meaning was to build the comparison between the eastern and western women to keep high status of their own societies.

Cast/ Sect System

Alexander Hamilton mentioned that there were many casts in Hindustan and in different towns these were different. In the town of Mangaroul Bunyans were who were so

polite in nature not only for the strangers but also for the wild animals even Dear, Antelopes, Peacock without fear can go in their homes. In the city of Surratt that there were many religions and sects and casts were present. As in Amstrandam by laws were mohometan or Hali sect. They were called Moor. Some were Persian and some were Turks. So, they were called Musey who followed the Moses law. Another sect was called the Molacks. He also observed that banyans had professions like merchants, Banker or Pen men as accountant, collectors and surveyors. He wrote in his account that 85 sects were present in the Hindustan, and the people did not eat with each other. He also wrote about the sects at one place that there were 85 sects in Hindustan which were totally different with each other according to their doctrine and their opinions among them were Papists, Protestants, Brahmans. They were the people who worked for the diseased people. They took some money if anybody wanted to go to the heaven after their death. Among them the clergy people were who were inferior then those. They preached about moral values and wanted to guide humans. They advised the people to spend the good life in world because after death body will change into the beautiful beasts. Some clergy people had to spend their lives over the Alms they were used to cover their bodies with white clothes, and they had black stick in their hands. The people were so polite not to human beings but to wild animals, and birds. The people had long hair, but their beards were shaved (O et al., 1931). Caste system was social hierarchy that divided the people into different groups. The accounts systematically avoided the positive aspects of society and highlighted those aspects of the caste system and sects which were the part of every society in any place of the world. The people had been living since the past centuries and tried to criticize over the behaviours of the nations as their religious values as their social structures.

Cultural Perceptions of India through the Lens of Foreign Travelers

Edward Ives wrote that the people had great habit of boasting about the things. They had heavy furniture to furnish their homes. According to him that when these people met with their friends then the first question, they asked each other was what type of furniture was to decorate their homes and how many servants they had for them. And whole of their time while the people met at parties with each other then they offered the beetle and chunams and ate themselves. (Ives., MDCCLXXII). Alexander Hamilton observed that people spend a lot over their marriages. They played trumpet and bugled over the marriage ceremony. Women wore the silver and gold jewellery. And the men wore one earring on the right ear. Women adorned head to toe with jewellery. Even the people did not marry with those people who were not same cast (O et al., 1931). John Henery Groose observed that the people had long nails of their fingers and toes. These were of unusual lengths. And The people kept over it the yellow, red material or the paste which was made by the special kind of the shrub which were grown in some dirty places (Bridges & Grose, 1772). Edward Ives wrote that two customs of the Indian people were that European did not like firstly the people chewed the much quantity of the Beetle which was a leaf of special kind and turned their lips into red and this they often spit out from their mouth. All the people though they belonged to the low or high costs liked to chew. The second was the people always kept their nails too long and kept the teeth black it was done so because according to them monkeys had white teeth and they made them black with colour. (Ives, MDCCLXXII)

Superstations

Edward Ives observed that Indian people were superstations. Before the beginning of the monsoon all the women, children, men and old people throw nuts into the river, and few coco nuts were broken at the bank of the river. The people considered that by doing so they

were able to escape their ships from natural disaster. He observed that the people took the exam of nobleness in this way. This custom was in Gentoon only the people gave the rice to the people. If the person swallowed this rice without chewing with the people. If alive then the people were innocent people. if they found any pain or difficulty in swallowing then the people were criminals. An incident that he and his friend admiral once had to go on a special task to another province and they had to use the boat in which an Indian of unknown cast was playing the flute, after admiring form it Mr. Duding took a permission to play it he gave them but when after playing he sent back he threw it to the river. (Ives, MDCCLXXII). Alexander Hamilton observed that these people were very superstitious because they believed over the deities and spirits, if anybody did not find himself out of the disease then the people considered it that some spirits were angry with them. Then left him over the fats. The people believed while they buried their dead that rainwater would take back all the bones and the flash to the soil from which it was made. Few of them did not bury the dead bodies. They saw their dead bodies till the whole day. If the fowl took the right eye, then the people became happy because they considered that it will take happiness and pleasure for the family. If bird picked away the left eye. The people became sad because the people considered that it will take bad fortune and misery for the family (O et al., 1931). Robert Orme wrote that Gentoo had a believe that after the death the soul is transformed into the new form of the body. So, they did not give any harm to the insects (Orme, 1805).

No superstitious behaviours were seen than it had a firm root in India. If anybody made sin then he had to give the order by the priest that he had to reborn then he would be able to get rid of the sins so for this purpose the solution was made by the priests that a golden cow was made and the king was said to sit in his body then after a recommended time he had to come out of his body and then this golden cow was cut into the pieces and was distributed among those people who were seeing all this so this was the way to purify the

prince from the sin. John Henery Groose noted that since the birth of their child though baby is female or the male, they kept it naked or without the clothes. They did so till the age of six or seven years of his or her. He wrote that all the oriental performed the same custom. By doing so they considered it that it was the health of the people (Bridges & Grose, 1772). Henery Grose wrote that the women had to care many children because they were married at the age of twelve and after the tenth of their child, they once more became pregnant. Till the age of thirty their women become old. Even he himself observed that at the age of ten years their girls were pregnant, and their teenage sons soon disappeared as well as it had seen that their delicacy due to which they were charming and attractive soon disappeared (Bridges & Grose, 1772).

The travelers should not criticize the superstitious behavior of Indians because this had been cultural and social practices of that time. lack of the knowledge of the social structure and cultural values most of read the material of the predecessors and included it in their writings without taking proof these were performed or not.

Marriages/marriage rules

Alexander Hamilton wrote that the people spend a lot on their marriages in the form of pomp and show. The people called a few of the people on their marriages and trumpets; Drums and Flutes were played at those occasions. At night the people took the bride and bridegroom into the town, where different traditional customs were performed. Their marriages were fixed at the age of seven. Even the ages of the boy and the girls were sixteen and twelve (O et al., 1931). Robert Orme wrote that the people had great care for their women. Even in the religion of gentoo it was allowed that he could marry more than one. So, the pluralities of wives were not forbidden in their society. A man who had more than one wives and six or seven children they had to live in a small house (Orme, 1805). After the

death of her husband women had to spend whole of her life without second marriage. John Henery Grose observed that the people used to get rid of the husbands and wives the law of divorce and one person at a time can keep more than one wife. John Henery Grose also wrote that the people married their children at a very early age till the age of three, four or five. According to him people do for this because with this a girl took interest in her husband and had great attention and attraction and the husband took keen interest in his children.

Henery Grose wrote that there was custom that though the cast had the same religion, but they had no same profession, so the people did not merry with each other because they considered that it was against the rules of purity. Henery Grose observed that in marriages the gentoo people spend a lot of handsome clothes on the weeding couple, feast, decoration of the house, gathering of the guests, music, dancing girls, fireworks, and the pomp and show. The people called the Brahmins to start the ceremony. All this was spent at the son's wedding. Alexander Hamilton observed that the houses of the native people were built and constructed with mud and leaves and sticks. There were many houses in Hindustan. There were the tanks beside the houses to store the rainwater, but it was citizens that can spoil the health of the natives (O et al., 1931).

Henry Grose also observed that those native people who were lower in their rank the construction of their houses were with the straw as well as with the red clay and the cow dung. The roof was made of coconut leaves. But those people who were high in the rank their houses were different from them and were made of stone and mud. He also provided information regarding the coconut trees which leaves were used to make the boats and kernel for eating and after drying to get the oil, its water for drinks and its branches for the poor people house building. This fruit was called by them copra (Bridges & Grose, 1772). Edward Ives wrote that houses which were near the fort St. David were very moderate and there were the settlements of the English people. There were gardens in front of their houses in which

different fruits had grown like oranges, pineapple, limes, bananas, pomegranate, mangoes guavas, citron fruits and coconut trees as well as these gardens were full of European kitchen plants which seeds were especially taken from Europe. So those houses which were in the service of the European showed their taste and living slandered.

Alexander Hamilton observed that the people used the palkanies during the marriage occasions which were lifted over the shoulders by six slaves. It was used for the bridal to take it to her husband's home. It was the custom and how much pomp and show as well as luxuriant the people had (O et al., 1931). In moor used the elephants and the houses in their equipages and carriages. Even The people used the palanquins and hackers to go from one place to the other. On the elephants only the people regarding the designations of the courts always made journey as the kings Mughal themselves, their prince sons, nabob of provinces, great officers of the state, over the back of the beast in the binding canopied thorn with great pomp and show when they passed from the city. These beasts were also used in wars. Henry Groose also observed that the people were so lazy that they used the palkanies which were like room, bed inside it and velvety curtain which was fastened by the bamboo and was taken by the six men over their shoulders The people spend more. The people took the monthly wage. These were so comfortable that a person inside it can sleep. Young bamboo was used to make it and decorated with gold or silver tassels. It was decorated by leaves as roof and oil cloth to escape from rain over it and especially tiger heads were kept over the palkanies. These palkanies which had tiger heads were confined to the governors and council's members. By this, any person can easily observe that these were majesty people.

Depiction of Sati

Alexander Hamilton wrote that some cast members did not have customs to burn the wives with their husbands, but they cannot marry till their whole life. They had to spend their

lives in the form of Widows and had to protect their virginity till their life. But some of them buried the wives with their husbands. In Bombay he saw that The people dig pit and adjusted in it woods and spread oil or butter over it and then kept the husband corpse over it then they threw the wife over him and they fired both of them then they started to play trumpet, Bugles and did special dance by going round the dig when this all finished then they dropped 500 Tunes loaded of the woods from upper side to fuse the ashes of both husband and wife. Another place he observed that the people did not dig the pit only kept the woods over the earth and danced in front of the victim. All the relatives took sleeping medicines to keep themselves unconscious and they both buried and till it they remained in sleeping condition. He also wrote that this law was not for the queen (O et al., 1931).

About the ceremony of sati Alexander Hamilton wrote an incident that these people were very cruel. Once English governor went with guards to see the ceremony of the sati then he inspired from the widow's beauty, and he sent his guards to take this lady by force. He married her without compelling her to embrace the religion of Christianity. Both had six children and lived a happy life and after her death he made a tomb for her in love and every year he started to sacrifice the cock (O et al., 1931). Henery Grose wrote that women had to burn with the dead body of her husband after his death on that day or that month with it some more customs were for her that her lock was cut by the people, and she had to wear cloth of special colour (Bridges & Grose, 1772).

Edward Ives noted the strange and cruel customs were present in the religion one of them was sati in which a woman had to burn with the dead body of her husband. He wrote that admiral Watson and other soldiered went to see this whole act he saw that women was ready to perform this custom with great devotion. According to him that he wanted to save her. If he asked for that moment to live, then she would ready happily. He wrote the woman went near the corpse and stretched her arms round his neck and then lay down over the dead

body. Then her relatives, who were so near to her, covered both bodies and set fire. Brahmin asked the entire relative to make noise this was done so nobody would be able to listen the noise of live bunt woman. (Ives, MDCCLXXII). Although there was no law against polygamy or more than one wife, the people had only one wife (O et al., 1931).

Marriage rules and religious performance of the rules had been a great honor for the rioters, but they negated it. These were often designed to portray the culture and society of Indian as inferior and in need of western invention.

Festivals/Feast/Ceremonies:

Alexander Hamilton observed that on the eve of new moon it was the custom to make the feast that the people took a devil Gunnies on their shoulders and threw it into the river. This was done because the people considered that they were throwing evil into the river. He observed that on the new moon the people celebrate the wooly day celebration. This day was very fearful that the parents frightened their child from this event and this day. Parents took their naughty girls and the boys to the butcher who cut their pieces. They considered that by doing so people warding off all the bad things from society. By this the people killed fifty people in that day.

These were the special ceremony which was held in Bengal and is common kind of penance that for past sins which they had committed or due to the promise of the parents with their god and goddess to perform it if they blessed with son the child when reached his age then he performed such ceremonies for their parents. It was held in a way that they select a big plain for it and then twenty feet heighted bamboos were erected in the soil then over it may be the ring or that type of bamboos and was tied at both end of the rope under the shoulder Brahmins pinched up large piece of skin and hooks were placed in it with these hooks devotee hanged and took a jump from them. Devotee for this purpose was painted in

special way he observed that this performance was very ridiculous. The preparation was made by them to four days before performance first day they were kept hungry second day they ate fruits and then third day in special dress they roamed in the streets and kept fast and then in fourth they eat fruits. Like this he was informed by his friend that a gentoo cast for seven months hang him daily on fire. Then on first November these gantoos in Bengal do the same they fired over the long bamboos and placed them near their houses they lighted it only because of their deceased parents for their relief and then on eleventh night they lighted every house, every street till the river then they go to take it in their hands to the homes of their relatives and friends for their ease. And a lot of fruit and meat was placed on every corner of the house. In Bombay the people performed the ceremony of breaking the coconuts near the river .Then gantoo eat dry rice and if he was able to swallow then he was considered an innocent person if he had some fault or guilt then they would not be able the saliva enough for these rice they would feel very difficult while they wanted to swallow them so due this they had to pass different other difficulties like they had to pass from the fire and sometimes had to place his hand in hot silver (O et al., 1931).

Travellers' Opinions about Indian people

Even Robert Orme wrote on his account that people cannot make progress. The people were Barbarous and cannot pave way for them. At many places Edward Ives wrote that the people were lazy, ignorant and could not work well. William Hodges wrote, the people made were less than those which were present in Europe. The people were lazy and inactive people. So, a lot of negative attitudes of the people are shown in their writings. As in his writing Edward Ives wrote these people were inactive and lazy. The people can keep more than two wives. The people remained naked and wore only to cover the sensitive parts of their bodies. The people also came from England to establish the hospitals here. They established beautiful houses with the chanum and Bettel. Indian was luxuriant. There were more than 85 casts in

India. He wrote that sati was imposed over the innocent women who want to live for their children. The people were superstitious that the people did not take the drinking vessels to the mouth. The people had long nails and used the betelnuts' in their mouths. They spit it everywhere and the people had black teeth. It was fashionable because according to them monkeys had white teeth. Their palkanies were luxuriant. It had comfortable seats for the people. The people threw their dead bodies on the roof of the building so that that the birds will eat them, and prosperity will come. Ogies were there who cured only the barren women. The people did not eat meat. They considered it as if they were eating the flash of their parents. The people used to record the things, the leaves of Cajon. The people prepared over it the servant bills, wages, and household bills. They made holes with the right thumb in them and used a wood to write over it. They used the iron instrument to write over it also. He also observed that there were many professions like Tylor, Carpenter, Blacksmith, Silver smith and many mechanics. The people were very competent. And can copy the things as they saw. But all were not paid well. Even people bargain with each other. People had no special tools for their profession. Even cutter had water pot, oil bottle, shaver and powder. People use 8-10 razors. He observed that the people had no road to walk on. The people poured the water in their mouth by lifting the vessel high. The water was used to cure the diseases and was used at the death time as holy water. Old women were lusty for taking the gold from the English people. for this purpose, they were ready to shed the tears from their eyes. He also observed that nawabs were of the age of thirty or fourteen. The complexion was lighter than Indians. They had white turban over their heads and long splendid cloth over. About the Nawab, he wrote that that once Watson went to meet the Nawab. He spread Otta, a special perfume made of rose over it and presented the betelnuts and chunam to them. He also explained that nawab took the promise from Watson to help in every problem. When Nawab came to meet the admiral then he came over the elephant with his two sons. And he took nine elephants over

them, the luggage, bands and twelve camels with him. He arrived with 400 horses and 5-6 thousand soldiers. At the camp he came down from the elephant and entered the palkany that was so beautifully decorated. There were bed and cushion inside it. He also wrote that it was custom of the country that there were girls dancing there (Orme, 1805).

Their huts were made of the straw and leaves while kings and nawabs had beautiful buildings made of stones and mud and even English people made civilized buildings, and Indian people were inferior to those people. English people had to take the permission to talk with native people to purchase the goat, ox, cow, water, woods, and land in the form of licenses from the Indians. The people took guns, and European things. The people used the barter system. He observed that huts of the low people were built with clay, mud, cow dung, and leaves. High ranked people had houses made of stones. People used to place yellow coloured made of special leaves called the herbs which were grown over the marshy places. The people took fluids of it over the nails.

it was strong and symbolized with the force of elephants. Before the rain and before the ship taken into water the people break the coconut. English people established the laws. Bombay was under the presidency of the English people in 1727.The people had better administration then the Mughals. They made the property rules and the land rules. There was layer who were employ of the East Indian Company. Coconut grove was important, and the tax was taken for its cultivation because it was used in the manufacturing the things. There were custom houses. The administrative system was worst. They had poverty according to their houses and dress. Women were so beautiful in India. But their charm timing was only the thirty years because they had children of a small age. The people had barbarous customs. They performed the sati at the death of the husband by his wife to send her into the small room. they made noise outside while they burnt both people. Teak was important wood used in the furniture and in ship construction. Ships anchors were European who was better than the Indians. The

people took the liquor from Europeans. There were different names of them spirit of deer, mutton, goat.

The people publically took baths, cupping, rubbing and sweating. The people were not skilled men. They were Barbar. There were girls dancing in society. They wore dirty and naked dresses to shine their business. They earned more due to their breast size. They wore jewelry head to toes. People are used to growing poppy. opium was considered to increase the courage and the strength among the man. So, the commanders allow their soldiers to suck it while they were going on the perilous journey. The nawabs said to suck it to the English people The people took it and suck the heads of it and their sleep was last. Even bangs were used in Saurat. Which was the herb and was intoxicating agent. They became after drinking it mad. The people did not kill the cow. The people used the cow dung as fuel and its urine was considered a powerful agent which they used by mixing the ash on the faces, belly and foreheads. And it is used in the houses to escape it from the bad spirit. The people used to live in harems and scarcely came outside. They used to place the cow dung on the mouth, forehead, and bellies. The people considered that the cow is innocent and remains in the service of man .it gave the man milk and ghee, butter and cheese. This all was done with female cow. The people burn its excrement and make the powder. They did not kill it as they were killing their parents. People have early marriages at the age of four, three and five. The people were so cruel to burn their wives with the corps of their husband. They spend a lot of time during the marriage ceremony. The people used the betel nut and the chunum. Their mouths were red due to it. They dropped it while the people were talking. Chunum was the lime burnt. The people kept it in silver, gold, or metal boxes. At the age of twelve people took the children. Their women became pregnant after the tenth child. These women did not cover their breasts. The people had ploughed of simply handmade. The people had no modern machinery even when they made the clothes over hand loom. Their women had to work with

their husbands. Their men were lazy as compared to the women so for running the houses hold duties, they had to spend their life by working side by side of their husband. They had no proper military men if some areas had the people were so cruel that they cut the noses their enemies. There were gold, jewelry, spices, pearls and drugs. William Hodges wrote in his account that the people adore gold and silver jewelry. Man wore gold earring in their ear and white turban. He wrote that the people were uncivilized. English people had built beautiful buildings. These buildings were superior in their designs and style than Indians. Native people used to go from one place to another in hackeries and palkanies. The people brought women from Kashmir. Timber was the precious wood. The people used the carts of bullock, camels to go from one place to another. The people floated over the surface of water the lamps of light. Nawabs used elephants. The people go with protocol. The people performed sati. Robert Orme observed the sati in the country. Robert Home observed Patna, Saringapatam, Mysore in the country. He observed that English people break the power of the marhates. William Jones observed that all the facts of the history were not true. He wrote that revenging, tyrant and the killing destroy was not eastern qualities which were performed by the Nadir Shah. He had no sympathy for the poor people. These were the oriental qualities. Despotism was present like oriental. He wrote that India was under the feudalism.

In short, they people highlighted the injustice, favoritism, corruption, bribery, marriages, and religious rituals discussed. Cruel and barbarous custom were called to justify their own satisfaction. these ceremonies were the basic part of the Indian societies not extravagant and wasteful while were peculiar the Indian. All these were present in the societies of the European nations. They were also divided in different sects and groups religiously and socially sectors. Each group had their own social and cultural setup that’s way they remained in the continuous battles which spoiled their economy, and they had to move to the eastern markets and countries.

Conclusion:

The travel accounts of European observers reveal a persistent bias that not only misrepresented Indian society and culture but also served broader imperial interests. These writers often portrayed the subcontinent as inherently poor, static, and incapable of progress, ignoring the long-established administrative strength of the Mughal state and the acknowledged skills of its people as riders, warriors, and administrators. While selectively highlighting incidents such as the alleged "Black Hole," later dismissed by scholars including V. A. Smith, these accounts failed to recognize that every society develops its own values, norms, and practices shaped by environment, tradition, and historical experience. Although the Mughal Empire faced political decline for multiple reasons, foreign travelers consistently exaggerated its weaknesses to justify their own economic and political ambitions. Their writings created divisions, fostered stereotypes, and crafted an image of Indians as inferior and uncivilized, thereby making colonial domination appear both necessary and natural. Even when some travellers praised the fertility of Hindustan or acknowledged aspects of its military system, they omitted the technological and administrative contributions made by local rulers, while emphasizing their own civilizing mission. Such narratives—rooted in narrow perspectives, selective observation, and orientalist thinking—played a pivotal role in shaping Western perceptions of South Asia as backward, thus paving the ideological path for imperialism and colonial rule.

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