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**A STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF THE THIRD WORLD IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ORDER**

Abstract

The thesis examines the conceptual difficulties as well as the relevance of the concept of the Third World in the contemporary evolving world order. The pertinent questions with regard to the relevance or the irrelevance of the concept of the Third World can be formed like; what was the idea of the Third World? Secondly, what were the post-colonial conditions of the Third World? Thirdly and more importantly, how the prevailing conditions of the Third World turned it into a category? Finally, what are the underlying principles that make the concept relevant to contemporary world order as well as political processes within the state?

The states in the Third World are characterised as weak political entities. The process of state and nation-building in the Third World has not yielded the desired outcomes so far. The issue of regime legitimacy is a major political concern in most of the Third World states. Ethnic separatism in the case of many Third World counties is still a threat to territorial integrity. The prolonged intra-state conflicts have made many Third World states vulnerable. There is an imbalance in state-society relations in many Third World countries. Political institutions have yet to modernise. Even, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new world order which brought the idea of liberalism have not helped the states in the Third World to overcome these challenges. Apart from the normative difficulties, the states in the Third World also struggle with acute poverty, underdevelopment and overpopulation. Though, there are few states in the Third World which have a sense of new found power but still struggle with some of the basic issues that characterise the Third World.

However, end of the Cold War also brought the discourse the end of the Third World. The global hierarchy based on the ordinal approach finds it difficult to see the Third World being existed without the existence of the Second World. Here, the thesis also takes into account the criticality of certain specific terminology which defines the global stratification. The core chapters have been designed in a way that attempted to capture the coherence of the

concept of the Third World both at domestic as well as international level as an analytical category. The rise of specific Third World states, which are shielded against the norms of the concept, has also been analysed in a context. The thesis also reflected upon the changing nature of the power structure in the international system and argues that despite shift in the power from traditional centres to newly emerging actors, including non-state actors, it does not change much in the conceptual trajectory of the Third World.

The nature of the study is historical and analytical. It has used the comparative method at several places in the study to meet with the objectives of the study. The chapter on the world order has some limitations due to the civil war like situation spreading all across the West Asian region. Due to the ongoing problem, it is difficult to capture any situation conceptually and theoretically when it is still evolving. The study largely relies on secondary sources of data: books, journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers and some primary sources like annual reports, country data, etc. The study had been divided into two major phases for its importance, i.e. the Cold War and post-Cold War period. Final core chapter ends with the discourses and debates on the Third World. It examines how it has been historically perceived by scholars. This section involves the debates over its origin and the terminology initially. Then, it traces the philosophical foundations of the concept of the Third World. This core chapter covers a broad discussion on the relevance or irrelevance of the concept of the Third World by examining contending arguments.