**Question: Define colonialism. Discuss the causes responsible for growth of colonialism in international relation.**

**Meaning**

Colonialism is a very popular term in the dictionary of international politics. Up to 1945 foreign policy of colonialism projected, used and defended by almost every European state for justifying its rule over the people of several colonies and dependent states. There was a time when colonialism was as legal and moral instruments of fulfilling the goals of national interests of powerful states. These were described as policies for helping the development of backward nations. But, in reality, these acted as instrument of war, oppression, exploitation, expansionism, misery, hatred and degradation. These were used to impose and justifying authoritarian and unjust alien rule over native people. Today, however, colonialism stand universally condemned as illegal, wrongful and undesirable principles of foreign policy.

**Meaning of Colonialism**

1. **In Narrow sense:** In a narrow sense, colonialism refers to the process of control of supplies of raw materials, mineral resources, and expands of markets in underdeveloped and pre-­capitalist regions. Such narrow definition of colonialism overlooks a vital aspect of colonialism relating to political activity and the drive for dominance over the daily lives of the people of colonies.
2. **In Modern Sense:** In a modern sense, colonialism is a general description of the state of subjection—political, economic, and intellectual—of a non-European society as a result of the process of colonial organization. Colonialism deprives a society of its freedom and its earth and, above all, it leaves its people intellectually and morally disoriented.

**Definitions**

1. *“Colonialism is the occupation of virgin territories in which conflict iwa incidential, or even unnessary and subordinate to the desire of Europeans to find a new place to live” --* E.M. Winslow
2. *“Colonialism is a natural overflow of nationality; it is the power of the colonialists to transplate the civilization they represent to the new natural and social environment in which they find development.” –* J. A. Hobson

Thus, from above definitions it can be said that colonialism refers to foreign domination in social, economic, and political policies of the colony countries. Obviously, the destiny of the colony is governed by the policies of the foreign country so as to sub-serve the interests of the ruling country.The economic and social development of a colonial country is completely subordinated to the ruling country. Colonial economy is stripped off all independent economic decisions. The development of agricultural, utilization of the country’s vast natural resources, it’s industrial and tariff policies, trading relations with foreign countries, and so on are left into the hands of the ruling country.

**History of colonialism**

In antiquity, colonialism was practiced by empires such as Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Ancient Egypt, and Phoenicia. These civilizations all extended their borders into surrounding and non-contiguous areas from about 1550 B.C. onward, and established colonies that drew on the physical and population resources of the people they conquered in order to increase their own power.

Modern colonialism began during what’s also known as the Age of Discovery. Beginning in the 15th century, Portugal began looking for new trade routes and searching for civilizations outside of Europe. In 1415, Portuguese explorers conquered Ceuta, a coastal town in North Africa, kicking off an empire that would last until 1999.

Soon the Portuguese had conquered and populated islands like Madeira and Cape Verde, and their rival nation, Spain, decided to try exploration, too. In 1492, Christopher Columbus began looking for a western route to India and China. Instead, he landed in the Bahamas, kicking off the Spanish Empire. Spain and Portugal became locked in competition for new territories and took over indigenous lands in the Americas, India, Africa, and Asia.

Starting in the 1880s, European nations focused on taking over African lands, racing one another to coveted natural resources and establishing colonies they would hold until an international period of decolonization began around 1914, challenging European colonial empires up to 1975.

**Causes of Colonialism**

1. **Economic Gains:** One of the primary causes of colonialism is to secure economic gains by utilizing and exploiting the raw materials of the subject nations. In the words of Dr. Heinrich Schenee “Great industrial nations need colonies to supply them with raw materials.” Similarly, the possession of colonies always affords a big opportunity to the colonial power to sell its surplus goods. The countries like England, France, Spain and Portugal established their colonies primarily for the economic benefits.
2. **Power and Prestige:** To be more and more powerful and thus secure prestige in international relations has been a psychological motive behind the policy of colonialism in international relations. The colonial possession is always considered as an addition to the national prestige of the colonial states.
3. **European Rivalry:** The exploration and colonization was started by Spain and Portugal. Gradually, other countries like France and England also entered the race. Acquiring new colonies became a thing of national pride. Moreover, due to various economic benefits of colonization, a stage of ‘competitive colonialism’ started among the European powers.
4. **To Spread Christianity:** During the Age of Discovery; the Catholic Church started a major effort to spread Christianity in the New World by converting indigenous peoples. As such, the establishment of Christian missions went simultaneously with the colonizing efforts of European powers such as Spain, France and Portugal.
5. **White Man’s Burden or Humanitarian Motives:** The supporters of colonialism advocate that it is motivated by the humanitarian motive of uplifting the poor and backward people – the non-white people. It is projected, as R Kipling observes, “The Whiteman’s burden to the help the development of others.” Such notion is based on the view that the white race is a superior race and it is its primary duty to uplift the inferior races. Supporters of such motives of colonialism advocate the view that colonialism helps the people of colonies in abolishing ignorance, slavery and cannibalism.
6. **Securing National defense:** The control over the men and materials resources of the imperial possessions considerably strengthens the ability of the imperial power to defend itself in wars. In the two World War, Britain depended very heavily upon India and other colonies for the supply of soldiers and vital resources for the defense of the Britain Empire. During the First World War, France drew nearly 5, 00,000 troops and 2, 00, 000 workers from her colonies. In both the success World Wars Britain was largely due to its ability to exploit the man power and other resources of its colonies.
7. **Adjustment of Surplus Population:** One of the important motive of colonialism is to adjust surplus population in the overseas colonies and territories. In the past. Many nations justified their policy of colonial acquisitions on the basis of necessity of adjusting their surplus populations. Mussolini’s Fascism openly advocated “Italy’s surplus manpower must emigrate.” Thus, the need to surplus population abroad has been one of the causes of colonialism.

Besides theses seven primary causes of colonialism, the desire to spread a particular religion in the other parts of the globe, the need for maintaining particular balance of power, the desire to spread particular ideology and the desire to export ideological revolution to the other countries, have also been motives of colonialism.

**Forms of colonialism**

Historians often distinguish between various overlapping forms of colonialism, which are classified into four types:Settler colonialism, planter colonialism, exploitation colonialism, surrogate colonialism, and internal colonialism and national colonialism.