



Xavier University Bhubaneswar
University Dialogue Series (UDS)

Date: 25 May 2018

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: Class Room 129

An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India (Shashi Tharoor, 2016)
(Book Reading Series)

Speaker:

Prof. Pradeep Kumar Mishra
Xavier School of Rural Management
Xavier University Bhubaneswar

Inspired by his own speech given in 2015 on how Britain owed reparations to her former colonies, Shashi Tharoor wrote the book titled 'An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India'. The book is one of the comprehensive arguments against the ruins brought in by the British empire to Indian economy, politics, and society.

The book debunks several myths floated by Western scholars that British colonizers brought in modernization, unity, and advanced knowledge to India and Indians. Tharoor argues that during the British rule India's economy contracted enormously as 'India was governed for the benefit of Britain'. He also reiterates the facts on how the textile and shipping industry were killed for protecting British industry. Rampant famines were frequent that killed millions of people. Apart from destruction of the economy, India's political institutions were destroyed, and the British rule offered India anything but democracy.

Tharoor's work has brought in a fresh perspective on colonialism. While many of the facts were not unknown to historians, the forceful arguments, not to mention his style of writing, have been able to awaken a generation of people who did not see horrors of colonialism but have been overly confused between the narrations provided by nationalists and apologists.

Keywords: India, Britain, Reparations.

Experience Sharing

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The author recently presented his paper on title 'Does impact assessment meet stakeholders expectation', at the 30th Annual conference of 'International Association for Impact Assessment', held at Durban (16-19 May 2018). He will also share his experience of attending the conference.

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