

About

The Department of African Studies has launched an initiative called "**Scholars on Africa**" with the primary objective of promoting the research ideas of scholars and faculty members on current happenings and contemporary issues related to the African continent. This initiative serves a dual purpose, as it not only facilitates academic exploration but also provides valuable insights to the policymakers of India on matters concerning Africa. By actively engaging with scholars and faculty members, the initiative aims to foster a better understanding and relationship between India and Africa, bridging the gap between the two worlds.

Under the "Scholars on Africa" initiative, Scholars of the Department of African Studies are encouraged to contribute write-ups on various African issues, not exceeding 1000 words in length. It is noteworthy that these write-ups will be forwarded by any faculty members of the Department. These write-ups serve as a platform for scholars to express their personal views and insights on a diverse range of topics, including History, Politics, economics, culture, and social issues prevalent in Africa.

AFRICA- THE MOTHER CONTINENT

Many may consider Africa as poor or feel ignorant about it but we as a student of African study do feel immense pleasure and pride in saying that we are studying about the continent which is the mother of life on this earth covering an area of 30.2 million square km having maximum 54 countries.

Yes about the continent which has experienced ignorance of the world for a longer time but will not remain ignorant for a long time, about Africa despite having one of the largest diversity across the world known for deserts(Sahara, Namib Kalahari, Nubian, eastern desert) only, about the Africa which is having largest resources (30% of total world reserves) across the world but still having the highest number of least developing countries in the world.

Yes, about Africa which was given the title of the dark continent just to degenerate the potentialities of the mother continent. After studying Africa I can say that Africa is very different from one which is shown to us. The generalisation of Africa as a Dark continent was done purposefully and intentionally to carve out desired interest out of it. In my opinion, Africa is a continent which was much ahead of its time historically, geographically, politically economically and traditionally.

There are various stories regarding the origin of life across different continents but there is a common understanding among the people that life may also have originated in other continents also but it was Africa only where the life survived and the national park of Serengeti is moving forward proudly carrying this historical fact with it (Australopithecus afarensis or Lucy). When it comes to the advancement of civilization it was Africa where the first civilization of the world originated on the banks of river Nile (The earliest civilizations developed between 4000 and 3000 B.C.E.). It was also the place where the language (Sumerian, Akkadian and Egyptian) as a medium of communication was started.

The growth of Egypt as a oldest civilization, their paintings their monuments and archaeological findings depicts the potentialities and richness of cultural history which Africa is carrying with it.

In fact, the pyramids of Giza are a marvellous example of the geometrical knowledge of Africans, the mummies found in Egypt(The 4,300-year-old mummy was found covered in layers of gold near the Step Pyramid at Saqqara)

also depict the economic status and status of trade which Africans were having and it was the time when the contemporary world was thinking of how to establish civilization. Those were the civilizations of Africa whether it was Egyptian, Kerma, Aksum, or Kush who had standing armies of their own for the protection having prosperous trade, those were the kingdoms which rule Africa for the longest time, those were the kingdoms who created languages of their own and which are still to be deciphered in today's world.

The real darkness of this Dark continent was the loot which was done with Africa in the form of the slave trade or drain of wealth in the form of bullion, despite all this Africa survived because it never left its old traditional roots and culture. It is the result of the Eurocentric approach that considers the Western world as a father of various governance models and ideologies, all these cultural and political systems can be traced to African history but all this cultural and political richness was overshadowed under the title of Dark continent.

Africa has the second largest geographical area after Asia is the continent which consists of every kind of diversity which all other continents might have, whether it is the largest desert of the Sahara, having the longest river in the form of the Nile, the Highlands of Ethiopia to the equatorial rainforest which have second largest area of forest cover after Amazon also called as the lungs of the world which sinks huge amount of carbon dioxide in it. It is also the continent through which all three lines tropic of cancer, tropic of Capricorn and equator passes. Africa being the mother continent is facing motherly challenges, as it is facing the consequences of actions of other developed World in the form of issues like global warming, desertification, droughts, floods food security, deforestation, and rising sea levels.

In today's world of globalisation and modernization Africa is a continent which is moving forward proudly carrying its traditional and cultural identity in the form of tribalism which gives the continent a unique identity. Africa is a blend of traditional values and modern culture (Ubuntu culture which is similar to vasudev kutumbakam). the origin of various philosophies of the world can be traced to the continent whether it is the concept of rebirth after death, the ancestral worship, the worship of mother nature, or the philosophy of communism in the form of communalism (ujamaa).

It is evident from the historical texts that it was after the 17th and 18th centuries that the continent of Africa lost its pace of matching up its steps with the time due to the dominance of colonial settlers on the continent, as explained by Frantz fanon-the development of Underdeveloped of African people was a result of the imposition of structural, psychological superiority complex over Africans and the acceptance of these complexes by African which led to the dependence of Africans on the colonial Masters.

Africa the continent the mother continent despite having the largest resources of minerals has faced brutal atrocities and conflicts.

The huge resources have contributed to political instability in the region like West African countries including Liberia, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Mali, and Central African countries like Sudan, Angola democratic republic of Congo and these are the reasons which left African states as the rentier state in post-independence time, but in today's time they have transformed themselves into a classical resource seller state.

There is an urgent need for the mother continent to remember motherhood to turn its children's countries into self-sufficient in every field

I urge the people of Africa and the people of the world to look at Africa with an Afrocentric approach, this Afrocentric approach has a potential to answer some great grievances of the continent, to resolve the conflict of the continent and to realise Kwame Nkrumah's vision of Africa must unite (pan Africanism).

***Views are personal**



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