

A Review Study on Post Colonial Issues in the Plays of Badal Sarkar

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Abstract:

The impact of colonization on nations and peoples who have been colonized is the focus of post-colonialism. After WWII, the word became popular among philosophers to describe the time after a colonized nation gained its independence. In the late 1970s, literary theorists began to draw attention to the economic, philosophical, and cultural impacts of colonization on the countries that were impacted. The term "post-colonialism" has been defined differently by different philosophers. From a postcolonial perspective, Badal Sircar's literature and theatrical work are noteworthy for two reasons. In the first place, it was an outcry against the British proscenium stage style; in the second, he used writing as a means of drawing attention to the devastating impact of colonial control on formerly colonized countries. These two goals motivated Sircar to make his theatrical style more pertinent in order to bring attention to the consequences of colonization. The idea of reserving his theatre for indoor shows did not satisfy Sircar. He believed that he could not achieve his goal of raising public awareness of injustice and exploitation through the medium of theatre. The goal will never be achieved since the common people are too poor to afford theatre. The primary objective of this dissertation is to draw attention to the problems associated with colonization, such as the injustices and hardships endured by the people.

Keywords: *Post-colonialism, economic, cultural, exploitation, suffering, capitalist, injustices*

I. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to challenging the new social and political realities that arose in India following colonial rule, postcolonial theatre is a major player. Among the most prominent names in this field is Badal Sarkar (1925–2011), whose plays analyse the ideological, social, and psychological effects of colonialism on post-independence India. The internalized oppression, alienation, and moral crises that remained in postcolonial society were topics that Sarkar wrote about in the decades after independence, in addition to the historical experience of colonial dominance.

In his dramatic works, Badal Sarkar delves deeply into the post-independence Indian disenchantment with the often-unfulfilled promises of freedom, equality, and social justice. Many of the problems that his plays address have their roots in the psychological and structural legacy of colonial rule, including the breakdown of social norms, urban alienation, class struggle, bureaucratic exploitation, and the crisis of personal identity. Sarkar delves into the lived experiences of common people ensnared in repressive social institutions that have their roots in colonial control and are upheld by postcolonial power structures, instead of concentrating on obvious nationalist themes.

One distinctive aspect of Sarkar's theatre is his groundbreaking idea of Third Theatre, which challenges elite proscenium settings and colonial theatrical norms in favour of open or non-traditional performance spaces, direct audience participation, and minimal production. By rejecting Western dramaturgical patterns and embracing indigenous ways of expression, this aesthetic decision stands as a postcolonial intervention in and of itself. Sarkar uses this style to make theatre accessible to more people, transforming it from an entertainment medium into a vehicle for social critique and collective consciousness.

The postcolonial condition is portrayed in plays like *Bhoma*, *Pagla Ghoda*, *Michhil*, and *Evam Indrajit* through themes of marginalization, resistance, protest, and existential misery. Central to postcolonial discourse are the dual consciousnesses of persons reconciling tradition and modernity, freedom and limitation, optimism and frustration, all of which are reflected in Sarkar's characters. The paradoxes of life after independence force his theatre goers to face hard realities of authority, accountability, and societal transformation. Plays by Badal Sarkar combine innovative theatrical technique with deep sociopolitical understanding to provide a scathing indictment of postcolonial India. Because it examines the aftermath of colonialism and analyses the successes and failings of freedom in a newly independent nation, his work is an essential contribution to postcolonial studies.

In post-colonialism, the emphasis is on the legacies of colonialism on the countries and peoples that were formerly ruled by it. After World War II, philosophers mostly used term to mark the moment when a once-

colonized nation achieved its independence. As the 1970s came to a close, literary academics started to focus less on the political and cultural effects of colonization and more on the philosophical, economic, and cultural ones. "Colonialism should be conceived as the conquest and subsequent control of another country, and it evolves both the subjugation of that country's native peoples and the administration of its government, economy, and produce," says Jane Hiddleston. To sum up, colonialism is when one country exerts its social, cultural, political, and economic domination over another. Some historians and scientists consider Christopher Columbus's conquests of numerous countries in 1492 to be the first acts of colonization. "Colonialism involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, often by force," according to Elleke Boehmer in *Postcolonial and Colonial Literature*.

A colony of occupation is one in which a foreign authority exercises oppressive control over a native population that is yet numerically dominant. It has happened in Nigeria and India. This is one definition of colonialism: the taking over of another people's territory and way of life. According to Ania Loomba, "Establishing a community" in a foreign place... continues by saying that this "... necessarily meant un-forming or re-forming the communities that existed there already, and involved a wide range of practices including trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions".

The term "post-colonialism" first became popular in North American university campuses, and in particular in literary departments... as an academic subject quickly caught the interest of Western and other academic institutions, critics, and researchers (Hiddleston 1). Various scholars have taken different approaches to defining post-colonialism. We can better comprehend the phrase if we talk about its definitions here. As Jane Hiddleston puts it, "The term "post-colonialism" can generally be understood as the multiple political, economic, cultural and philosophical responses to colonialism from its inauguration to the present day, and is somewhat broad and sprawling in scope". Consequently, post-colonialism emerged as a response to the political, cultural, and economic policies imposed by colonial authority.

When Badal Sircar first appeared on stage, the Proscenium style was all the rage in Britain. As part of their economic monopoly in India, the British introduced this stagecraft. The native high-class Bhadrakolok and the colonizers enjoyed each other's company on this proscenium stage. The birth of Badal Sircar on July 15, 1925, marks the beginning of what appears to be a first-generation Bengali playwright of postcolonial Indian theatre. His career as a serious actor began in the early 1950s. During this time, India was both rejoicing in her newfound freedom and bouncing back from the unjust policies and rule of the British. Plays written during this period were filled with social awareness and practicality. Writing on issues such as slum life, mental turmoil, disturbance, disappointment, and the ensuing wrath of the newly formed middle class, playwrights of that era tackled complex social topics. In the early years of his involvement with the theatre, Sircar did not work as a full-time director or author. He had a background as a civil engineer before deciding to leave his job with the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation and the Comprehensive Area Development to focus solely on his theatre career.

When seen through the lens of postcolonialism, Badal Sircar's renowned "Third Theatre" and the methods it employed are noteworthy. The purpose of its inception was to raise public consciousness about the devastating consequences of colonial authority. He created this theatrical style with these goals in mind. There are three main features of this theatre. The portability, low cost, and adaptability of this theatre are its defining features. Sircar chose to act in both indoor (Anganmancha) and outdoor (Muktamancha) productions so that he could be more versatile and move his shows around more easily. After beginning to hone his Third Theatre skills with small-scale productions, he came to the following conclusions:

It took some time for me to fully commit to Anganmancha (Arena theatre). My initial exposure to theatre-in-the-round in 1958 was an international event that sparked the idea. A few of notions regarding the performers and the audience developed into more robust ones as a result of watching more, reading more, playing in theatre, and composing plays.

It is easy to see Sircar's reaction and rage against colonial domination and the English language in his Bengali writings, which is one of the most noticeable goals of his post-coloniality. Sircar chose to write in his home tongue despite being born and raised in a well-educated middle-class household with a Christian ancestry. His Bengali plays have been translated into English by writers such as Hattamalar Uparey (1977), Basi Khabar (1979), Sukhpathya Bharter Itihas (1976), Bhoma (1976), Michhil (1974), and Ebong Indrajit (1963). The English language is completely unsuitable for theatre, in his opinion, despite the fact that his schooling provided him both self-assurance and fluency in the language. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's ideas had a significant impact on him.

Sircar mostly authored plays for the proscenium stage, including *Indrajit*, *That Other History*, and *There is No End*. The educated urban middle class is the target audience for these plays, which explore the prevalent attitudes, imprecise sentiments, and undefined grievances that afflict them. Everyday struggles for survival, the loss of purpose in life, and the deterioration of human emotions and ideals are all laid bare in these plays. These are the aftereffects of colonialism, which threw Indian civilization into disarray and caused widespread confusion.

During this time in his career, when the proscenium theatre form popular in Britain was still relatively new and Sircar had not yet fully realized the transformative power of the stage, he wrote these plays. He eventually realized that, with the right audience, theatre has the power to revolutionize society.

He ultimately settled on and developed his own theatrical style, which is both adaptable and portable, with a focus on audience participation. That way, it can reach more people. Anger at privileged groups' exploitation of oppressed groups and urbanites' dominance over rural economies is on full display in Sircar's Third Theatre pieces. According to Mitra, his shift from discussing the plight of middle-class people to that of workers and peasants "is arguably a Marxist progression". As a result of the capitalist economic system and industrialization that the British colonizers brought to India, Sircar was filled with animosity towards the societal divisions that had emerged as a result, particularly between the urban and rural parts of the country. He was against Hattamala and capitalism.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sadhan Rudra (2025) The neo-Marxist school of thought has been quite critical of the United States' expanding hegemonic power and the dollar's promotion in the post-WWII era. Midway through the twentieth century, numerous colonies achieved political independence; yet, severe poverty and a lack of financial infrastructure continued, raising important concerns regarding the veracity of this independence. Capital structures and neocolonial middlemen ensured that former colonies continued to be economically and commercially dependent on their ex-colonial powers. By viewing postcolonialism as a reimagined colonialism, specifically neo-colonialism, critics have cast doubt on the performative character of sovereignty. True freedom and independence are still hindered by problems like economic reliance, debt traps, neo-capitalism, and internal colonization. This dissertation delves into Badal Sircar's Third Theatre and how it uses a decolonial theatrical strategy to tackle these enduring colonial systems in postcolonial India. This study analyzes two of Sircar's plays—Indian History Made Easy and Bhoma—to see how his dramaturgy calls for collective resistance based on subaltern memory and material suffering while criticizing neo-colonial capitalism, internal colonization, and bourgeois involvement.

Manjit Kaur (2025) Badal Sircar's *Procession* (Michhil) is a groundbreaking work in Indian political theatre that uses a performance-based technique to explore themes of authoritarianism and socioeconomic inequality. This article takes a look at Sircar's Third Theatre, which is his experimental, non-proscenium type of theatre. Theatrical performances transform the space into a participatory arena for political struggle. *Procession* breaks with conventional theatrical practices by eschewing elaborate sets, inflexible staging, and aesthetic distancing in favour of honesty, closeness, and ideological clarity. Those without a voice can find one in the play, and the audience is captivated from start to finish. Bringing theatre to public spaces like parks, streets, and slums, with an emphasis on decentralization and accessibility, Sircar's Third Theatre aims to benefit historically excluded communities via cultural creativity. In *Procession*, the narrative voices change like a chorus, but the themes of public disenchantment, class strife, and institutional violence are constants. In addition to bringing performance to a wider audience, this approach echoes the collective anxieties of a society undergoing transformation. Being both commentators and characters, the actors blur the line between reality and fantasy. By engaging them in the creative process, Sircar elevated the audience from passive observers. The study argues that *Procession* is more than just a dramatic depiction of protest; it becomes a tool for spreading awareness and collective empowerment through the medium of theatre. Rather, it is a dress rehearsal for when things really get rolling. Sircar contends that theatre ought to do more than only reflect society; it ought to proactively meddle with it by drawing attention to the political potential of performance in pieces such as *Procession*.

Ahmad Aasif, Srivastava Dr. Mrinal (2023) Badal Sircar is seen as an upcoming talent in Indian literature. In addition to adding to it, he enhanced Indian theatre. Plays written by the great Badal Sircar had a transformative effect on society. For the downtrodden and persecuted, he fiercely advocates. Badal Sircar's mastery at properly portraying the contemporary socioeconomic landscape is on full display here. Personal, interpersonal, societal, religious, and political issues predominate in his plays. What we see in his plays is a reflection of reality. Sircar is an emotionally vulnerable author who finds himself driven to write and reflect by the world around him. His plays effectively portray the plight of individuals enduring a challenging period in their life as a result of various sociopolitical forces, which manifests in their minds and bodies. He is the author of more than fifty plays. His plays were mostly written in Bengali, but many were later translated into English. Societal issues, oppression, and dominance are common threads in his plays. This article discusses Badal Sircar's writings, which focus on both major historical events and the everyday struggles of modern man. Observations made by him about his local community served as the basis for each of his works. In this article, I'll show you how, as a playwright, he expertly reflects back to his audience the problems they're facing right now. Members of the privileged and the disadvantaged are both sought for in the research article. The harsh truth and hardships endured by the lower classes are exposed in a critical manner in the research piece. *HUMANITY: U* All of a person's encounters with other people are part of their human relations or social relations. When individuals in a certain area or country are in constant contact with one another, the result is a society. In a community where individuals face varying

challenges, it is the responsibility of organizations to address these needs and give answers. As a society, we are controlled by these norms, which are founded on our ability to wisely and responsibly provide the basic needs of shelter, food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and transportation. The progress of society is crucial to progress since no one person can excel in every area.

Ramesh Dr. Raji (2022) A prominent figure in the postmodern literary canon, Badal Sircar has written and published collage-based literary and dramatic works. He brings up a number of social and economic concerns that are affecting Indian society through the medium of education. More than that, his own theatre company Sabaddi, which he founded in 1967, has helped bring attention to him. Creators of the term "third theatre" include as he drew ideas from Western theatre practitioners and street theatre pioneer Safdar Hashmi. Popular as a playwright, actor, and director, he has helmed numerous productions. Coming from a middle-class Bengali family, he was able to secure a scholarship from the university. That scholarship allowed him to go to many different places. He started his theatre so the country's oppressed people may have a voice. He was a modest man who ran his theatre by dictating that the performers wear plain attire. In his open-ended play "Procession," which he employs collage method to coherently and sensibly connect scenes to the streets of Calcutta, Sircar explores the irony of working-class people. The play leaves an impression on the audience's psyche. Corruption and the oppression of the working class are important topics in the drama, which the research intends to investigate.

Singh Dr. Rishi Pal (2019) The impact of colonization on nations and peoples who have been colonized is the focus of post-colonialism. After WWII, the word became popular among philosophers to describe the time after a colonized nation gained its independence. In the late 1970s, literary theorists began to draw attention to the economic, philosophical, and cultural impacts of colonization on the countries that were impacted. The term "post-colonialism" has been defined differently by different philosophers. From a postcolonial perspective, Badal Sircar's literature and theatrical work are noteworthy for two reasons. In the first place, it was an outcry against the British proscenium stage style; in the second, he used writing as a means of drawing attention to the devastating impact of colonial control on formerly colonized countries. These two goals motivated Sircar to make his theatrical style more pertinent in order to bring attention to the consequences of colonization. The idea of reserving his theatre for indoor shows did not satisfy Sircar. He believed that he could not achieve his goal of raising public awareness of injustice and exploitation through the medium of theatre. The goal will never be achieved since the common people are too poor to afford theatre. The primary objective of this dissertation is to draw attention to the problems associated with colonization, such as the injustices and hardships endured by the people.

Vishwkarma Govind, Singh Dr. Rishi Pal (2019) Colonialism and its aftereffects on nations and peoples that were formerly under its rule are the focus of post-colonialism. The concept, which refers to the time after a colonized nation gains its independence, came into common usage among philosophers following World War II. The literary scholars of the late 1970s began to pay more attention to the philosophical, economic, and cultural impacts of colonization on the countries that were impacted, in addition to the political and cultural ones. The term "post-colonialism" has been defined differently by different philosophers. There are two main reasons why Badal Sircar's literature and theatrical work are important from a postcolonial perspective. It was a backlash against the British proscenium stage style, and secondly, he used to write to draw attention to the negative impact of colonial rule on countries that had been colonized. These two goals motivated Sircar to make his theatrical style more pertinent in order to bring attention to the consequences of colonization. Even when his theatre could only host performances indoors, Sircar was not satisfied. He believed that he could not achieve his goal of raising public awareness of injustice and exploitation through the medium of theater. The goal will never be achieved since the common people are too poor to afford theater. The primary objective of this dissertation is to draw attention to the problems associated with colonization, such as the injustices and hardships endured by the people.

Mukherjee Victor (2016) Badal Sircar (1925–2011) was a major figure in modern Bengali theatre, both as a form and a content creator for the people's theatre that emerged in India after independence. Withdrawing from the Western The 'Third Theatre' that Badal Sircar proposed was influenced by works such as 'Poor Theatre' by Jerzy Grotowski, 'Environmental Theatre' by Richard Schechner, and 'The Living Theatre' by Julian Beck and Judith Malina. A break from the First Theatre, an urban proscenium venue, and the Second Theatre, a rural folk theatre, is the 'Third Theatre,' Sircar's creation. Similar to the works of Utpal Dutt, Habib Tanvir, and Safdar Hashmi, Badal Sircar's egalitarian "Third Theatre" had paved the way for a new kind of modern Indian drama with its audience-focused, outdoor, non-proscenium performances. This study endeavors to analyse Sircar's 1976 performative text *Indian History Made Easy* (Sukhapathya Bharater Itihas) and draw connections between the book and the idea of the "Third Theatre."

Fatima Kulsoom (2013) When discussing the development of contemporary Indian theatre, the figure of Badal Sircar inevitably comes up (Mitra 59). A famous first-generation Bengali dramatist of post-colonial India, Badal Sircar was born in July 1925. He got his start in the business as a director and actor in the late 1940s. It was the proscenium stage that introduced him to the theatre. Sircar is well-known for creating his own theatrical style, the "Third Theatre," and for founding his theatre group, "Satabdi." He wrote over fifty plays during his career. Badal Sircar's plays depict the colonial era and the subsequent exploitation of lower-class Indians, as well as their resistance and uprising against this exploitation. But, a strong emotional reaction to the injustices and oppressions

suffered by the downtrodden and oppressed, in his own nation and abroad, has grown to define his reasons for writing. Part one of this study provides an overview of post-colonial philosophy and its elements, while Part two examines the post-colonial themes in Badal Sircar's plays.

III. CONCLUSION

Badal Sarkar's plays show a deep and ongoing engagement with postcolonial India, showing that social liberation and human fulfilment were not certain outcomes of the end of colonial control. Using his vivid imagination, Sarkar shows how colonial and postcolonial power systems are similar, drawing attention to how exploitation, inequality, alienation, and moral rot are still present in independent Indian society. His plays show how colonial tyranny can take new forms when political independence is not accompanied by social development.

Postcolonial people, like Sarkar's characters, have a shattered sense of self because they are torn between hope and despair, antiquity and modernity, defiance and acceptance. A society moulded by colonial legacies and upheld by post-independence institutions bears the psychological and social repercussions, as shown in plays like *Bhoma*, *Michhil*, *Pagla Ghoda*, and *Evam Indrajit*. Sarkar questions nationalist myths from the elite and puts the oppressed's lived reality front and centre by centering on everyday lives and voices that are marginalized.

Postcolonial theatre owes a great deal to Sarkar, especially to his Third Theatre, which revives performance as a democratic, inclusive, and politically active art form by challenging the control of Western theatre. His plays become more ideologically charged through this stylistic innovation, which turns theatre into a tool for social critique and awareness. Finally, the play by Badal Sarkar is an effective example of postcolonial intervention since it calls for ethical accountability and direct action in opposition to entrenched oppressive structures. The intricacies, paradoxes, and unresolved conflicts of postcolonial Indian society are shown in his plays, which still have relevance today.

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