

HIS2B02 - TRENDS IN INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

**SEMESTER II
Core Course**

BA HISTORY

**CBCSSUG (2019)
(2019 Admissions Onwards)**

**School of Distance Education
University of Calicut**

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**HIS2 B02 Trends in Indian Hstoriography
University of Calicut
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Study Material

B.A.HISTORY

**II SEMESTER
CBCSSUG (2019 Admissions Onwards)
HIS2B02 TRENDS IN INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

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MODULE I

Historical Consciousness in Pre-British India

Jain and Bhuddhist tradition

Condition of Hindu Society before Buddha

Buddhism is centered upon the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha, where as Jainism is centered on the life and teachings of Mahavira. Both Buddhism and Jainism believe in the concept of karma as a binding force responsible for the suffering of beings upon earth. One of the common features of Bhuddhism and jainism is the organisation of monastic orders or communities of Monks. Buddhism is a polytheistic religion. Its main goal is to gain enlightenment. Jainism is also polytheistic religion and its goals are based on non-violence and liberation the soul. The Vedic idea of the divine power of speech was developed into the philosophical concept of hymn as the human expression of the etheric vibrations which permeate space and which were first knowable cause of creation itself.

Jainism and Buddhism which were instrumental in bringing about lot of changes in the social life and culture of India. Formula composed of certain sequence of sounds and and rhythms. It was belelived that a hymn could bring victory or defeat in wars. It could assure prosperity of a state or of its enemies. It could be used to win votes in the popular assembly or to silence the arguments of an opponent. A lot of money of state was spent on the occasion of the coronation of the kind and the performance of horse sacrifice. Thousands of Brahmanas were feasted. They all had to be given Dakshina on a liberal scale. A large number of animals were killed on those occasions. The whole of the attention of the state was concentrated on the performance of the sacrifices.

In the history of Indian religions Bhuddhism occupies a unique place and its founder was Bhudha or Gautama or Siddhartha. He is also called “The Enlightened one”. His father's name was Suddhodana and mothers name was Mahamaya. The child called Siddhartha was followed luxurious life and was married at the age of 16 .His wife namely yasodha,at the age of 29, a son was born to him and he was given the name of Rahul.

Teachings of Buddha

Buddha taught for 45 years through conversation, lectures and parables, his method of teaching was unique. Buddha’s conception of religion was purely ethical. He did not care for worship or rituals.Buddha did not bother about the caste system. The simplicity of Budhism was the cause of the spread of Buddhism. The central point was that Buddhist literature seen in two languages Pali and Sanskrit. The Pali canon is divided into Three Pitakas or three baskets or, the Vinayaka pitaka contains disciplinary rules and regulation. Buddhism established an intimate contact between India and foreign countries. The Indian monks and scholars carried the gospel of the Buddha to foreign countries from the third century before Christ onwards and consequently converts those countries looked up to India as holy land ,the cradle of their faith, a pilgrimage to which was the crowning act of the life of a pious house-holder .India's isolation was broken by Buddhism.

Buddhism made a direct appeal to the primary emotions of the people. Its simplicity endeared it to the common folk who came to look upon it as the religion of the country. It is contended that Buddhism helped the evolution of an Indian nation and paved the way for political union of India.

Impact of Buddhism

1. Buddhist religion became popular due to its simplicity. Buddhism created a vast and varied literature in the spoken language which was meant for the common people and not reserved like a secret language for a learned priesthood.
2. The great contribution of Buddhism to India and the world was in the field of sculptures and architecture.
3. Buddhism established a cordial relation between India and foreign countries.
4. The Buddhist Viharas used for educational purposes.
5. The motto of Ahimsa paramo dharmah was closely attached to Buddhism.
6. Another contribution of the Buddhists was the monastic system.

Jainism

There is a lot of similarity between the teachings of Buddha and Mahavira. Both of them belonged to princely families and not to priestly families. Both denied the authority of Vedas and necessity of performing sacrifices and rituals. Mahavira was the last *Thrithankaras*. The name of his father was Sidhartha who was the head of the kshatriya clan called the Jnatikas. Sidhartha was married to Princess Trishala, sister of Chetaka who was the ruler of Vaisali. The original name of Mahavira was Vardhamana. Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. A great generation of Thirthankaras, Saints and scholars deeply attached to this tradition. The term Jaina is derived from the term "Jina" is the common name for the supreme souls who are totally free from all feelings of attachment, aversion, etc. The etymological meaning of the word "Jina" is conqueror. The most important sectarian division in the religious world is between Digambara and Shvetambara. To the Digambara sect, nudity is an essential prerequisite for mendicant life. Another fundamental issue is regarding the question of women's capacity for *Moksha*.

Sacred Scriptures of Jainism

The central point was that most of all ancient Jain texts are written in *prakrita* (an early form of sanskrit). The general outline of the canon is as follows. It is divided into six sections and contains either forty five or forty six books.

1. The Twelve *Angas* or limbs
2. The twelve *upaangas* or secondary limbs.
3. The ten *painnas* or scattered pieces.
4. The six *Cheya suttas*
5. Individual texts (two)
6. The four *mula suttas*

Teachings of Mahavira

Mahavira turned his attention into *Ahimsa*. Mahavira's teaching was based on the tri-ratna or three essential elements of good life were Right faith, Right knowledge, and Right action. Mahavira asked his followers to live a life of virtue and morality. He put great emphasis on *Ahimsa*. Jainism spread in all parts of India. The Jain built *Bhikhsugrihas* or cave dwellings. The most important centres of Jainism were Mathura, Ujjain, and Gujarat. According to him the three essentials for good life were right faith, right knowledge and right action.

Jain literature and writers

Both the Svetambaras and Digambara sects called their sacred books the *Agama -Siddhanta*. The Jain monks wrote *Niryukis* or commentaries. The *Charitha* give the stories of *Thirthankaras*.

Concept of Time in Ancient India

The concept of time is a very significant factor in the historical writing. In the Vedic version, time is the impersonal aspect of God, time is eternal but in the material world time is understood in terms of past, present and future. In ancient period time span reckoned with some important events not with calendar.

The Indian concept of time was cyclic. The *mahayuga* was divided into four parts The *Kritayuga*, *Dwapara yuga*, and *Kali yuga*. The *kali yuga* was the smallest time span of four lakh thirty two thousand years. On the basis of modern calculation the Kaliyuga began in 3102 B C. The central point was that there was space and there was time. But there was no notion that space and time were in any sense the same thing. But then along came Einstein's special theory of relativity and people started talking about space time in which space and time are how facts of the same thing.

Ithihasa-purana tradition

The term used in Sanskrit literature for history was *Ithihasa*, with a literary meaning of thus it was, so it has been or it happened here. The antiquity of *Ithihasa purana* tradition can be traced back to the Vedic age. The earliest reference to the word purana occurs in *Rigveda Samhita*, the oldest Vedic text. The combination of *Ithihasa* and *purana* appear in *Brihadadaranyaka Upanishad*. The *Ithihasa purana* and the Vedas were closely related and equally important. The *Ithihasa purana* were often composed originally by priest poets attached to various tribes. The two epics, *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*, include almost all the elements of historical tradition. The great epics of the Aryans were *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*. *Ramayana* is the oldest and most popular epic and consists of seven books and 2,400 couplets. It was written by Valmiki. Some writers say that the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha* contain very little of history. According to the Orthodox Hindus, *Ramayana* belongs to the Treta Yuga and *Mahabharatha* belongs to the *Dvapara Yuga*. However, this view is not accepted by the modern historians. According to them, the epic period came after the Vedic period and before the Buddhist period. The epic period came after the Vedic period and before the Buddhist period. The value of *Ithihasa purana* tradition is fairly illustrated in some of the Puranic texts. In some of the Purana, *Ithihasa purana* and *Akhyana* have been calculated as almost identical.

Ramayana

The theme of *Mahabharatha* is the conflict between Rama and Ravana. *Ramayana* illustrates the story of Aryanisation of the country. The era of epics witnessed emergence of new castes due to the

intermarriages between different castes. It contains the political affairs belong to the 5th century B.C. In early period it contains 6000 slokas and later it increased up to 12000 and finally consists of with 24000 slokas. According to the story of the *Ramayana*, King Dasaratha ruled at Ayodhya which was the capital of Kosala. He had three wives and four sons. When he became old, he wanted to leave his kingdom and consequently appointed his eldest son Rama as Yuvaraja. The youngest queen Kaikeyi, wanted her own son, Bharata, to be ruler of Ayodhya and consequently got two promises from Dasaratha by which Rama was to be exiled and Bharata was to be made the ruler. Rama was a dutiful son and he decided to carry out the promises of his father. Consequently he left for the jungles accompanied by Sita, his wife, and Lakshmana, his younger brother. As soon as Rama left Ayodhya, Dasaratha died. Bharata refused to accept the throne and tried to persuade Rama to return but the latter refused to do so. While Rama was an exile, Sita was stolen away by Ravana, the King of Ceylon or Srilanka. Sita refused to marry Ravana and consequently was put in prison. Rama and Lakshmana, with the help of Sugriva and Hanuman and their forces, invaded Ceylon. Ravana was defeated and killed and Sita was recovered. When the fourteen years period of exile was over, Rama went back to Ayodhya and became its ruler. Sita was turned out by Rama as there was some criticism against her. While she was in jungles, she gave birth to two sons. Lava and Kush, who were looked after by Valmiki. These children became expert archers. When Rama wanted to perform horse sacrifice, they challenged his armies and ultimately were united with their father. The puranas consider the subjects like nature of creation, the relationship between men and gods. The three main constituents of the Itihasa purana tradition are genealogy, mythology and historical narrative or Vamsavali Charita. Valmiki Ramayana is an epic poem of India which depicts the journey of virtue to annihilate vice, Sri Rama is the Hero and Ramayana his journey.

The epic poem Ramayana is a smriti which is translated as from memories given. Valmiki Ramayana is composed of verses called sloka in Sanskrit language, which is an ancient language from India and a complex meter called Anustup. Thus the structure of Valmiki Ramayana is arranged into six kandas or books and they are

1. *Bala kanda*
2. *Ayodhya kanda*
3. *Aranya kanda*
4. *Kishkindha kanda*
5. *Sundara kanda*
6. *Yuddha kanda*

The importance of Ramayana in Indian Culture

Rama is the hero of the *Ramayana* epic, an incarnation of the God Vishnu. The eldest and favourite son of Dasaratha, king of Ayodhya, he is a virtuous prince and is much loved by the people. The epic's poetic stature and marvellous story means that the story of Rama has been constantly retold by some of India's greatest writers both in Sanskrit and regional languages. It is one of the staples of various dramatic traditions, in court drama, dance-dramas, and in shadow-puppet theatres. In northern India, the annual *Ram-lila* or Rama-play is performed at the autumn festival of *Dussehra* to celebrate with Rama and Sita the eventual triumph of light over darkness.

The Mahabharatha

Mahabharatha is written by Vyasa, who is regarded as the legendary author of the *Mahabharatha*, *Vedas* and *Puranas*. Mahabharatha deals with the political affairs from 10th century B.C. to 4th century A.D. In early period it included 8800 *slokas* or verses. It was known as *Jaya Samhitha*, *Jaya* means victory. Mahabharatha is an ancient Indian epic where the main story revolves around two branches of a family—the Pandavas and Kauravas, who fought in the Kurushetra war, battle for the

throne of Hastinapura. Maha bharata is a classical sanskrit epic of India probably composed between 200 B C and 200 A D. *Mahabharatha* is based on oral stories and legends that exist among the tribes and people of north western and northern India. Mahabharata is a great epic heroic poem. It consist of essence of all scriptures. It is an encyclopaedia of ethics, knowledge, politics, religion, philosophy and Dharma.

Characters in Mahabharata

The most important characters of Mahabharatha can be said to be Krishna, the Pandavas, who are Dharmaraj, Bhim, Arjun, Nakul and Sahdev, the Kouravas, who are group of 99 brothers and one sister (her name was Dushila) headed by the eldest brother, Duryodhana. The most important teachers were Dronacharya and Bhishma. Mahabharatha is an important source of information on the development of Hinduism. It is regarded by Hindus as a text about *dharma* (Hindu Moral Law). The *Mahabharatha* is a rich source of subjects and images that have been reworked in the national literatures of India. The central theme of Mahabharatha deals with the battle of two families and their allies for control of Hastinapura and is narrated by the epics legendary author, Vyasa, and by the main characters of the narrative.

Mahabharatha consist of 18 books, several introductory epic stories, which are very loosely related to the main subjects and images that have been reworked in the national literature of India. *Mahabharatha*, the most renowned epic of India, is the only book of its kind in the whole world. It contains the history of ancient India and all the details of its political, social and religious life. The stories, songs, nursery, tales, anecdotes, parables, the discourses and sayings contained in the epic are marvellous and highly instructive.

Unlike the Ramayana which is described as a conflict between the Aryans and the non-Aryans, the Mahabharata War of Kurushetra affected all the Aryan Kings of India who fought either on one side or the other. The Pandavas had their allies from Kashi, Kosala, Magadha, Matsya, Chedi and the Yadus of Mathura. The allies of the Kurus were the Yavanas, Sakas, Madras, Kambojas, Kaikeyas, Sindhus, Sanviras, the Bhojas, the Andhras the rulers of Mahismati, Avanti and Pragjyotish.

Charithas and Kavyas

It is a new branch of historical writing emerged in the 7th century. It was a continuation of the earlier *itihasa Purana* tradition. Historical biographies were prepared as a consequence to the small regional Kingdoms and growth of power of regional kings and rulers. The most important feature and purpose of the writings of historical biographies were eulogistic. The important historical biographies of ancient India were the *Harsha Charitha* of Bana, *Mushaka vamsa* Kavya of Athulya. The most important point was that the Kavya and Charitha played a vital role in India. Kavya, highly artificial Sanskrit literary style employed in the court epics of India from the early centuries A.D. *Mahakavya* a peculiar form of the Sanskrit literary style is called as Kavya. The important feature and purpose of the writing of historical biographies were eulogistics. The main reason behind the eulogistic was that all the authors were seeking royal patronage. The works generally focused on particular person with single dynasty. The historicity of these biographies are questioned mainly because of literary ornamentation. So the irrelevant facts came as the dominant factor for this writing.

Harsha charitha

Bana wrote *Harsha Charitha* in the 7th century A.D. It is considered as the most important historical biography of ancient India. Banabhatta was a 7th century Sanskrit prose writer and poet of India. *Harsha Charitha* is a monumental historical Romantic fiction in *Akhyayika* form written by Bana

bhatta in eight chapters. Another source of information for the reign of Harsha is *Harsha Charitha* of Bana. Bana was a Brahman. He was a court poet of Harsha. *Harsha Charitha* illustrates the history of the reign of Harsha. In the first chapter of this work denotes the life and family of author himself. The second, third and fourth chapter deal with the ancestors of Harsha and the history of the house of Thanesar. The sixth seventh chapters deal with the wars and conquests of Harsha. The last chapter pictures the different types of religious sects living in the forest of the Vindhya. *Harsha Charitha* throws light upon the socio- economic, religious and political life of India in the time of Harsha. The *Harsha charitha* was the first composition of Bana and is regarded to be the beginning of writing of historic poetic works in Sanskrit language. The *Harsha charitha* ranks as the first historical biography in Sanskrit.

In the history of classical Sanskrit literature which at least 2000 years old poet Banabhatta stands like a Himalayan peak in giving a new literary dimension to Sanskrit prose. His spectacular success could be gauged by the numerous imitations of his style which were followed by successive poets. The *Harshacharitha* of Bana contains six chapters of which the first two are devoted to a detailed account of the family history, starting from the lineage of the family. According to the text, Bana was born in a village called Prithikula on the banks of the river Shona in the region of Kanyakubja almost at the close of the sixth century.

The village was a settlement of Brahmins celebrated for their scholarship and virtuous life. Bana lost his mother early in childhood and lost his father too when he was 14 years. This untimely demise of his father threw Bana into deep distress, though the family was rich and affluent. With a view to overcoming mental depression, Bana took wandering life. He also received an all round education both in secular as well as in spiritual fields.

Mushakavamsa Kavya

Mushakavamsa Kavya written by Atula in the 11th century. It is considered as the historical chronicle of Kerala. This deals with the dynastic history of the rulers of Kolathunadu, the northern part of Kolathu nadu. It also included the chronology of the kings of the Mushaka dynasty from its founder Ramaghata to Srikanta. In this work Atula had mixed up historical facts with legends. He was tried to relate the geneological origin of his king parasurama and the Yadavakula. *Mushakavamsa kavya* written in Sanskrit language. Athula's *Mushaka vamsa kavya* is semi legendary accounts of the rulers of the Ezhimala. *Mushaka vamsa kavya*, a Sanskrit political work written by Atula, the court poet of Srikanta, the Mushaka king of Ezhimala. It describes the history of Mushaka Kingdom from its foundation to the time of Srikanta.

Mushaka vamsa describes in detail the chronology, geneology and history of the Mushaka kings. It also refers to the establishment of cities and temples, conduct of wars, suppression of revolts, marriage alliance, rule of succession and the king's patronage of arts and letters and religion. The *kavya* is important as the earliest survival of an independent of dynastic and regional history in Sanskrit literature produced almost a century before. The author of this work, Atula may be regarded as the morning star of Kerala historiography.

Rajatarangini

Ancient India produced several historical biographies and geneologies. It is the dynastic history or the dynastic chronicle produced in Kashmir by Kalhana in 12th century. AD. It is the chronicle on the Kings of Kashmir. It is considered as first historical work produced in India. Kalhana was the son of Kalpaka, who was the minister of King Harsha in Kashmir. The writing of *Rajatarangini* was completed by him around 1148 A.D. The text *Rajatarangini* consists of eight books and 8000 verses. Arueel Stein translated it into English language. The work is divided into three parts, the first part

includes ,the first three books, generally based on tradition. It describe the legendary Kings. Second part includes the next three books, covering the Karkota and Utpala dynasties, based upon the existing chronicles. The third part consist of the last two books deals with contemporary Lohara dynasty, which were written on the basis of eye witness account, personnel knowledge and prasastis of earlier kings etc.

Kalhana did not consider himself as an historian, but as a poet or *Kavi*. According to him “only a poet can bring the past with eye of his mind, by divine institution”. He states that the purpose of the work is to establish true places and time of kings and inform the reader about the events of the ancient days without considering the different tradition. He belives that while studying history of earlier reigns, the wise man might foresee the fortuness and misfortuness of Kings. Kalhana had a deep feeling of regional patriotism, that is he had written that the rulers of Kashmir had conquered the whole India in ancient days. His ideal king is strong and should be benovolent towards his subjects and sympathetic towards their wishes. He also wants the bureaucracy should not get more influence in goverenment. He was against petty feudal cheifs as they had brought political anarchy in the Kingdom.

In these works Kalhana gives details of the careier and achievements of each Kings of Kashmir in chronological order. He also explaines about the foundation of Kashmir by Prajapati Kasyapa, who had raised it from the great lake. He mentiones that in the year 653 of Kaliyuga the first king Kashmir came into power, in *rajatharangini* Kalhana also gives the minute details of the contemporary ruler Jayasimha. He beleived in the theory of Karma. He states that good kings arise through the merits of the people and the oppressive kings inevitably suffer the same. He also belived in fate, he states that fate leads the kings even against their will.

Zia Ud Din Barani

He was considered as the most important historical Chronicler of the Sultanate period. He was born in 1286 A D in a Sayyid family of Kaithal. He had his education at Delhi and later he rose to high position in the court of Alaud din Khalji, Ghiyasudhin Tughlaq, Muhammed bin Tughlaq. He passed away at the age 73. It is belived that Barani wrote 10 books but some of them are not traced, *Tarikh-i-Firoz shahi* and *Fatwa -i-Jahandari* are the famous works of Barani. For these works he gathered information from his associates like Amir Khusru. Barani considers Firoz Tughlaq as the personification of an ideal monarch. He propagated his philosophy of history through his works.

Fatwa-i-Jahandari was his another important work. It deals with the creation of the world, teachings of the prophets, ideals of government and principles of administration like the right and duties of rulers, special privileges of nobles, crime and punishment, organisation of the army and maintenance of law and order. The language of the work Persian but Hindustan words occurs frequently. His style of presentation is simple and lucid, but preface is ornamental.

Abul Fazl

He was a court historian of Mughal India under the reign of Akbar the great. He is considered as the most important historian not only of the Mughal period but of the entire Medieval India. He was a man of wide culture and spiritual ideas. He was also one of the *Navaratnas* in the court of Akbar. He was born in 1551 as the son of Sheik Mubarak at Agra,after having his education he became a teacher. He wrote *Akbar nama*. It includes official records, eye witness accounts, interviews with officials, nobles and provincial rulers. *Akbarnama* has three parts, the first part deals with political history of Babar and Humayun and the background of the birth of Akbar. Second parts includes the details of Akbar reign upto 1602 and third part is known as *Ain-I-Akbari*, and consists of the details of administration, population,trade, and commerce, industry, revennue system, social customes and

Hindu culture etc. *Akbar nama* became reference book for the modern historians because it contains the authentic informations about the reign of Akbar. Akbar namah was written to provide a detailed description of Akbar's reign in the traditional diachronic sense of recording politically significant events across time aswell as synchronic picture of Akbar's empire geographic, social administrative and cultural without reference to chronology. In fact Abul Fazl may be regarded as a pioneer in the field of collection and utilization of statistical data for the purpose of historical study. *Aini Akbari* was completed in the 42nd regnal year but a slight addition was made to it in the 43rd regnal year on the account of the conquest of Berar. Abul Fazl was not only one of the eminent court poets of Akbar, but was also a favourite courtier and trusted secretary of Akbar. Abul Fazl was perhaps the most gifted historians of India.

Muhammad Qasim Ferishta

Muhammad Ferishta was considered as the important pillar in the historiography of Mughal Period. He was hailed from Deccan. *Tareekh e Farishta* by Muhammad Qasim Farishta. In this work he narrated the events without making any didactic statements and showing favour to anybody. It contains the history of north India from the invasion of Muhammad Ghazni to Akbar. In 1587 Firishta was serving as the captain of guards of King Murtuza Nizam Shah when claimed the throne of Ahmed Nagar. In short Mughal historians had no philosophy of history, they could not improve the techniques and methods of historical writings, they recorded the events only for pleasing their masters. They could not provide their own interpretation to the evidences which collected by them.

MODULE II

Colonial and Nationalist Historiography

Colonial Historiography

The term colonial historiography has been used in two senses. One relates to the story of the colonial countries, while the other refers to the work which were influenced by colonial ideology of domination. It is in the second sense that most historians today write about the colonial historiography. In fact the practice of writing about the colonial countries by the colonial officials was related to the desire for domination and justification of the colonial rule. Therefore, in most such historical works there was criticism of Indian society and culture. At the sametime, there was praise for the western culture and values and glorification of the individual who established the empire in India. The histories of India written by James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Vincent Smith and many others are pertinent examples of this trend. They established the colonial school of historiography which denigrated the subject people. The basic idea embedded in the tradition Colonial Historiography was the paradigm of a backward society's progression towards the pattern of modern European civil and political society under tutelage of imperial power. The guiding hand of the British administrators, education combined with "Filtration" to the lower orders of society, implantation of such institutions and laws as the British thought Indians were fit for, and protection of pax Britannica from the threat of disorder nationalism posed among the subject people -these were the ingredients needed for slow progress India must make. Sometimes this agenda was presented as "the civilizing mission of Britain".

An orientalist representation of India was common, promoting the idea of the superiority of modern western civilization, this is the term recently brought into prominence by Edward Said and others but the Indian nationalist intelligenstias had identified and criticised this trend in British writings,

from James mill onwards. It was the product of British colonialism in India. In modern Indian history, the school or tradition of history writing which was influential in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Many intellectual influences co- existed in this tradition. The Indologists and orientalist were the real force behind the development of such enquiry. The main theme of their historical writing was better criticism of all Indian things and an uncritical justification of all British rules. They believed that the people of India could only be changed progressively through the Christianity and missionary education :Thus stressed on the conversation of Indians to Christianity.

Indology

The word Indology was coined by the British. In general Indology is the study of Indian culture. It comprises so many disciplines of knowledge. This branch of knowledge deeply rooted in India's past. History, archaeology, philosophy, literature and linguistics are included in the vast area of Indology. Indology took form in eighteenth century, which is closely related to the invention of Sanskrit by western scholars. The European School pioneered Indology in the 18th century, and comprised mostly of German and British scholars. The American Indology emerged challenging colonialism and gave more emphasis to regional language. In short Indology is the study of India, Indology includes the study of Sanskrit literature and Hinduism along with the other Indian religions, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Pali language. Indological perspectives claims to understand Indian society through the concepts, theories and frameworks that are closely attached to Indian civilization.

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The Asiatic Society

Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society in 1784 at Calcutta. His aim was to start a centre for Asian studies including almost everything concerning man and nature within the geographical limits of the continent. The Asiatic Society realized the field of research in a wide dimension. It includes manuscript collection, libraries, museums and various research publications. The notable point is that Asiatic Society consists of a huge collection of illustrated manuscripts of different representatives. Asiatic Society is a unique institution having served as a foundation head of all literary and scientific activities. It was visualised as a centre for Asian studies including everything concerning man and nature within the geographical limits of the continent. The library of the Asiatic Society has a huge collection of many books and Journals of all major languages of the World. It also has a collection of large number of maps, microfiches, microfilms, paintings, pamphlets and photographs.

The museum of the Asiatic Society was established in 1814 by N Wallich. It has transferred most of its collections to Indian museum of Calcutta. The main purpose of the Asiatic Society was to collect the old Sanskrit manuscript. *The central point is that William Jones gave transformation to Abhijana Sakunthalam similarly translation of Hitopadesa of Vishnunarman, publication of Ritusamhara of Kalidasa, which was the first Sanskrit text in print, the translation of Gita Govinda of Jaya deva are the contributions of William Jones.*

William Jones

William Jones was born in London. He was an Anglo-welsh philologist, especially known for his proposition of the existence of a relationship among European and Indian languages, which would be known as Indo-European. Jones was the first to propose a racial division of India involving an Aryan invasion but at that time there was sufficient evidence to support it, Jones was the initiator of Hydes note books during his term on the bench of the supreme court of Judicature. Sir William Jones was a distinguished scholar of Oriental languages and poet. In his youth, Jones practiced his language skills in translation. His interest in the Orient was also aroused by his French tutor Madame

Fauques -de-Vasculuse. The note books are the peculiar Primary source books source of information for the life in the 18th century. Jones was the first westerner who studied Indian classical music, and the first person who attempted to classify Indian plants and animals.

Max Muller

He was a German born philologist and orientalist, he spent most of his life in Britain. He was put forward the idea of Indian Studies and the discipline of study of religion. Max muller strongly advocated for the necessity of reforms in Hinduism in order to propagate views of christianity. He was one of the founders of western academic field of Indian studies and wrote both scholarly and popular works on the subject of mullers connection with sanskritists based at Oxford University led to career in Britain, where he eventually became the leading intellectual commentator on the culture of India. Muller's view on religion were shaped by German idealism and the comparative study of language. Muller's account of that process was largely lexicographical. Maxmuller was a champion in the field of vedic studies. In 1868 the University of Oxford created a new chair of comparative philology and muller became its first occupant. Maxmuller strongly stated that the need for reforms in Hinduism in order to impose views of Christianity on Hinduism. The most important point is that Indologist Maxmuller however notes that "if religio meant originally attention, regard, reverence, it is quite clear that it did not continue long to retain that simple meaning'. According to Maxmuller, the Latin root religion of "religion" was more and more exclusively applied to the inward feeling of reverence of the gods and to the outward manifestation of that reverence in worship and sacrifice'.

Maxmuller made intensive study of many cultures around the world, especially India. According to Maxmuller "religion is something which has passed and still passing through a historical evolution and all we can do is to follow it up to its origin, and then try to comprehend in its later historical developments". He argues that what religion was in ancient times, today would have been only called law".

Nationalist Historiography

Nationalist historiography means that the historical writings produced or reproduced by the Indian historians highlight the Indian history from a national point of view. The national point of view represents the national culture and tradition. Every nation had its own culture and traditions and every nation wants to spread it. It can only be possible through literature. History is a part and parcel of literature, therefore, what history is written by a nation represents its culture and traditions that is called the nationalist historiography. Nationalist approach played a vital role in Indian historiography since the second half of the 19th century. Indian nationalist historians tried to prove their falsity of colonial historical narrative on the basis of analysis of existing historical narrative on the basis of analysis of existing historical source and also they were raised as political weapon to eliminate foreign rule in India. Ideological studies were regarded as a binding factor of Indian people and their sentiments. National pride played a big role in providing inspiration to common people and historical consciousness began to grow steadily as never before. The 19th century British historians played a crucial role in providing a nationalist reaction. This reaction came in the form of a nationalist approach in historiography. An important element in this approach was an effort to restore national self esteem and the glorification of India's past. Another element was the propagation of economic nationalism through the depiction of the ruinous economic consequences of British rule in India. Most important of all, nationalist historiography tried to re-discover India for the modern Indian mind and promote political integration and anti imperialist sentiments to further the cause of nation building in India. The nationalist contend with not only the earlier imperialist bias in historiography but also a communal interpretation of history that began to gain influence from the early decades of the century.

Nationalist historiography played an important role in providing an ideological basis of the freedom struggle and in analysing the economic consequences of imperialism. The focus of nationalist attention was an external that is imperialistic exploitation of India, not so much the internal i.e., class exploitation and consequent class conflict within Indian Society. Greater concentration on the later aspect was the consequence of the influence of the Marxist approach, an influence increasingly evident from the 1940s. The phrases nationalist school and nationalist history can only be understood in the background of the colonial domination and colonial historiography. The nationalist historiography has certain defects too, that is some methodological defects, some chauvinist approaches on caste, cultural, and social bias. Emotion and sentiment usurped the place of reason, balance, perspective, and objectivity—all became a causality. They also failed and ignored certain aspects and issues like tribes, women, downtrodden people, marginalised societies etc. some sensational account brought about of communal identities. It glorified Indian past and culture and events instead of making critical analysis.

Vincent Arthur Smith

Vincent Arthur Smith was an Irish Indologist and art historian. He was born in Dublin on 3 June 1848 which was then part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. He passed the Indian civil service exam in 1871 and was appointed to what would become the United Provinces in India. His works were closely attached to Indian history. His inclinations and interests turned him early towards studying its archaeology and history. Smith was honoured with the award of Companion of the Order of Indian Empire and awarded doctorate by Dublin University in 1919. He died in Oxford on 6th Feb 1920.

His first publications appeared in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society, and dealt with Bundelkhand and its popular songs, early inhabitants and history in 1875, 1877 and 1881. The typical examples of Vincent Smith's great men history was Akbar the Great Mogul 1542-1605 is a biography of Akbar. The great men history of V A Smith played a vital role in history. The most important work Akbar the Great Mughal (1542- 1605) is a peculiar work of V A Smith. This book was focused on Akbar's religious beliefs and interests. This book traces Akbar's ancestry and early years, his accession to the throne and his regency under Bayram Khan, his many conquests including Bihar. The Afghan kingdom of Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Kashmir, Sind, parts of Orissa and parts of Deccan plateau.

The most important point was that the writing of history is closely associated with the culture and tradition. The central point was that history is written by a nation that represents its culture and traditions that is called the nationalist historiography. Nationalist historiography is considered as an indispensable feature of Indian historiography since the second half of the 19th century. The focal point was that nationalist historians tried to propagate nationalist feeling among the people. They were also raised as political weapon to eliminate foreign rule in India. Ideological studies were considered as a binding factor of Indian people and their sentiments. The nationalist thinking became a voice of the educated Indians who started opposing the writings of British officials for disgracing the Indian culture and religion in the western world. The central point was that the British writers also tried to impose their own ideology and supremacy upon Indians. The Indian Nationalists such as R C Majumdar, Dadabhai Naoroji, Balagandhar Tilak, Bipan Chandra, Lalajpat Rai and others through their writings initiated furthered nationalist historiography in the real sense. This approach was further developed by the scholars such as RC Majumdar, R G Pradhan, Pattambhi B Sitaramaya, B R Nanda etc. Many Indian nationalists like Naoroji, Banerjee, R C Dutt, M G Ranade have tried to explain the western impact of British rule. However they have not presented the plight of Indian economy in a Marxist framework but in a nationalist perspective. The Indian revolutionaries of Second phase such as Bhagat Singh, Chandra Sekhar

Azad, Rajaguru, Sukhdev, B C Vohra, J N Sanyal, Ajay Ghose, Shiv verma, Manmath Nath Gupta etc.

K P Jayaswal

He was born in Mirzapur north western provinces and graduated from Allahabad university. Jayaswal was an Indian historian and lawyer. He was the champion of nationalist movement. He put forward the intellectual ideas and valuable contributions to nationalist historiography. He was regarded as the one of the intellectual forces behind the nationalist movement. Jayaswal's work Hindu polity (1918) and History of India (1933) are classics of ancient Indian historical literature. He also played a vital role in excavating and restoring ancient sites, including the University of Nalanda in Modern Bihar. He was also an expert in numismatics, and his discovery of several coins of Maurya and Gupta periods led to his being first Indian to be invited to speak at the Royal Asiatic Society of London in 1931. At the same time Historian R C Majumdar criticized his theories about the Gupta history. He was twice president of the numismatics society of India and was awarded the degree of doctor of philosophy by Banaras Hindu University and Patna University.

R C Majumdar

Ramesh Chandra Majumdar was a historian and professor of Indian history coming from Kayastha family. Majumdar was born in Khandarpara on 4th December 1884. Majumdar began his teaching career as a lecturer at Dacca govt training college. Majumdar started his research on ancient India. He was widely travelled and wrote detailed histories of Champa (1927), Suvarnavipa (1929). He was also the president of the Asiatic Society (1966-68) and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. The most important work "The history and culture of the Indian People" was published in 1977. He taught Indian history in the University of Chicago and University of Pennsylvania. He was also the president of the Asiatic Society (1966-1968). The central point was that he was the principal member of editorial committee to author a history of the freedom struggle in India. But he left the govt job due to the conflict with the education minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on the Sepoy Mutiny, and published his own book, The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857.

R C Dutt

Dutt was born into a distinguished Bengali Kayastha family well known for its members literary and academic achievements. He entered the university of Calcutta presidency college in 1864. He entered the Indian civil service as an magistrate of Alipur in 1871. He was a major economic historian of India of nineteenth century. Not only his thesis on deindustrialisation of India remains powerful. Romesh chandra was a civil servant and economic historian. According to him the Britishers were not interested in the development of Indian economy. However he praised the Britishers for bringing into India modern civilization, peace, modern education, modern science and technology and so on. They had built up a strong and efficient administrative machinery and framed good laws. For all these Dutt had high regards towards the British administration could not improve the material prosperity of Indian people, rather it had worsened gradually Indian people became the victims of about the relative property. Famine was a contributory cause of poverty in India. But there were another cause responsible for Indian poverty.

K A Nilakanda Sastri

K A Nilakanda Sastri was born in a Telugu Niyoga Brahmin family, Kalladai kurichi near Thirunelveli on 2nd August 1892. He was an Indian historian who wrote on South Indian history. Many of his books from the standard reference works on the subject. He is regarded as the greatest and most prominent among professional historians of South India. Nilakanda Sastri was a recipient of the

third Indian civilian honour of Padma Bhushan. He is regarded as the greatest and most prolific among historians of South India. *A History of South India: from pre-historic times to the fall of Vijayanagar* is a book of history written by Indian historian. *A History of South India* is widely recognised as a classic and was the standard textbook in colleges for teaching South Indian history for over four decades. The first manuscript of *A History of South India* was completed in August 1947. Tamil historian A R Venkatachalapathy regards him as arguably the most distinguished historian of Twentieth century. He was appointed as ex-officio director of archaeology for the Mysore state in 1954. He was also the president of All-India oriental conference in the early 1950s.

Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai

Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai known as elamkulam was an Indian historian. He was the champion of Southern Indian History, Kerala history in particular. He was one of the major proponents of the imperial state model in medieval Kerala history. Major portions of Elamkulam's work are written in Malayalam with a few in Tamil and English. He was also considered as one of the top authorities in Vattezhuthu script and early Malayalam language. Most of his research findings published during his later years. He published more than 20 books in Malayalam including one in Tamil and two in English. Pillai died on 4th March 1973. The central point was that the major works of Elamkulam closely attached to Indian marital art, northern Kalarippatt. Some of the important work of Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai include *Keralam anchum arrum Noottandukalil*, *Janmi Sambradayam Keralathil*, *Kerla Bhashayude Vikasa parinanamangal*, *Unnuneeli sandesam* and *Leela thilakam*. One of the major researches of Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai concerned the historical details behind the origin of the Indian marital art, northern *kalaripatt*. He had put forward his reasoning to establish the fact that this form of art, which was to be practiced widely in Kerala, originated in the 11th century A D, during the period of warfare among the Cholas and the Cheras. His researched studies also concern the works of the historical legends like Tipu Sultan. The works of Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai have been well preserved in the libraries. The modern-day historians like K. Sivasankaran Nair depend on the path shown by Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai to work on the history of Kerala.

MODULE III

Critique of Paradigms

Oriental Despotism

Oriental despotism as an idea has emerged during the early years of the British administration in India. Oriental despotism envisages a society ruled over by a despotic ruler without any codified law except for the decrees of the ruler. The ruler and his court appropriate the surplus production and rules over his subjects without any concern for them.

Oriental despotism had been instrumental for the Europeans in understanding the Asian societies and their governments. Oriental despotism, the concept itself has gone through many a conceptual evolutions over the centuries, since its inception in the Aristotelian philosophy.

Several British thinkers had written on the specific nature of governments prevalent in India prior to British rule. They unanimously agreed on the idea that India had lived under despotism for centuries. The centuries-old Islamic rule over India was, in their opinion, purely based on the personal choices of the ruler, or the monarch. Any degree of decentralisation or public participation was thus null. Alexander Dow, an orientalist, had argued that the tropical climate in which Indians lived had made them to lead an easy and less-hardship life, care free of the defences and translating

the political situation always susceptible to external aggression and subsequent subservience.

The theory of oriental despotism gave the British administration ample reasons to establish their colonial rule over India. They took it upon as a god-given mandate to rule over and eventually civilize Indians. This civilising task which went down in history as The White Man's Burden has its origin in the idea of oriental despotism.

The way of governance the British introduced in India was no less authoritarian, contrasting with the on-paper plan of benevolent British rule. A justification for this was furthered saying that it may not be necessary to provide Indians with a just rule as they lacked the idea of freedom and liberty historically.

Sooner or later the English realised that India had her own sets of laws and systems of governance. This was found by the Enlightenment seekers who eventually certified India as an exotic place. The existing laws of India were collected and along with the British laws was made into a new corpus of laws to administer India. The newly introduced system had inherently British ways of administration like the division of power into - legislature, executive and judiciary each effectively checking on each other. The British introduced private ownership of land and the erstwhile zamindars were entrusted with tax collection. According to Edmund Burke, the guilt of colonial rule from the British part can be neutralised by establishing a just rule over India. However on the actual front of administration the British mistrusted Indians and always treated them with suspicion.

The British imagined their rule over India as a civilising mission as Indians, as they confronted, were lacking it. Thus oriental despotism had been used as an ideological justification for colonialism.

Asiatic Mode of Production

Mode of production is one of the most fundamental concepts in Marxism. Marx discovered this concept chiefly in the process of formulating his theory of materialistic history. In Marxian view periods of history are differentiated on the basis of modes of material production. The mode of production is determined by the forces of production and relations of production. Marx has identified four modes of production namely Asiatic mode of production, Ancient mode of production, Feudal mode of production and Capitalist mode of production.

The concept of Asiatic mode of production refers to a specific original mode of production. This is distinct from the ancient slave mode of production or the feudal mode of production. The Asiatic mode of production is characteristic of primitive communities in which ownership of land is communal. These communities are still partly organised on the basis of kinship relations. State power, which expresses the real of imaginary unity of these communities, controls the use of essential economic resources, and directly appropriates part of the labour and production of the community.

This mode of production constitutes one of the possible forms of transition from classless to class societies; it is also perhaps the most ancient form of this transition. It contains the contradiction of this transition, i.e. the combination of communal relations of production with emerging forms of the exploiting classes and of the State. Marx did not leave behind any systematic presentation of the history of India.

He set down his observations on certain current Indian questions which attracted public attention, or drew materials from India's past and present conditions to illustrate parts of his more general arguments. The concept of Asiatic mode of production is therefore inadequate for an understanding of Indian history and society.

Marx made no full-scale study of Indian society. The ideology of Hinduism was to him an ideology of an outdated social milieu. He was most skeptical of a Hindu golden age of the bygone era. British rule in India was seen by Marx as a graft on to Asiatic despotism.

Hydraulic Society

In sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the European scholars had begun to explore the existing social systems and relations in their newly-found geographies in almost every corner of the globe.

By exploring the civilisations like India, China, Near East etc., they realised that the systems prevalent in those societies were at odds with that which they had in Europe. The newly explored societies came to be called as Oriental or Asiatic societies which had a despot or highest authority ruling over them.

The classical economists while studying the oriental societies noted specifically the large networks of waterworks installed and maintained for the purpose of irrigation and communication.

The state being the largest landowner controlling the largest networks of irrigation and communication thus acts as the absolute power- the hydraulic society.

Hydraulic society is both agromanerial and agrobureaucratic in character.

Aryan Supremacy Theory

The invention of an Aryan race in nineteenth century Europe was to have, as we all know, far-reaching consequences on world history. Its application to European societies culminated in the ideology of Nazi Germany. Another sequel was that it became foundational to the interpretation of early Indian history and there have been attempts at a literal application of the theory to Indian society.

It was initially both curiosity and the colonial requirement of knowledge about their subject peoples, that led the officers of the East India Company serving in India to explore the history and culture of the colony which they were governing.

Similarities between Greek and Latin and Sanskrit, noticed even earlier with William Jones' reading of Sandracottos as Candragupta. Two other developments took place. One was the suggestion of single origin of all related languages, an idea which was applied to speakers of the languages as well. The second was the comparative philology, which aroused considerable interest, especially after the availability of Vedic texts in the early nineteenth century. Monogenesis was strengthened with the notion of an ancestral language, Indo-Germanic or Indo European as it came to be called as also in the origins of some European languages and their speakers being traced back to Iran and India or still further, to a Central Asian homeland. The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed discussions on the inter-relatedness of language, culture and race, and the notion of biological race came to the forefront. The experience of imperialism where the European 'races' were viewed as advanced, and those of the colonised, as 'lesser breeds', reinforced these identities, as did social Darwinism.

Prominent among these identities was Aryan, used both for the language and the race, as current in the mid-nineteenth century. Aryan was derived from the Old Iranian arya used in the Zoroastrian text, the Avesta, and was a cognate of the Sanskrit arya. The application of these ideas to Indian origins was strengthened by Max Mueller's work on Sanskrit and Vedic studies and in particular his

editing of the Rigveda during the years from 1849 to 1874. He ascribed the importance of this study to his belief that the Rigveda was the most ancient literature of the world, providing evidence of the roots of Indo-Aryan and the key to Hinduism. Together with the Avesta it formed the earliest stratum of Indo-European language group.

Max Mueller maintained that there was an original Aryan homeland in central Asia. He postulated a small Aryan clan on a high elevation in central Asia, speaking a language which was not yet Sanskrit or Greek, a kind of proto-language ancestral to later Indo-European languages. From here and over the course of some centuries, it branched off in two directions; one came towards Europe and the other migrated to Iran, eventually splitting again with one segment invading north-western India. The common origin of the Aryans was for him unquestioned. The northern Aryans who are said to have migrated to Europe are described by Max Mueller as active and combative and they developed the idea of a nation, while the southern Aryans who migrated to Iran and to India were passive and meditative, concerned with religion and philosophy. This description is still quoted for the inhabitants of India and has even come to be a cliché in the minds of many. Having posited the idea of a common origin for the languages included as Indo-European and among which was Indo-Aryan, common origin was extended to the speakers of these languages. The theory of Aryan race became endemic to the reconstruction of Indian history and the reasons for this are varied. The pre-eminence given to role of the brahmanas in the Orientalist construction of Indology was endorsed by the centrality of the Vedas.

The Aryan theory also provided the colonised with status and self-esteem, arguing that they were linguistically and racially of the same stock as the colonisers. Missionary views in the later half of the nineteenth century were familiar to many Indians. Among these, Jyotiba Phule provided a radical exposition of the Aryan theory. He viewed caste relations as relations of inequality, where society had been divided into a hierarchy of ranked castes. By emphasising the importance of the non-Aryans he used the theory of Aryan race to argue a different origin and status for the lower castes. Referred to as the dasas and the shudras in brahmanical texts, the lower castes were, according to him, the indigenous people. They were the rightful inheritors of the land, whose rights had been wrongfully appropriated by the invading Aryans, and who had subjugated them and reduced them to a lower caste status.

The upper-castes had their own use for the theory and a twist which suited their social aspirations and political needs. The theory was used to argue the superiority of the upper castes and promote their self-esteem by maintaining that not only were the upper-castes the lineal descendents of they were also racially related to the European Aryan.

Dayananda Sarasvati, seeking to return to the social and religious life of the Vedas, used the Vedic corpus as the blueprint of his vision of Indian society. But he argued that the Vedas are the source of all knowledge including modern science, a view with which Max Mueller disagreed. He underlined the linguistic and racial purity of the Aryans and the organisation which he founded, the Arya Samaj, was described by its followers as 'the society of the Aryan race'. The Aryas were the upper castes and the untouchables were excluded. The innovation, or according to some the revival, of, ritual called shuddhi or purification made it possible for those converted to other religions to be accepted back as caste Hindus. The same ritual, but with less frequency, was also used to 'purify' those outside caste, into being given a caste status.

These views coincided with the emergence of nationalism in the late nineteenth century in India, articulated mainly by the middle class, which was drawn from the upper caste and was seeking both legitimacy and an identity from the past. Origins therefore became crucial. To legitimise the status of this middle class, its superior Aryan origins and lineal descent was emphasised. It was assumed that only the upper caste Hindu could claim Aryan ancestry. This effectively excluded not only the

lower castes but also the non-Hindus, even those of some social standing. Aryanism therefore became an exclusive status.

Romila Thapar's Critique on Colonial and Nationalist Historiography

Colonial historiography

The base for colonial history writings was laid in the 18th and 19th Century in the tradition of the western historiography. Indian history writings internalized the contemporary popular western theories and methods. Of those there were two prominent thoughts and traditions which influenced history writing. They were Liberal ideas of the age of Reason and ideas of Romanticism.

Liberal ideology of Age of Reason : These ideas are based on utilitarianism and found in the articles of British liberal history write-ups. They opined that modern political rule has to keep the interest of the majority and felt that history is the story of human society's progress and economic growth and considered the medieval age as the period of behind faith, superstition which suppressed individual freedom. They thought that it was only the west with full of civilization and considered other societies as still uncivilized. Such historians are called "Whigs". They believed that it was the duty of Europe brings other human societies to the level of civilization. At the end of the 19th century historians focused more on age of Reason and considered even as science and began to use scientific and critical methods to the study of history and sources of history. Another set of scholars of this group even proposed that History should reveal human history and the same should be used to carve future like science. These historians are called positivist historians.

Romanticist Ideology : Romanticism of the 19th Century was a reaction to modernism of Europe and to the age of Reason. Truth is not limited to thought and considered the importance of human feelings. They believed in the mysteries of nature and super natural elements. They did not consider medieval period as the dark-age but on the contrary accused that the growing industrialization and material comforts were barreling human culture. They gave a yearning call of 'Back to Nature' and looked at ancient cultures with a ray of hope. Some of the historians of the Romantic tradition played important role in building History of India. In 1784 Warren Hastings established Royal Asiatic Society. The main purpose of this society was to have clear and understanding about social practices, law, religion and way of life of the ruled ones by the ruling ones. Asiatic Society became the platform to study and analyze history, science, arts, literature and culture of Asian Countries. They believed that India as the Cradle for Sublime thoughts of human civilization. They introduced religion, science and literature of India to the Western world. The people of Britain who were dissatisfied with utilitarianism found new treasure in Indian literature.

An Orientalist representation of India was general, promoting the thought of the superiority of contemporary Western civilization; this is a theme recently brought into prominence by Edward Said and others, but the Indian nationalist intelligentsias had recognized and criticized this trend in British writings from James Mill onwards. The thought that India had no unity until the British unified the country was commonly given prominence in historical narratives; beside with this thesis there was a representation of the eighteenth century India as a dark century full of chaos and barbarity until the British came to the rescue. Several late nineteenth century British historians adopted Social Darwinist notions in relation to the India; this implied that if history is a thrash about flanked by several peoples and cultures, akin to the thrash about in the middle of the species, Britain having approach to the top could be ipso facto legitimately measured to be superior and as the fittest to rule. India was, in the opinion of several British observers, a stagnant society, arrested at a stage of development; it followed that British rule would illustrate the path of progress to a higher stage; hence the thought that India needed Pax Britannica. The mythification of heroic empire builders and Rulers of India in historical narratives was a part of the rhetoric of imperialism; as Eric Stokes has

remarked, in British writings on India the focus was on the British protagonists and the whole country and its people were presently a shadowy background. As we would expect, colonial historiography displayed initially a critical stance towards the Indian nationalist movement since it was perceived as a threat to the good work done by the British in India; at a later stage when the movement intensified the attitude became more intricate, since some historians showed plain hostility while others were more sophisticated in their denigration of Indian nationalism. In common, while some of these features and paradigms are commonly to be established in the colonial historians' discourse, it will be unjust to ignore the information that in course of the first half of the twentieth century historiography out-grew them or, at least, presented more sophisticated versions of them. They found many scientific facts in Indian astronomy, mathematics and other knowledge forms.

Nationalist Historiography

Nationalist Historiography means that the historical writings produced or reproduced by the Indian historians highlight the Indian history from a national point of view. The national point of view represents the national culture and tradition. Every nation has its own culture and traditions and every nation wants to spread it. It can only be possible through the literature. History is a part and parcel of literature, therefore, what history is written by a nation that represents its culture and traditions. That is called the nationalist historiography.

Critique of Nationalist Historiography- Romila Thapar

The nationalist thinking became a voice of the educated Indians who started opposing the writings of British officials for disgracing the Indian culture and religion in the Western world. The Indian nationalists such as Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee, A.C. Mazumdar, Dadabhai Naoroji, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipan Chandrapal, Lala Lajpat Rai and others through their writings initiated and furthered the nationalist historiography in the real sense. This approach was further developed by the scholars such as R.C. Majumdar, R.G. Pradhan, Girija Kumar Mukerji, Pattachi B. Sitaramayya, B.R. Nanda, Bisheshwar Prasad, Amlesh Tripathi, Tara Chand, S.N. Sen, K.K. Khullar, Virendra Sindhu, S.R. Bakshi, Kamlesh Mohan etc. Up until the twentieth century, modern Indian history grew out of the inclusive, mainstream nationalism. This criticised colonial interpretations that were negative about the Indian past, but generally it did not provide alternate theories to explain the past. It was distanced from religious nationalism, although the reading of ancient history/classical history was projected as a Hindu 'golden age'. Despite some aspects of cultural nationalism also emphasising the Hindu past, this was not the prevailing view. Now, however, the requirements of religious nationalisms, more frequently referred to as Hindu and Muslim communalism, demand a history to justify their ideology. In the creation of a religious nationalism, many aspects of a religion are made to undergo mutation.

Since the 1960s, historical studies in India have been moving away from the rather limited debates of colonial and nationalist interpretations, towards the broader vision and more precise methods of the social sciences, and still further in using various theories of explanation. The focus has shifted to questions of a different kind and to processes such as those of state-formation, diverse economies, histories of castes, the social contexts of religions, gender histories, environmental change, intellectual ideas and so on. There is now a universe of discourse in history built on a strong tradition of liberal and intellectually independent historical writing of high quality.

These studies have made visible the multiple cultures and the plural foci that are characteristic of the Indian past. They have introduced a view of history from the perspective of underprivileged groups, and such a view, in any society, punctures the romantic picture of the ancient past as a

golden age. This kind of history does not suit the platform of religious nationalism. There is yet another dimension to these changes that is becoming increasingly intrusive. Nationalism focuses on the link between power and culture and seeks to use culture as access to power.

MODULE IV

Historiographical Trends in Independent India

Marxist approach to Indian History

Marxism has a dominant presence in the field of post-independence Indian historiography. A lot of historians either come directly within its fold or have been influenced by it in certain degrees. It has also influenced most of the trends of Indian historiography in some way or the other. The two books which heralded the beginning of Marxist historiography in India were *India Today* by R. Palme Dutt and *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* by A.R. Desai. *India Today* was originally written for the famous Left Book Club in England and was published by Victor Gollancz in 1940. Its Indian edition was published in 1947.

Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi

The most influential historical writing regarding India, after James Mill and Vincet Smith, came from D.D.Kosambi. Kosambi left behind him besides several papers and articles, the following major works: *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (1956), *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (1965), *Exasperating Essay: Exercises in the Dialectical Methods*, and *Myth and Reality: Studies in the Formation of Indian Culture*, of these, the first two works revolutionized Indian historiography.

With the writings of D.D.Koasmbi, a fundamentally new approach to the study of Indian history, scientific methodology, modern technique of interpretation, selection and analysis of basic problems appeared in Indian historiography. Kosambi's work is most refreshing in its range of new material, original discoveries of megaliths, microliths, rustic superstition, and peasant customs. He explained how to gain an insight into the past by examination of the monuments, customs and records. For this, makes an impressive use of scientific methods in many fields like archaeology, ethnography and philology.

D.D.Kosambi and paradigm shift

Romila Thapar credits D.D. Kosambi (1907-66) for affecting a 'paradigm shift' in Indian studies. According to her, such paradigmatic changes had occurred only twice before in Indian historiography. These were done by James Mill and Vincent Smith. James Mill, whose book *History of India* (1818-23) set the parameters for history writing on India, was contemptuous towards the Indian society. He considered the pre-colonial Indian civilisation as backward, superstitious, stagnant and lacking in most respects as a civilisation. He was an unabashed admirer of the British achievements in India and relentless critic of pre-British Indian society and polity.

He divided the Indian history into three parts- the Hindu, the Muslim and the British. This division, according to him, was essential to demarcate three different civilisations. Vincent Smith's *The Oxford History of India* (1919) provided another break in Indian historiography as it avoided the sharp value judgments and contemptuous references to the pre-British period of Indian history contained in Mill's book. He instead tried to present a chronological account of Indian history and focused on the rise and fall of dynasties.

Kosambi viewed history completely differently. For him, Mill's religious periodisation and Smith's chronological accounts of dynasties were of no value. He believed that the 'Society is held together by bonds of production'. Thus he defines history 'as the presentation, in chronological order, of successive developments in the means and relations of production'. This, according to him, is 'the only definition known which allow a reasonable treatment of pre- literate history, generally termed "pre-history"'. He further argues that history should be viewed in terms of conflict between classes : 'The proper study of history in a class society means analysis of the differences between the interests of the classes on top and of the rest of the people; it means consideration of the extent to which an emergent class had something new to contribute during its rise to power, and of the stage where it turned (or will turn) to reaction in order to preserve its vested interests.' He describes his approach to history as 'dialectical materialism, also called Marxism after its founder'. However, Kosambi was flexible in his application of Marxism. He argued that 'Marxism is far from the economic determinism which its opponents so often take it to be'. He further asserts that the 'adoption of Marx's thesis does not mean blind repetition of all his conclusions (and even less, those of the official, party-line Marxists) at all times'. He, instead, considered Marxism as a method which could be usefully applied for the study of Indian society and history. The paucity of relevant data for the early period of Indian history was one factor which prompted him to analyse the broad social formations rather than small-scale events. He thought that the use of comparative method would balance out the absence of reliable historical sources. He, therefore, adopted an inter-disciplinary approach in his studies of Indian society. This enabled him to view the reality from various angles in order to get a full picture of it.

Kosambi's non-dogmatic approach to history is clear when he rejected two key Marxist concepts- the Asiatic Mode of Production and Slavery- as inapplicable to ancient Indian society. Although he accepted the concept of feudalism in Indian context, he denied the existence of serfdom. According to him, it would be more rewarding to view the early Indian society in terms of the transition from tribe to caste. He argues that the 'pre-class society was organised ... into tribes'. The tribes were small, localised communities and 'for the tribesman, society as such began and ended with his tribe'. The beginning and development of plough agriculture brought about a radical change in the system of production. This destabilised the tribes and the clans and gave rise to castes as new form of social organisation. This was an extremely crucial development. Kosambi writes: 'The entire course of Indian history shows tribal elements being fused into a general society. This phenomenon, which lies at the very foundation of the most striking Indian social feature, namely caste, is also the great basic fact of ancient history.' Kosambi tried to relate the intellectual and cultural production with the prevailing social and economic situation. Thus, according to him, the teachings of Bhagavad Gita can be understood only with reference to the feudal society in which it originated. It, therefore, preaches the ideology of the ruling class which emphasised 'the chain of personal loyalty which binds retainer to chief, tenant to lord, and baron to king or emperor'.

Similarly, he considers the Bhakti movement as preaching a sense of loyalty to the lord which, in the earthly sense, translates into loyalty and devotion to the rulers. His detailed study of the poetry of Bhartrihari, the 7th-century poet, reflects a similar approach. He describes Bhartrihari as 'unmistakably the Indian intellectual of his period, limited by caste and tradition in fields of activity and therefore limited in his real grip on life'. In his study of the myths, he contended that they reflected the transition of society from matriarchy to patriarchy.

The Feudalism Debate

As we have seen in the previous section, D.D. Kosambi argued that, contrary to Marx's own statements and to those of several Marxists, the Indian society did not witness a similar progression of various modes of production as happened in Europe. He said that the slave mode of production was not to be found in India. He also rejected Marx's own schema of the Asiatic Mode of Production as inapplicable to India. He, however, thought that there was the existence of feudalism in India, even though he conceived it differently. He was aware that the medieval Indian society was quite different from that of Europe. One of the important characteristics of European feudalism, i.e., manorial system, demesne farming and serfdom, were not to be found in India. But he explained it as a result of the non-existence of the slave mode of production in the preceding period. He further differentiated between two types of feudalism in India – 'feudalism from above' and 'feudalism from below'. Feudalism from above means a state wherein an emperor or powerful king levied tribute from subordinates who still ruled in their own right and did what they liked within their own territories – as long as they paid the paramount ruler. By feudalism from below is meant the next stage where a class of land-owners developed within the village, between the state and the peasantry, gradually to wield armed power over the local population. This class was subject to service, hence claimed a direct relationship with the state power, without the intervention of any other stratum.

Kosambi's lead on this issue was followed by R.S. Sharma who made a comprehensive study of feudalism in India in his book entitled *Indian Feudalism* (1965) and in various articles. According to him, there were a decline in trade and increasing numbers of land grants to the state officials in lieu of salary and to the Brahmans as charity or ritual offering in the post-Gupta period. This process led to the subjection of peasantry and made them dependent on the landlords. Almost all features of west European feudalism, such as serfdom, manor, self-sufficient economic units, feudalisation of crafts and commerce, decline of long-distance trade and decline of towns, were said to be found in India. According to R.S. Sharma, the most crucial aspects of Indian feudalism was the increasing dependence of the peasantry on the intermediaries who received grants of land from the state and enjoyed juridical rights over them. This development restricted the peasants' mobility and made them subject to increasingly intensive forced labour.

The decline of feudalism also took the same course as in west Europe. Revival of long distance trade, rise of towns, flight of peasants and development of monetary economy were considered to be the main processes responsible for the decline of feudalism in India. In this schema, the process of feudalisation started sometimes in the 4th century and declined in the 12th century. This view of the medieval Indian society and economy has been questioned by several historians who argue that the development of the Indian society did not follow the western model.

R.S.Sharma

Prof. R.S.Sharma applied historical materialism to the study of early Indian history. His steadfast conviction in the dialectics of modes of production and the society's ability to produce surplus enabled him to undertake a multi-pronged analyses of the state of the sudras and women, different stages of economy, landmarks in the evolutionary processes of state formation, rise and fall of urban centres, emergence and dissemination of feudalism and other phenomena.

Thus, he wrote in 1983: "Mode of production involving the theory of surplus leading to class formation continues to be the best working hypothesis, notwithstanding countless assertions to the contrary. The effort to eliminate class and surplus has introduced 'elite', 'status', 'hierarchy',

‘decision-making’, etc. in their place. The theory of surplus is rejected on the ground that people do not produce more on their own but are compelled to put in more work or more people are mobilized for work. Whatever motives be assigned for producing more – and this will differ from society to society – almost all types of serious investigators admit that only extra produce can support whole time administrators, professional soldiers, full-time priests, craftsmen, and other similar specialists who do not produce their food themselves. The argument that people were compelled to produce more would imply the existence of an organized coercive authority such as the state or at least a protostate represented by a strong chief, but it would not negate the idea of surplus”. Though a Marxist in his methodology and orientation, Sharma was neither a strict doctrinaire nor a propagandist nor even an apologist for any political ideology. He had the conviction to take on the orthodox Marxists. Marxism for him was not a substitute for thinking but a tool of analysis that required considerable skill to unfold historical processes.

Writing in 1966, Sharma lamented that very little attention was being paid to the mode of production in ancient India, which, in the materialist view, determines the relations of production – economic, social and political. For Sharma ‘people’ meant the real producers of wealth, and, therefore, the real makers of history. ‘People’ were seen as indispensable components of productive forces and not passive subjects in an ‘empire’. In his own inimitable method, Sharma retrieved the voices of the most marginalised people and communities. The alleged neglect of caste by Marxists has often been commented upon. It is well known that D.D. Kosambi, striking a discordant note from the general tenor of Marxist perspective on caste, gave it a very conspicuous place in his overall framework of history writing when he treated caste as an ideology. The whole gamut of his works focussed on social process. Very early in his career, fathoming and explaining strategies of social exclusions worked out by dominant classes became his passion, which he nurtured and sustained all through. Long before the Subaltern Studies volumes purporting to be ‘history from below’ became fashionable in the 1980s and thereafter, he had already got his *Sudras in Ancient India: A Social History of the Lower Order Down to c.AD 600* published in 1958. It was indeed one of the early manifestations of his commitment to people of India to which he remained hooked till his last breath.

R.S.Sharma’s pioneering study of the shudras unhesitatingly described them as the ‘labouring class’ and simultaneously focussed on their different layers. Further, it not only investigated the vicissitudes of their material conditions (changes therein studied in time sequence indicated on the basis of archaeology and inscriptions) but also attempted to reflect on complexities of their economic and social relations with members of the higher and highly privileged varnas.

Sharma’s magnum opus *Indian Feudalism 300-1200* has been a landmark monograph that challenged the age-old notions about stages in the development of structures and processes of power centres in the early Indian society. Indian Feudalism presented feudalism not as a jargon for defining parameters of mere political authorities but as a definite marker in the evolution of Indian society. Focussing on the changing order of land rights – hierarchy of landed intermediaries/beneficiaries emerging between the real tillers of the soil and the state and such new stake holders in land being endowed with numerous fiscal, administrative, judicial and policing powers – Sharma could mark the beginning of the ‘medieval’ period in Indian history with the emergence of this feudal social formation. This new formation was particularly noticeable for the subjection, exploitation and immobility of all forms of labour – both agrestic and artisanal.

Delivering the General President’s Address at the Indian History Congress, he lamented over the fact that the role of women in the process of production had not received the attention of scholars. That he was constantly mulling over the issues concerning and confronting women is evident in the essay on *‘Historical Aspects of Sati’*. He was not just a class room preacher. He took his craft into

the public domain and like a true activist, ceaselessly fought the communal, obscurantist, casteist, and fascist forces throughout his life. During six decades of his active academic career, Sharma had written so prolifically to spread scientific historical consciousness amongst his readers.

Irfan Habib

Irfan Habib (born 1931) is one of the greatest marxist historians of India. His father was Mohammad Habib, a Marxist historian and ideologue belonging to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Irfan Habib's pathbreaking book the *Agrarian System of Mughal India* quarried the rich documentary material available for the period in an effort to establish the main methods of surplus-extraction and the main features of class structure. He concluded that the main exploiting class was the ruling nobility; that the zamindars stood forth as junior co-sharers, the peasantry was highly differentiated, with the village community as an instrument of sub-exploitation; and finally that the caste system ensured the presence of a large population of landless labour. The surplus entered circulation in the form of commodities; and so the 'natural' economy was confined to subsistence needs within the village. The pressure of revenue led to an agrarian crisis, which generated peasant revolts. These last often came under zamindar leadership, or assumed a religious garb. Such a picture was closer to Marx's Asiatic Mode with allowance made for commodity production, and limited landed property, and the existence of class struggle in one form or another. What such a mode should be called is open to question. Among them, the works by Irfan Habib are particularly remarkable in the range of scholarship and imagination.

His study of the Mughal economy, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1963), has acquired the status of a classic. In this book, he argues that the basic contradiction in the late medieval period was between 'the centralized ruling class (state) and the peasantry'. But there were other contradictions also between the state and the zamindars, between the untouchables and the rest of the society and between the tribes and the encroaching caste peasantry. Among all these, Habib argues, the drive for tax-revenue may be regarded as the basic motive force. Land revenue sustained the large urban sector; but the pressure for higher collection devastated the country, antagonized zamindars whose own shares of surplus was thereby affected, and drove the peasants to rebellion'. This book on medieval Indian history was followed by other important contributions in the form of *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire* (1982) and his edited book, *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. I* (1982). Apart from these, his several books and articles, including *Caste and Money in Indian History* (1987), *Interpreting Indian History* (1988) and *Essays in Indian History : Towards a Marxist Perception* (1995), explore and comment on various periods of Indian history.

Bipan Chandra

The Marxists have long held the view that the Indian nationalism as a movement was mostly dominated by the bourgeoisie. Although various classes, including the peasantry and the working classes, participated in it, its basic character remained bourgeois. This view of national movement remained quite common among the Marxist historians for quite some time. However, over the years, several Marxist historians began to disagree with this paradigm.

Bipan Chandra mounted a major critique of this view and this criticism became more comprehensive over the years. In his very first book, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (1966), he pleaded for according certain autonomy to the ideas as significant vehicle of action and change. Even though he accepts that 'social relations exist independently of

the ideas men form of them', he feels that 'men's understanding of these relations is crucial to their social and political action'. Moreover, he argues that the intellectuals in any society stand above the narrow interests of the class in which they are born. It is because the intellectuals are guided 'at the level of consciousness, by thought and not by interests'. Thus the Indian nationalist leaders were also, as intellectuals, above the interests of the narrow class or group they were born in. This does not mean, however, that they did not represent any class. They did represent class interests, but this was done ideologically and not for personal gain.

On the basis of his analysis of the economic thinking of the early nationalist leaders, both the so-called moderates and the extremists, Bipan Chandra concludes that their overall economic outlook was 'basically capitalist'. By this he means that 'In nearly every aspect of economic life they championed capitalist growth in general and the interests of the industrial capitalists in particular'. This does not mean that they were working for the individual interests of the capitalists. In fact, the capitalist support for the Congress in the early phase was negligible. Nationalist support for industrial capitalism derived from the belief of the nationalists that 'industrial development along capitalist lines was the only way to regenerate the country in the economic field, or that, in other words, the interests of the industrial capitalist class objectively coincided with the chief national interest of the moment'.

In his opinion, the early nationalist leaders were trying to unify the Indian people into a nation. Their basic objective was 'to generate, form and crystallize an anti-imperialist ideology, to promote the growth of modern capitalist economy, and in the end to create a broad all India national movement'. According to Bipan Chandra : 'Above all, the political activity of the masses was rigidly controlled from the top. The masses never became an independent political force. The question of their participation in the decision-making process was never even raised. The masses were always to remain "passive actors" or "extras" whose political activity remained under the rigid control of middle class leaders and within the confines of the needs of bourgeois social development. The nationalist leaders in all phases of the movement stressed that the process of achievement of national freedom would be evolutionary, and not revolutionary. The basic strategy to attain this goal would be pressure-compromise-pressure. In this strategy, pressure would be brought upon the colonial rulers through agitations, political work and mobilisation of the people. When the authorities were willing to offer concessions, the pressure would be withdrawn and a compromise would be reached. The political concessions given by the colonial rulers would be accepted and worked. After this, the Congress should prepare for another agitation to gain new concessions. It is in this phase, non-violent manner that several political concessions would be taken from the British and this process would ultimately lead to the liberation of the country.

On the basis of his analysis of the social base, the ideology, and the strategy of political struggle, Bipan Chandra concluded that the nationalist movement as represented by the Congress was 'a bourgeois democratic movement, that is, it represented the interests of all classes and segments of Indian society vis-à-vis imperialism but under the hegemony of the industrial bourgeoisie'. This character remained constant throughout its entire history from inception to 1947. Even during the Gandhian phase, there was no change. In fact, according to Bipan Chandra, 'the hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the national movement was, if anything, even more firmly clamped down in the Gandhian era than before'.

In a later book, *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947*, Bipan Chandra applies the Gramscian perspective to study the national movement. The Congress strategy is no longer seen in terms of pressure-compromise-pressure. It is now viewed in terms of Gramscian 'war of position' whereby a prolonged struggle is waged for the attainment of goal. As Bipan Chandra puts it : 'The Indian national movement is the only movement where the broadly Gramscian theoretical

perspective of a war of position was successfully practised; where state power was not seized in a single historical moment of revolution, but through prolonged popular struggle on a moral, political and ideological level; where reserves of counter-hegemony were built up over the years through progressive stages; where the phases of struggle alternated with “passive” phases.’

This struggle was not overtly violent because the nationalist leaders were seized of the twin agenda of forging the Indian people into a nation and to undermine the colonial hegemony. Through their prolonged struggle they wanted to expose the two important myths about the British colonial rule that it was beneficial to the Indians and that it was invincible. The Gandhian non-violence is also to be considered in this light. According to Bipan Chandra, ‘It was not ... a mere dogma of Gandhiji nor was it dictated by the interests of the propertied classes. It was an essential part of a movement whose strategy involved the waging of a hegemonic struggle based on a mass movement which mobilized the people to the widest possible extent.’

The national movement was now conceived as an all-class movement which provided space and opportunity for any class to build its hegemony. Moreover, the main party, the Congress, which led ‘this struggle from 1885 to 1947 was not then a party but a movement’. He criticises the various schools of historiography on India for their failure to address the central contradiction in colonial India which was between the Indian people and the British colonialism. Although he still considers that ‘the dominant vision within the Congress did not transcend the parameters of a capitalist conception of society’, he has made a clear break from the conventional Marxist interpretation of the Indian national movement and it appears that any study of Indian nationalism has to take his views into account.

Subaltern Studies- Ranajit Guha

Subaltern Studies as a new school of history-writing came up towards the end of the twentieth century in India. Ranajit Guha, who took the initiative, edited the first six volumes of the series titled Subaltern Studies, the title of which came to be the name of the new school.

Idea of Subaltern Studies

In the late medieval England the term subaltern was used to refer the serfs/peasants. Later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was used for the soldiers of inferior rank. Later Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist used the term in a very radical manner. Gramsci had adopted the term to refer to the subordinate groups in the society. In his opinion, the history of the subaltern groups is almost always related to that of the ruling groups. In addition, this history is generally ‘fragmentary and episodic’. Ranajit Guha also used the term subaltern to represent various groups of Indian society which are oppressed by the elite. According to Ranajit Guha: ‘The word “subaltern” in the title stands for the meaning as given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, that is, “of inferior rank”. It will be used in these pages as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way.’ Thus according to them all the Indian population minus the “elite” qualifies to be the subaltern.

Ranjit Guha and his colleagues have published several volumes of subaltern studies which as a project was initially planned as a series of three volumes. Right from the beginning, the subaltern studies has declared themselves challenging all the existing norms of Indian history writing. Ranajit Guha argued that the historiography of Indian nationalism has long been dominated by elitism—both colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism. The Indian historiography as practised has been heavily influenced by elitist nature and therefore lacks view of the common people. The politics of the common people need to be taken into account as it emerges from the traditional social organisations historically prevalent in that society. Unlike the vertical, cautious and pacific

nature of elite mobilisation, the subaltern mobilisations were horizontal, violent and spontaneous. Subaltern studies found a novel way of viewing history from the non elitist point of view (history from below) decoupling it completely from official narratives.

The history of subaltern studies has progressed through two phases. The first phase has seen the attempt to separate the subaltern sphere from that of elite. Independence of subaltern consciousness has been attempted to create. During the second phase the scope of the subaltern studies got broadened by including the aspects of colonialism, modernity and Enlightenment in opposition to the oppressed classes (subalterns).

Dipesh chakrabarty

Dipesh chakrabarty is a historian, and subaltern studies critic who made contributions to post colonial theory and subaltern studies. His contribution towards to post colonial and subaltern studies can be seen from his pioneering works such as '*Provisionalising Europe: postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*' (2000) explores the relation between history and post colonial theory. He has also contributed to the area of subaltern studies with his book titled 'Habitations of modernity : *Essays in the wake of Subaltern Studies* (2002). He is the founding member of the editorial collective of Subaltern Studies and was the editor for '*Subaltern Studies Vol.9* (1997) along with Shahid Amin. He is also a founding editor of Postcolonial Studies. Chakrabarty's '*Subaltern studies and Postcolonial Historiography*' reveals the historiography of the subaltern studies starting from the initiatives of Ranajit Guha and his Group way back in 1982. Chakrabarty explored to answer his own question i.e. "How did a project which began as a specific and focussed intervention in the academic discipline of indian history come to be associated with postcolonialism, an area of studies whose principal home has been in literature departments? and attempted to answer this question by discussing how, and in what way Subaltern Studies could be seen as a postcolonial project of writing history. It should be elucidated that the relationship between postcolonialism and historiography fails to see the contributions that other disciplines such as political science, legal studies, anthropology, literature, cultural studies, and economics have made to the field of subaltern studies.

Without aspiring to increase the claims of Subaltern Studies scholars or to refute what they may have really learned from the british marxist historians, Dipesh tries to illustrate that this reading of Subaltern Studies- as an example of Indian or third World historians simply catching up with or only relating appropriate methodological insights of Anglo social history- gravely misjudges what the series has been all about.

From its very beginning, Dipesh argues that Subaltern Studies raised questions about history writing that made a fundamental exit from English marxist historiographical traditions unavoidable.

Dipesh Chakrabarty's essay in *Subaltern Studies IV* points out that the nature of this declaration by asserting their basic concern with 'the thorny question of 'consciousness' and by identifying subalternity as 'the composite culture of resistance to and acceptance of domination and hierarchy.' This approximates an official definition, but Chakrabarty also says that members of the Editorial Collective " are perhaps far more united in their rejection of certain academic positions and tendencies than in their acceptance of alternatives".

Chakrabarty therefore has remained the subalternist most concerned with Marxism. His *Invitation to Dialogue*, the first extended response to critics in the pages of Subaltern Studies, in which he argues that 'nothing is permanent except change in the world; the subalterns should persist to make their place clear before the powers. The Subaltern theory proposes that 'the subaltern cannot speak' by providing special prominence on the aspect of noise.

Subaltern Studies became a unique place for a new kind of history from below, a people's history free of national constrictions, a post-nationalist re-imagining of the Indian nation on the underside, at the margins, outside nationalism. Subaltern Studies also became entangled with efforts to re-imagine history itself.

Cambridge and New Cambridge School

The 'Cambridge School' is the name given to a group of historians in Cambridge who reinterpreted Indian politics in the age of nationalism. They did not think that there was any fundamental contradiction between imperialism and nationalism. In their opinion, local interests and factional rivalries were prominent features of the history of Indian nationalism. If Indian nationalism emerged despite such localised rivalries, this happened because the British authorities simultaneously centralised the government and introduced representation in the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Government intrusion in local concerns forced local politicians to turn to the centre. Paradoxically, Indian nationalism was the product of the government impulse.

Central to this interpretation of Indian nationalism was the centrality of power. The thesis was set out in a collection of essays by Cambridge historians which was entitled *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870 to 1940*. The collection was edited by John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal, and was published by the Cambridge University Press in 1973 both as an issue of the Cambridge journal entitled *Modern Asian Studies* and as an independent publication. Critics accused the authors of debunking Indian nationalism and the group was dubbed 'The Cambridge School', or simply referred to as 'Cambridge'. A hot controversy followed in the wake of the publication, and Marxist and liberal historians in India sharply criticised the thesis. However, 'The Cambridge School' undoubtedly made an impact on Indian historiography.

What distinguished the historians of the Cambridge School was their focus upon the search for power by individuals and factions. They pushed their inquiries down from the nation (viewed as a whole by the Marxists) and the region (regarded separately by the elite theorists) to the locality; and in the locality, their attention focused, not upon social groups such as classes or castes, but on 'connexions' straddling these social categories.

Features of the Cambridge Interpretation

The Cambridge interpretation began with the locality, and with the 'connexions' in each locality. Three influential works emphasizing the role of the English-educated elite in Indian politics came out in quick succession: D. A. Low, *Soundings in Contemporary South Asian History*; J.H. Broomfield, *Elite disagreement in a Plural Society. Twentieth Century Bengal*; and Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*.

What distinguished the historians of the Cambridge School was their focus upon the search for power by individuals and factions. They pushed their inquiries down from the nation and the region to the locality; and in the locality, their attention focused, not upon social groups such as classes or castes, but on 'connexions' straddling these social categories.

The gradual centralization of the government, matched as it was by the growth of a representative element within the centralized structure, pulled local politics outwards, into politics with a national focus. Nationalism, in this view, was disguised collaboration with imperialism.

In C.A. Bayly's analysis of mid-nineteenth century politics in Allahabad town, local politics consisted of a series of loose consortia of patrons each with their clientela to satisfy'. The town was

dominated by commercial magnates who in the vicinity enjoyed the status of rais or notable. He establishes it useful to describe the several groups in clientage to the commercial raises as 'connexions'. A bunching of economic functions approximately the magnates gave the connexions a cross-caste, cross-society aspect. Later the similar 'connexions' became the operative units in nationalist politics in Allahabad. In his revise of Bombay politics, Gordon Johnson concurred with this.

The mainly obvious feature of every Indian politician was that each politician acted for several diverse interests at all stages of Indian society, and in doing so cut crossways horizontal ties of class, caste, region and religion. In other languages, the factions were vertical alliances, not horizontal alliances.' The local rivalries were seldom marked by the alliance of landlord with landlord, educated with educated, Muslim with Muslim, and Brahman with Brahman. More regularly, Hindus worked with Muslims, Brahmans were hand-in-glove with non-Brahmans.

According to the Cambridge interpretation, the roots of politics lay in the localities – the district, the municipality, the village. There the town notables and the rural-local bosses enjoyed the power to distribute possessions without any interference by the seemingly impotent imperial government. But things began to change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Motivated, according to David Wash brook, by the need to improve, to gather more wealth, to do more good', the imperial authorities accepted out bureaucratic and constitutional reforms which forced more and more local politicians to turn their attention from the local centers of power to the government at the centre.

Anil Seal, in his introduction to Locality, Province and Nation, had the similar thing to say. As a centralized and increasingly representative government appeared, it was no longer enough for Indians to secure political benefits in the localities alone.' The rising power to be bargained for at the centers for government necessitated the creation of provincial and then all India politics. Village, district and small town politics sustained unabated in the undergrowth', but political associations, such as the Madras Native Association or the Indian National Congress, deployed a dissimilar grammar of politics in the provinces and at the centre. For the formal structure of government provided the framework of politics, and it was only by operating within it that Indians could share and determine the sharing of power and patronage'.

Gender History- Uma Chakravarti

Uma Chakravarti is an Indian historian and feminist writer. She has written extensively on Indian history with issues rearding gender, caste, and class. Her body of work mostly focused on the history of Buddhism, and that of ancient and 19th century India.

Uma Chakravarti observed that women have remained the "silent voices of history". According her, the European as well as the Indian scholars of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries started writing on the status of women in early India to recreate a favorable image of the past which, in case of the former, portray the early romanticism with Indian culture nurtured in the Orientalist discourse and, with regard to the latter, reflect their nationalist pride and new agenda for reform.

Uma Chakravarti took a critical social history approach. In her approach we find that the social connection between the status of women and their participation and control over the productive forces in the ancient Indian society were considered the chief matter for investigation - and is the best alternative to the symbolically oriented inter-disciplinary studies, with their inherent gender bias.

She suggested that women's history could be reconstructed by evaluating their participation in social reproduction, especially in the domestic sphere. In most of the modern capitalist system

women's domestic labor remains unseen as it is entirely free, beyond wage earning. But this perspective could also be found in ancient societies and thus we find that women's contribution in domestic service was idealized as a duty in ancient India.

Moreover, a large number of women from the lower strata of society worked with or without wages in domestic spheres as well as productive fields, but historians have hardly paid any attention to record their experiences in history. Uma Chakravarti mentions that the nationalist historiography mainly dealt with the upper caste women, but the women served as labors remained unrecognized in historical studies. She initiated a new perspective by focusing on women's participations in different productive realms.

Uma Chakravarti had initiated the dual process of stimulating our thinking on the women's history in general and particularly on early Indian women. Firstly, she presents critical observations on the former scholarly writings and contribute to developing the historiography of women's history, especially of early India. Secondly, she focuses on different social institutions of ancient India for reviewing women's involvement in the process of social reproduction in a historical frame.

Chakravarti observes how, with the growing necessity for re-evaluating some of the Indian customs and institutions, the first generation of Indian scholars incorporated some social and legal questions in their scholarly projects for assessing women's position in the contemporary Indian society. Chakravarti is instrumental in laying down the foundations of the historiography of women's history and gender studies in general.

In her article: *Beyond the Altekarian Paradigm: Towards a New Understanding of Gender Relations in Early Indian History*, Uma Chakravarti essentially looks at the ideological springboard from which the writing of such history loomed on the horizon. According to her the nationalist urge to highlight the women's honourable position in the past society stemmed from the desire to ensure the development of a new reformed society for the new nation with an ennobled woman in a guided and given role.

Similarly, making a critique of the simplistic following of the nationalist frame in Shakuntala Shastri's history writing, Chakravarti referred to the narration of the Gārgī-Yājñavalkya episode picked by the former from the Upanishad in order to indicate the currency of the notion of women's right to education in the Vedic society. The tone of the legend actually brings down the role of Gārgī, with all her expertise and learning, finally emphasizing her subordination under Yājñavalkya as a learner. Chakravarti questions Shakuntala Rao Shastri's interpretation of this episode, criticizing her for relegating the issue of gender confrontation and turning the episode into a romanticized and idealized segment of the India's past.

Chakravarti emphasizes upon the necessity of developing an alternative perspective, a new paradigm - by focusing on the early women's participation in aspects of lives other than biological reproduction, especially on the importance of the women's social reproduction as an area of historical studies in which the presence of women can be firmly attested from available sources.

Uma Chakravarti expresses her concern that the nineteenth century historiography predominantly focuses on the women of the upper castes and classes and that fresh investigations were needed to locate the conditions of the women serving as domestic and social laborers which she thinks would reveal another side of the history. This is where we find some fresh contributions from Chakravarti herself and other scholars.

Uma Chakravarti's book *Gendering Caste, Through a Feminist Lens* is a masterly contribution, examining the overwhelming influence of the higher caste male dominance in early Indian society.

She addresses the relation between caste hierarchy and gender and proposes that the caste system was consolidated by restricting women's sexuality. More specifically, she says, women's position in the varṇa society, especially of the high castes, was an important factor where the matter was directly related to the birth of a male child and caste purity. Thus, she points out, marriage was more and more ritualized and the ideas like Pativrata and Strīdharma were getting crystallized more and more so that a cohesive model for the entire society was created, assigning the women into submissive roles. Chakravarti observes that female sexuality was a big threat for the social order in ancient India, while motherhood was idealized only in its ritually legitimized form. Thus idealized motherhood rested upon caste endogamy and the patrilineal system, where the issue of inheritance to property was a crucial matter.

In Chakravarti's book *Everyday Lives, Everyday Histories: Beyond the Kings and Brahmanas of Ancient India*, she attempts to release the reading of history from this trope where the dominant upper caste patriarchal ideology becomes the main focal perspective. She tries to show the way to delineating history from the perspectives of marginal groups in early India, arranging her reviews on social alienations, class conflicts and gender violence as discourses of history for restructuring the entire past in a way never really signified before.

In her article titled *Women, Men, and Beasts: The Jātakas as Popular Tradition*, Chakravarti observes that in the Buddhist Jātakas women were generally represented as a threat for the social order, reflecting their conventional beliefs about women's body and sexuality. Quite significantly, Chakravarti has identified the major difference between the Brāhmaṇical and the Buddhist approaches to women's sexuality, which as we can observe from her writings, lay in their receptions of the images of real women in their contemporary world. Vedic Brāhmaṇism, since the days of the Sūtras had developed a model of the ideal woman in their normative literature and in the Brāhmaṇical sources deviations from this ideal model of womanhood is projected only as a possibility best avoided. But the Jātakas and the Buddhist discourse in the main hold that women were naturally prone to seductions leading men away from the path of salvation and, therefore, transgressions were a natural result arising out of women's very nature. 62 In the Jātakas, thus, the women are generally represented as adulterous in nature. So it was the men who were vested with the responsibilities to protect and punish them.

Environmental History-Ramachandra Guha

Ramachandra Guha's book titled *Environmentalism: A Global History* is considered as the first genuine attempt towards documenting global history of environmentalism. The book is divided into two parts, each for the first and the second waves of environmentalism. Guha has explained the global awakening of environmentalism in two successive waves. The first wave had begun in 1860s and went on up to the period of Second World War, then entering an interval period which is termed as ecological innocence. The second wave of environmentalism starts, according to Guha, with the publication of a book titled *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in 1962.

The First Wave of Environmentalism

The first wave of environmentalism began in the second half of the nineteenth century. Guha divides this 'wave' into three distinctive phases each inspired by different ideologies namely back-to-the-land, scientific conservation, wilderness idea. The back-to-the-land movement upheld the need for returning to the land and was committed to agrarian and pastoral values. No wonder the supporters of back-to-the-land movement despised excessive industrialisation. The second phase, the scientific conservation involved efforts, across the countries, to find out scientific response to environmental issues along with better resource management techniques. The third phase of wilderness idea had witnessed intense fight between the utilitarians and the preservation group

regarding the conservation of wildlife, especially in the US. The famous author and philosopher John Muir wrote supporting the necessity of preserving the wildlife without human intrusion while Gifford Pinchot, a professional forester, urged the wise management of natural resources. This intense debate between utilitarianism and the preservationism brought out a new idea regarding the wilderness and ended up in framing regulations for wildlife conservation. National parks were established in the US and the first Forest Service department came into being in 1905, as a result.

The Second Wave of Environmentalism

The second wave of environmentalism began, according to Guha, with the publication of a book by Rachel Carlson titled *Silent Spring* in 1962. Rachel Carlson was an American author and conservationist. The book deals with the indiscriminate use of pesticides and how the chemical industry got away with lies. The serious threat posed by the chemical industry got exposed through this book and the need for conservation of ecology also began to be felt better in the US. A number of scientific articles followed the *Silent Spring* subsequently resulting in turning the pro-environment movement from an intellectual response to industrialisation to a mass movement. The mass movement spurred by the scholarly writings forced the US administration to reframe the United States National Pesticide Policy, brought in a countrywide ban on DDT for agricultural uses. The movement also led to the creation of United States Environmental protection Agency. The author draws our attention towards an important point that is the differentiation between the “poor peoples’ environmentalism” and the “environmentalism of the affluent”. While the former is the mass movement of the people belonging to poor countries fighting for their survival, the latter is the movement of people in rich countries who become environmentally conscious and work towards conservation.

Environmentalism in India

Just like UK, US and Germany, environmentalism came to India with industrialisation. Industrialisation had produced a situation where more people started producing more and consuming more. This obviously led to environmental crisis.

Local environmental crisis and macro environmental crisis

The magnitude of the environmental crisis can be varied as we see local level environmental crisis and macro level environmental crisis. The former denotes environmental degradation occurring at a limited geography like a particular forest area, agricultural land etc., Natural calamities like flood, forest fire and in some cases continued exploitation of land and unsustainable developmental activities could lead to a local environmental crisis.

Increased emission of green house gases disrupts the optimum global temperature and lead to global warming. It further leads to polar ice loss and increase in sea level potentially threatening life on earth. Even though heavily industrialised nations like the US, UK, West European countries and recently China were responsible for the lion’s share of GHG (Green House Gas) emission, the impact of global warming is uniformly felt across the globe. It affects global food production, extinction of species, loss of ecosystems etc., Such a situation is called macro environmental crisis.

In India the first wave of environmentalism happened towards the end of the first half of twentieth century. M.K. Gandhi was a pre-cautious environmentalist. In 1928 he wrote:- “God forbid that India should ever take to industrialisation after the means of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island namely England is keeping the world in change. If an entire nation of 300 million [India] took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts.”

Gandhi was not adamantly against industrialization even though he was skeptical about the western model of industrialisation. Gandhi was an intuitive and instinctive environmental scholar. The writings of Gandhi on industrialisation shows how greatly concerned he was about environment. Apart from Gandhi, several other individuals were involved in the first wave of environmentalism in India. J.C Kumarappa, joined Gandhi and worked on rural development, conservation of water, forest management, recycling, up-gradation of artisanal technologies etc. was a pioneer of the alternative technology movement. He wrote a book in 1939 titled *The Economy of Permanence*. Celebrated Ornithologist Saalim Ali, M.Krishnan, an accomplished wild life scientist etc., are pioneers in their respective fields who helped shaping the intellectual backbone of environmentalism in India.

The second wave of environmentalism appeared India during 1970s. Since independence India embarked on a capital and resource intensive pattern of economic development . In the 50s and the 60s India was trying desperately to catch-up with the west. Poverty alleviation or eradication became the motto of the Indian state. Large factories, steel mills and dams were built to induce economic growth. Concern for environmental protection and management was non existent during this period. Much of the environmental degradation happened during this period too.

Environmentalism in India re-emerged in the 1970s. This time not merely as an intellectual critique as it was in the time of Gandhi, but as a popular social movement. The Chipko movement of Himalayan peasants against commercial forestry once again brought the environmental discourse to mainstream. The Chipko movement started in 1973. The indigenous people of Garhwal Himalaya agitated against the logging of forest trees and they embraced trees in a sign of their protest. Chipko got both national and international recognition not only because of the environmental part of the agitation but also the unique method adopted by the participants. Chipko was authentically indigenous movement and adopted Gandhian non violence method for registering their cause.

The impact of Chipko movement was immense that it had opened a new chapter in the environmental protection movements in India, along with that it inspired movements worldwide. Chipko movement is a textbook example of environmentalism of the poor where less privileged sections of the society rise for their environmental rights as it often falls in their struggle for survival. The Government of India responded with some proactive steps towards environmental protection. The famous Project Tiger, one of its own kind of project to save tigers, was initiated in 1973 itself. A department for environment was created in 1980. The Chipko movement was unique in another aspect too as it focused on the post-struggle restoration. The forest land where the government banned logging was soon brought under re-vegetation planting indigenous fruit bearing trees. Chipko also inspired scientific and scholarly research in environment related areas.

Another mass movement during the second wave was the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)in 1985. Noted for the unprecedented mass participation ever in Indian environmental movement, the NBA has conducted prolonged agitation against the proposed dam on the Narmada river.

The third wave of Indian environmentalism began with the economic liberalisation in the year 1991. Through economic liberalisation the Private sector was urged to play a leading role in the now open economy. The new economic policies indeed nurtured a climate of entrepreneurship, reduced mass poverty and solved India's endemic foreign exchange crisis. As a rapidly growing economy, the environmental challenges once again came to the mainstream discourse as the well-being of environment is essential for growth. This marks the third wave of environmentalism in India. The first two waves were backed by intellectual reflection and mass movements respectively. Today India needs environmental movements equally supported by both the intellectual reflection of Gandhi's era and serious social activity.
