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Some study on Indian National Movement (1857 A.D to 1947 A.D.)

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Abstract

Some study and Understand the nationalist school of historiography of the Indian National Movement. Comprehend the contributory factors to the writing of historiography of the Indian National Movement. Explain the search for national identity. Grasp the imperialist attack on Indian culture and civilization. Know the content of the nationalist historiography. Summarize the writings of some eminent nationalist historians. In this paper fuscous on sources of Indian National Movement.

Keywords: National movement, historiography, culture, civilization

Introduction

It includes the evolution of the ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history and changing attitudes towards the nature of history itself. Eventually it includes the study of the development of man's senses for the past. There are differences in the nature, quality and quantity of historical literature in different ages and different people. These differences represented the changes in social life, beliefs in society, the presence or absence of the sense of history. History writing began due to the early compositions of the ancient Greeks and the Chinese which faced several difficulties and uncertainty due to absence of chronology and method of criticism even then this crude beginning of history writing has made a tremendous progress. It is pertinent to trace how the history writing of Indian National Movement came into existence. What were the problems and how they were solved, are surveyed in the foregoing description, analysis and a detail account them is given. Although the history of India is very old and rich, the Indian historiography is comparatively of recent origin which led to evolve the writing of Indian historiography, in which the nationalist school is one of the most important approaches. Roussean's stress on feeling and passion and Herder's doctrine of the 'genius of nations', of national culture and national character formed the philosophy of nationalism. Herder says that each national culture is a unique entity with its own inherent character. The national character is expressed in its language, literature, art and in its moral code, which determines the history of a people. Nationalism is a powerful sentiment, it is essentially spiritual in character and it is the will of the people to live together. The nation state is the normal form of political organisation in the modern world. The nationalist historians used to invoke the spirit of nations past the most, they used to emphasis on people rather than the state, which transformed the exclusive idea of political history and embraced the material & spiritual development of man in society. For this reason the nineteenth century was the century of nationalism in Europe and the century of Great history writing of national movements.

Search for National Identity

They never wanted the westerns civilization to displace the Indian civilization as Macaulay and the missionaries desired. They wanted only the West should revitalize the Indian culture as Raja Ram Mohan Roy emphasized the most. Hence these educated Indians began to reform their age old socio-religious scenario and rejuvenate their ancient culture. This self-confidence bred the national consciousness on a large scale and aspired for freedom from the foreign rule. India being subject country for many centuries, its history is not described and interpreted by Indian historians. But there is no such glorification of noble qualities of Indians because; there is no written evidence by the Indians on their own. When Bankim Chandra pointed out this deficiency then the several historians began to address to the same

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deficiency with national spirit and ideology which gave birth to the nationalist school of Indian historiography.

Imperialist attack on Indian culture and civilization

He in his history and the account of Hindu civilization wrote that Indians are rude and excelled in the qualities of slave. In the same way another British historian Vicent Smith in his account of Alexander is invasion on India tried to prove that Europeans were superior in warfare than Indians. Mountstuarst Elphinstance administrator turned historians mentions that the Indian foreign trade was conducted by Greeks and the Arabs and the Arabs easily overrun India as Persia. The British historians often tried to underestimate the Indian culture and suggested the lowest possible dates for the Vedas and the great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Even they hinted that the Indians might have borrowed their culture from the Greeks but they did not give any evidence to prove it. The Christian missionaries highlighted deliberately the religious superstition, social abuses and the practice of Sati in Indian society where as they systematically ignored the burning of heretics, practice of slavery, and serfdom in the European societies. This led the Indian historians and philosophers to prepare themselves to defend the imperial attack on their.

Religion and Society

The Indian nationalist School and its historians like Rajnarain, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Sasadhar Tarkachudasmani defended the Indian religion and society in their writings. Dayananda Sarswati, who amalgamated orthodoxy with liberalism and defended Hinduism on the rational lines. He says that the religion and society mentioned in the Vedas is the pure form of Hinduism in which systems like caste and Sati were created in later period and not sectioned by the original faith. Consequently, woman began to enjoy very high status in the Hindu Society.

Material Culture

Romesh Chandra Dutta is three volumes on the civilization in Ancient India excelled in it and brought out such relevant data to prove it. R.C.Majumdar, one of the Indian historians calls it as the first Indian national history. Ramesh Chandra Dutta assigned 1200B.C. the year of the compilation of the Rig Veda where as B.G.Tilak one of the Sanskrit scholars assigned 4000B.C. the year of composition on the basis of astronomical data. R.K.Mukharjee's book, the researches proved that the ancient. Indians had achieved progress in science, technology even in firearm and the building of aeroplanes. The most important claim of the Indian historians is that the Aryans were originally from India itself and then they spread to various parts of European and other countries in the world.

Politics and Administration

The British historians tried to underestimate the political and administrative system in India at each and every step. They said that India had several sects and creeds. Therefore, it could not qualify to be a nation. But historian R.K.Mukharjee in his scholarly thesis, the 'Fundamental Unity of India' mention that religious unity, spiritual fellowship among the Hindus and their ideal of an all India empire formed the basis for Indian nationalism in the past. The demand of educated Indians for representative

institutions and their share in the administration of the country clearly suggest the rise of 9 nationalism among them. K.P.Jayaswal another historian in his 'Hindu Polity' demonstrated that a constitutional form of Government, address from the throne and the voting of grants existed during the period of Sixteen Mahajan Padas who were popularly called Ganarajayas of ancient India. Naturally, these ideals of politics and administration of ancient India boosted the nationalist school of Indian historiography for its manifestation and generated the Indian National Movement.

Military

The British historians underestimated the Indian military tactics and glorified their easy conquest of India. But the nationalist School of Indian historiography debunked it and brought to the notice the reality of the British, who used treacherous tactics in the Battle of plissey (1757) and bribed some people is their victory of Sikh wars. Indian military is popular for her prowess since the ancient period. Her tactical movements of war had spread every corner of the world and this was the reason that the army of Alexander never wanted to enter the territories of Nanda Empire. The stories of military skill of Maratha and Rajput rulers which nationalist school of Indian historiography spread everywhere. That led Indians to unite and generate nationalism.

Hatred of the British

The Indian historians of nationalist school created hatred against the unjust rule and politics of the British in Indian. Among such historians Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C.Dutt, B.D.Basu, R.C.Majumdar, V.D.Savarkar, S.B.Choudhary and many other were in forefront. Although all the British officials were against the Indians, Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, Wellesley, Dalhousie and Lord Macaulay were more imperialist and exploited the Indians the most and invited much more hatred of Indians. The Indian historians of nationalist school criticized the wanton education system of Macaulay. R.C.Majumdar brought the British policies before the bar of the world. His book titled 'Clive the Forger' created almost hatred against the treachery of Robert Clive. Thus, this helped the nationalist school of Indian historiography a lot and caused to develop nationalism though out the country.

The Strength of Nationalist school of Indian Historiography

Although, the nationalist school of Indian historiography has some weaknesses, it has some stimulants and strength, which surpassed the said weaknesses. The nationalist studies received this strength and impetus from the sentiment of nationalism of people themselves. This has happened because, the spirit of nationalist studies brought fore the practical uses of history as was done in the nineteenth century Europe. The Indian nationalists sought their national development not in the immediate period but in their remotest past. They adopted a powerful motive of national spirit for historical investigation. Which quickened the historical research and generated almost nationalism in the Country. In order to meet the imperialist challenges, the Indian nationalist began to study the source material with the Zeal of crusaders, they studied very carefully the movements, epigraphs, coins and a variety of literary

sources that opened a new treasure of information, infested the minds of Indians with national fervour and pride and quickened the struggle of Indians for their freedom from the British rule.

Growth of Regional and local History

The national school of Indian historiography enhanced the interest in the regional and local history. Romila Thapar a noted historian says that the local and regional history is an important off shoot of nationalist historiography, which led to the archeological discoveries and found a huge unexplored source material in various regions. This enabled the historians to correct their earlier generalizations and bring out several regional histories like the, History of Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. Neelkant Shastri's history of South India is the part and parcel of the regional and local history which contributed hugely to the writing of nationalist historiography.

Economic History

The national school of Indian historiography became the most important force behind the writings of economic history of India. The British exploited India beyond imagination and reduced it to the most pauperised country in the world. William Digby's prosperous British India is the most important evidence in this regard which led Dadabhai Naorogy and R.C.Dutta to write on the British exploitation of India. Dadabhai Naoroji the proponent of economic drain theory, blamed the British for draining Indian wealth to England and reducing Indians to starvation. R.C.Dutta's two volumes of Economic history of India concun with Dadabhai Naoroji and asserted that the basic cause of India's economic problems should be sought in the undevelopment of India. Thus, the nationalist school of Indian Historiography stimulated to write the economic history of India.

Cultural History

The nationalist school of Indian historiography reveled a very Vast store of information relating to various facts of life of Indian people, which brought in force a new approach of study of culture in ancient India. This is clear from the Survey of Indian history and the work of nationalist historian K.M.Panikar. Naturally, writing of cultural history also began due to the consciousness of Indians about their nationhood. This enabled Indians to reconstruct their history to understand their correct heritage. In short, the Indian nationalist school of historiography stimulated the Indian national movement.

Eminent nationalist historians

R.G.Bhandarkar (1837-1925)

He was one of the nationalist historians and a social reformer. He wrote two monographs as 1.The Early History of the Deccan in 1884 and 2. A Peep into the Early History of India in 1900. He has presented a historical account base on political, social, economic and religious conditions of the western India from the earliest period to the Muslim conquest in his first book whereas in his second book he took a brief survey of the early history of the northern India from the Mauryan period to the end of the Gupta empire. He undertook the critical historical method of inquiry and tried to attain truth and accuracy through regorous scruting of the different kinds of sources. Bhandarkar was more meticulous

in analysis and criticism of sources than any other contemporary European scholars which led him to trace several flaws in the writing of V.S.Smith. He was the subscriber of the Rankean dictum that the historian should describe the past as it actually was. He became the president of the First oriental conference held in 1919.

Romesh Chandra Dutta (1848-1909)

He relied on Sanskrit literature mainly to write his three volumes of 'A History of Civilisation in Ancient India'. Sister Nivedita says that R.C.Dutta understood the Indian mind and their social institutions with the help of literary sources and his book on civilization is an exposition of the national glory to India and the world. It is based on the scientific treatment of the sources, it is rational and of original scholarship. He published two volumes of economic History of India in 1904, which inquired in to the nature of British rule in India. He was the first Indian economic analyst, who diagnosed that India's economic problem is the problem agriculture which accrued due to the exorbitant land taxes. He pointed out the two fold objectives of the British colonial economy as production of raw materials in India for British industries and consumption of British manufactured goods in India. Dutta attacked on the home charges and military expenditure of the British and suggested that the government should adopt retrenchment finance.

K. P. Jayaswal (1881-1937)

He came back to India and wanted to be a lecturer in the University of Calcutta but due to his association with the Indian National Movement the British government kept him away from the university, ultimately he joined the legal profession as advocate in the Calcutta High Court in 1911. He could not continue as a legal practitioner for a long time. He also authored another book known as 'History of India 150B.C. to 350A.D'. He used a variety of literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources for writing those books and presented his own interpretation where ever required. In order to respond to the imperialist oriental despotism, Jayaswal labouriously thesised that India had the earliest and the most successful republics in its ancient period. He says that the 'Samiti' in Vedic period was an assembly of sovereign representatives, which discussed and decided all matters of the state. The Sabha was a 15 body of selected men, subordinate to the Samiti. Jayaswal in his second book the Hindu polity, makes it clear that the limited monarchy was in existence in ancient India, in which the office of the king was a creation of the people and he held it with conditions. The Samiti known as the National Assenbly was the real sovereign and was above the king. Jayaswal further says that the Paura and the Janpada were the two political institutions of the city and acted as a powerful check on the royal authority. In his history of India, he made Bharasiva-Naga the national leader for liberating India from the foreign rule of Sakas and Kushanas. Although, Jayaswal is several theories are questioned by historians like Ghoshal and Altekar, his systematic account of the ancient India stimulated research into the political.

Conclusion

It tells us the story of successive stages in the evolution of historical writings. There is a difference in nature, quality and quantity of historical literature from age to age and

person to person. This difference represents the changes and beliefs in society, presence or absence of the sense of history. The pace of change is greater ever since the study of the past came increasingly under the influence of various ideas. The nationalist historians used to evoke the spirit of nations past and emphasized on people rather than the state, which transformed the exclusive ideas of political history and embraced the material and spiritual development of man in the society. The spirit of resurgent nationalism gave a strong impetus to historical studies and supplied a powerful motive for historical investigation to trace the roots of their national identity. There were several factors responsible for writing of historiography of Indian national movement as the search for national identity, imperial attack on Indian culture and civilization, the content of nationalist historiography and reinterpretation of Indian history. Although, some defects developed in the writing of nationalist school of Indian historiography, there were some heartening developments which worked as the strength of the nationalist school of Indian Historiography. There were several eminent nationalist historians who contributed to the nationalist school of Indian historiography.

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