

Herodotus (480 - 430 B.C)

Born in 480 B.C at Halicarnassus, a Dorian settlement on the seacoast of Asia Minor - made significant contribution to History and Anthropology and is regarded as the "Father of History".

Works :- One of the first works of Herodotus was an account of the Greco Asiatic relations. Though this work primarily of the Persian wars, he provides interesting information about the people of Mediterranean and Asiatic world in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.

Special Features

- (1) He wrote on not only about the political affairs but also tried to deal with social and cultural practices.
- (2) He made use of the evidences in extensive.
- (3) He started the tradition of introducing the history of one nation to another.
- (4) He started the practice of converting the legend writing in to the science of history.
- (5) He adopted a rational approach and tried to find out what men have done and why they did. In short he tried to analyse the reason for particular action.

Among the great writers of the Periclean age, Herodotus was one of the foremost. His great work "History" is divided in to nine books. Until the movements were discovered and the inscriptions were deciphered, his History was the only principal source of information.

Estimate

However the work of the father of history is not free from defects. Cicero calls him as a liar and Aristotle consider him as a story teller. He depended upon his own observations rather than records. His narrative is marked by interruptions. Historical figures are left in the middle. Attempted too much and left the important ones.

Thucydides

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He was born about 460 B.C. in a well to do Athenian family of Attica. He learned literature and art and served as a general in the Athenian army. He was in exile for 20 years. In 404 B.C. he returned to Athens but died soon afterwards.

Work

The theme of his writing was the Peloponnesian War - made major contribution to the Greek historiography.

Features

He freed history from the epic poetry and supernaturalism. He started his work in 431 B.C. that is as soon as the war took place. He collected extensive notes before the end of the war. He composed the work in subsequent years. He preserved a detailed story of the war in scrupulous care.

One of his chief contributions was his methodology. He concentrates on the main theme. He insisted upon the accuracy of the statement. He resorted to the detailed analysis of the whole issue. He was essentially a political historian who treated politics with the grasp of a philosopher. He made a study of the character and public opinion.

Estimate

Because of his scientific approach he was known as the father of scientific history. But he was also not free from defects. As he concentrated only on the theme, his work was dull. He missed the significance of social, cultural and economic forces in history. But Thucydides was the historian who made history what it is today.

Xenophon (430 to 354 B.C.)

" Soldier and Historian was born in a middle class family at Athens about 430 B.C., when the Peloponnesian war broke out. He studied Philosophy. Then he became the commander of the Greek army. In 354 B.C. he passed away.

His works

Memorabilia which preserves the recollections of his master Socrates. It depicts the social life of the ancient Greeks. Anabasis is another interesting work which gives the details of the military operations of Cyrus the younger. The Hellenica gives the history of Peloponnesian war.

Estimate

Though he was not great historian like Herodotus and Thucydides, he was versatile in his presentation. After him the Greek historical writing suffered for want of patronage.

Polybius

greatest of the later historians of ancient Greece was born about 205 B.C. He was a soldier, magistrate and diplomat. In the battle of Pydna as the Romans defeated the Greeks, he was sent to Rome as a hostage. After 16 years he returned to Greece.

His works

He wrote an Universal History in 40 books. - giving the history of Roman conquest of the world. Of the 40 books, the first five are secure. But portions of other books are lost.

Features

He held the view that the aim of history is to ascertain truth. Free from bias. Historian must make himself a judge before forming conclusions. He insisted the need for historical criticism and objective writing. He insisted for Universal history and not regional history. He rejected theocratic conception of history. He rejected theocratic to serve as philosophy teaching by experience and example, so that it can be of practical guidance.

Titus Livy (59 B.C to 17 A.D) (4) (9)

considered as the national historian of Rome, was the contemporary of emperor Augustus Caesar. Associated himself with men of letters - though court historian - he refused to become a submissive courtier. But he cherished an ambition to preserve the glory of his land.

His works

"From the foundation of the city" was the title given to his voluminous work. He narrated the history of Rome from its foundation by 753 B.C to the death of B. Drusus in 9 A.D. He divided his entire work into 142 books, but only 35 of them available.

Estimate

He ~~was~~ tried to give the entire history of Rome from its foundation. Though he was noted for his intellectual honesty and impartiality, his treatment of source material was not up to the mark.

Voltaire

Voltaire is considered to be the founder of the Rationalist School of Historians. His entire outlook and philosophy was dominating by his faith in science and reason.

His works

Charles XIII, The Age of Louis XIV, Europe on the Manners and Spirit of the Nations, Philosophical Dictionary.

He was the greatest thinkers of enlightenment. As he opposed the tyranny of monarchs he was put in to Bastille. and banished to England for three years.

Gibbon (1737-1794)

Among the writers who wrote under the classical influence, the most important was Edward Gibbon.

His works

His remarkable work "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". For this he studied the original records in Greek and Latin. The entire work falls in to four volumes covered a period of Roman History for a period of 460 years.

Estimate

One of the greatest of the English writers, Gibbon rejected the theocratical interpretation of history. However his account is very sketchy when he deals with the Byzantine history. Like other historians he had no high opinion about Eastern Roman Empire. and had no adequate knowledge of the Byzantine Greek language.

Leopold von Ranke

Widely regarded as the foremost historian of the scientific age. He made the study of history as the principal aim of his life. He is considered as the "Father of Modern Historical Scholarship". He studied Philology and Theology. He grew up at the midst of two great personalities viz Napoleon and Metternich. For long he found no interest in history. But later developed an admiration for Roman History. In consequence he developed an interest in historical research and an anxiety to ascertain the truth with reference to original works. He read the works on ancient Greece and Rome.

His works

"Histories of the Roman and German peoples." - the first of the work. It contained the critical analysis of the historical sources. After the publication

In this work he was appointed as professor of history at the University of Berlin. He instructed the scholars in the critical study of sources.

History of Serbia, another work noted for its clarity. Biographies of Great men, and historical work on Germany, England and France. The greatest of his works was the "Popes". Other important books were: "A History of France, Principality in the sixteenth and seventeenth century", "A History of the world".

Estimate :- He is noted for his objectivity. He used the corroborative evidences to get the authenticity of the content of the sources. In honour of his services, he was given the right to prefix "von" to his name.

Spengler (1880 - 1936).

Oswald Spengler was the philosopher, historian of Germany. He studied, mathematics, philosophy and history. at the universities of Munich and Berlin leading to his doctoral degrees. Started his career as a teacher but resigned as he devoted himself to study and research.

His works :-

Between 1918 and 1928 he published two volumes of his work "Decline of the West". Other works, "Man and Technics", "Hour of Decision".

He interpreted history into a life of nine cultures. Every culture went through four distinct phases viz Spring, Summer, Autumn and winter. The theory of Spengler was of importance for sociology. But few denied its vast influence to this theory.

Toynbee (1889 to 1975)

Arnold J. Toynbee was one of the greatest historians of recent times. Born at London he received his education at Winchester and Balliol. First he was interested in classical literature. At Oxford he worked as a professor. and at London as a diplomat served his Government.

His works (i) Nationality and war, (ii) The New Europe (iii) A Journey to China (iv) Civilization on Trial (v) A Study of History in 12 volumes.

Estimate:-

A study of history his monumental work took forty years to complete. Based upon his study, to him civilizations and not the state is the real unit of historical studies.

The Annales School

It is a French group of historians associated with a style of historiography developed by French historians in the 20th century to stress long term social history. It was established by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch. Though a French historical school Annales, whose journal was published in 1929.

The Subaltern School

The word sub-altern literally means any subordinate officer in the army below the rank of captain. In historiography the term Subaltern means inferior or subordinate sub-caste class, group, gender caste, age or office. In short Subaltern history is a non traditional, locally produced sub-history.

A New Kind of History

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It is primarily concerned with the reaction of the "underdogs" to suppression as manifested in their protests. Hence it is called as "a History of Protest". This 20th century micro history represents a new genre of historiography.

Subaltern Studies

Ranjit Guha is the pioneer in the new venture of subaltern history in India. Friedrich, the German philosopher coined the word. Ranjit Guha ably edited six volumes of Subaltern Studies - Writings on South Asian History and Society. Subaltern Studies represent a formidable achievement in historical scholarship. But it is also criticised as subaltern monographs are Marxian in tone.

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IV Unit.

Indian Historiography

Kalhana

Son of Kampaka, the minister of Harsha. He studied Kashmir's History, Geography and topography. Thoroughly understood the antiquity of the past and contemporary history of Kashmir. He relied on early chronicles, biographies, inscriptions etc. fortified with literary, inscriptional, numismatic and monumental evidences he produced his "Rajatarangini".

His works :- Rajatarangini

" of the River of Kings is a poem in Sanskrit in 8 cantos. Each canto is called taranga or wave. Kalhana was a poet historian completed his work during the reign of King Jayasimha of Kashmir. Rajatarangini is the earliest extent history of Kashmir.

Estimate: Rajatarangini is the metrical chronicle of the Rajas of Kashmir. Kalhana was the pioneer historiographer. Despite many merits, it suffers from some serious drawbacks. He failed to attempt a critical appraisal of authorities. He refers to its flora and fauna which are not to be found in Kashmir. In some respects he is credulous. But he need not be castigated for what he did not do. He was a learned and honest historian.

Bana

Bana was born in the Bhargava Brahmin family (650 A.D.). He was invited by Harsha Vardhana, the King of Kings to join his court. There he wrote the historical Harshacharita as a tribute to his king.

Harsha charita - History of Harsha of Thaneswar and Kanauj in 8 chapters.

Estimate

Harsacharita is a fragmentary romance belonging to the literary category of Kavya. It is more romantic than historical. But its historical value cannot be underestimated. (10)

Alberuni

Muhammed Ibn Alberuni was born in 973 A.D. in Khiva, Central Asia. Well educated he studied literature and science and became the councillor of the ruler of Khiva. When Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni occupied Khiva he took Alberuni as a prisoner to India. This was followed by Sultan's expedition long time especially in Peshawar and Multan.

His works

He wrote books on History, Science, astronomy, natural science and mechanics. He wrote and composed about twenty books on India. The chief among them was Tahrik-i-Hind (Reality of Hindustan).

In this work, he seeks to examine the reality of Hindu modes of life. He describes religion, literature, science and refers to roads, rivers, weights, measures, currency and related matters.

Among the customs of the Hindus, which he considered as strange, he mentions that they cleaned the blood with cowdung before they sat there for eating. In washing they began with the feet and ended with face. They did not ask permission to enter the house and seek it for leaving the house. He said, the Hindus believe that there is no country like theirs. Those who not bear the yoke of Muslims and fled to the nearby Hindu empires. He bestowed considerable attention on Geography also.

Ibn Batuta

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Ibn Batuta born in Tangier in 1304. An Arab by race and a native of Morocco, he visited India during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. He visited South India, Ceylon, China and Spain. Returning to Morocco, he wrote his Rehla (Travels). He stayed for 14 years in India including 8 years in Delhi. In his Rehla, he describes the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the geography of India, social life, economic condition and the administrative system.

Barani

Barani was born in 1285 A.D. in a Sayyid family of Kailthal. Barani had his education at Delhi. He rose to high position in the court of Alauddin Khilji. Died at the age of 73.

His works

Barani wrote ten books but some of them are not available. The most well known of his works are Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi and Fatawa-i-Jahandari. However as a historian Barani did not rise to the occasion. He allowed personal prejudices to blur his vision.

R. C. Dutt

R. C. Dutt is remembered for his monumental work, "The Economic History of India" (1902) and his translation of the Rigveda in Bengali. R. C. Dutt also wrote Ramayana: Epic of Ram, Prince of India. He also wrote, "Civilization of India".

R. G. Bhandarkar (1837-1925)

Born in Ratnagiri district in 1837. Got his education at Elphinstone College, Bombay as a professor of Oriental Languages. He taught Sanskrit.

His works

Early History of the Deccan, A peep into the early History of India, Vaishnavism, Jainism and many Religious systems. Also wrote large number of articles on copper plates, inscriptions etc.

K. P. Jayaswal

Kashi Prasad Jayaswal was born in a rich merchant family at Mizzapur in 1881. He took his M.A. Degree in History at Oxford. Played important role in Bihar and Orissa Research Society and brought out many journals and Articles.

His works

The most outstanding contribution of Jayaswal to Indian Historiography was his work "Hindu Polity" published in 1924. Some important articles are, Saisuraka, Mauryan chronology and the Date of Buddha's Nirvana, "Empire of Bindusara".

Another important work, History of India 150 A.D. to 350 A.D. Also traced the chronology and History of Nepal from 600 B.C. to 800 A.D.

J. N. Sarkar (1870-1958)

Jadunath Sarkar called the doyan of Indian Historians, is the most remarkable of the modern historians on medieval India. Born in a Zamindari family in Bangladesh he studied literature and History. He applied principles of scientific research in India.

His works

The general theme he took for research is the history of India of Mughal period and wrote more than twenty books. He took topics like, Tipu Sultan of Mysore and the Rebellion of 1857. for his research.

The other chief works were, History of Aurangzeb and Mughal Administration. Published "Fall of Mughals".

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'Shivaji and his times' was a supplementary to the studies on Mughals. He also wrote books of general nature. They are "History of Bengal", "Military History of India" and "India Through the Ages".

D. D. Kosambi (1907-1966)

He was born in Coa in 1907. He was considered as a Marxist historian, approach history from the economic point of view. He studied history, linguistics and Mathematics. For 15 years he taught maths at Tata Institute. ~~As~~ Though basically he was a mathematician, took keen interest in History.

His works

Kosambi wrote 4 books contributed more than 50 papers in History. Important works are:
"An introduction to the study of Indian History".
"Culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline".

To Kosambi Marxian method is correct approach. His approach inspired a new group of historians.

Defects

The defect in his study was that it was based upon one sided approach. While economic factors received importance, other factors are relegated to the background. The fitting date only accepted; others ignored. Historical changes are not changes in production relation. To Kosambi and his satellites such an approach remained beyond vision.

R. S. Sharma

Ram Sharan Sharma was an eminent historian and academic who specialized in the history of Ancient and early medieval India following Marxist historiography. His Thesis, "Sudras in Ancient India". founder

chairperson of the Indian Council of Historical Research and a Marxist. He was a scientific historian, fought against communal propoganda and actions in ancient India. (14) (19)

A.K. Nilakanta Sastri (1892 to 1975)

Born in a Telugu family in 1892 at Tirunelveli. One of the eminent historians of South India. Had his M.A. degree in History at Madras University and he became the professor there itself.

His works

A prolific writer he edited sources for South Indian History and published books in political, social and cultural History. He was authoritative in the early History of South India.

"Pandyan Kingdom" narrates the history of Pandyas the "Colas" - proved his eminent scholarship. "Tamil Kingdom of South India", "History of Srivijaya" are the other works. "A History of South India, cultural expansion of India and contacts between Aryans and Dravidians" are books of general nature. Edited works are: "A Comprehensive History of India" "Further sources of Vijayanagar History" and "Foreign notices of South India". He also wrote, "Sangam Literature - its cults and cultures".

T. V. Mahalingam (1907-1983)

Theeraghundur Venkatswami Mahalingam was an Indian Historian who is known for publishing the most authoritative descriptive catalogues on the Mackenzie manuscripts. The other books, "Inscriptions of the Pallavas: Kanchipuram in Early South Indian History".

K. K. Pillai (1905 to 1981)

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Kolappa Karagasabhapathy Pillay was an Indian Historian, who headed the Department of Indian History at the University of Madras from 1954 to 1966. He also served as President of the Indian History Congress and as the Founder President of the South Indian History Congress.

Books :- "The caste system in Tamilnadu", "Historical Heritage of the Tamils", "Thamilaga varalaru, Makkelum Panpadum", "A Social History of Tamils", "Studies in Indian History with special reference to Tamil Nadu", "History of South India"

R. Sathianathaiar

Sathyanatha Iyer, the disciple of S. Krishnasamy Aiyangar carried the South Indian History to greater heights. Leandré French, noted for critical analytical research. He served as the Head of the Department of History at Annamalai University - Member of Indian Historical Research Commission.

His works

"The Nayaks of Madurai", "Early History of Tondaimandalam", "History of Tanjavur in the 17th century", "A political and cultural History of India" in 3 volumes

He is considered as a scientific Historian. He guided and encouraged many research scholars.

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Historian at work : Selection of a suitable topic for ResearchCriteria for selecting a suitable topic

The stepping stone to research - one must think twice before selecting a topic.

- Criteria :-
- (1) Must be selected from an area which is near and dear to the researcher - must hold his interest and challenge his efforts - must be appropriate.
 - (2) Must satisfy about the availability of sources insufficient data will end in inadequate research.
 - (3) Must be manageable - may be expanded on the availability of sources - so must be limited in scope.
 - (4) Select a topic so as to complete within reasonable time limit.
 - (5) Source material must be easily accessible.
 - (6) Data available should be in a language known to the researcher.
 - (7) Must be a single subject so as to dealt with straightly.
 - (8) Select a subject which may need further investigation
 - (9) Must have a unifying theme, lead to specific conclusions.
 - (10) Make sure that the topic selected is not researched already.

Collection of Data

Collection of sources is the second stage in the process of historical research. The researcher should have a clear idea about archives, libraries, museums and epigraph centres and private collections where the source materials are preserved.

What is a Source?

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Sources are the Historian's raw materials.

The remains which the past leaves behind are called sources. The historical sources are the remains of man's unique activities in the society - which helps the historian to reconstruct the past.

Primary Sources

A primary source is testimony of a witness or a mechanical device like archaeological remains, inscriptions, coins, travel accounts which represent the occurrence of an event. It is the raw material and more meaningful to the historian. As it gives the first hand information the thesis will be rich by the more use of it.

Archaeological remains are unpoluted primary sources - being a contemporary evidence, it is unbiased.

Epigraphical evidences are contemporary and precise.

Numismatics & the study of coins is an important primary source as it gives information like the place, period, its economic condition, sometimes the name of the ruler, emblem etc.

Literary sources by its originality serves as the barometers for the psychology of the age concerned.

Confidential Reports like military and diplomatic despatches, public reports, editorials, speeches, newspaper reports and public opinion reports are authentic and could be corroborated.

Government orders (G.O.s) are authentic official records - represent the decisions of the Government.

Secondary Sources

When primary source is the raw material secondary source is the finished product. It is an indirect testimony of a person who is not present in the occurrence of the event. It is a stepping stone towards reaching primary source. So the researcher should first read the secondary sources. Secondary sources are called so because they provide second hand information. A close reading of secondary sources will lead the researcher to the primary sources.

Internal criticism

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Internal criticism is also called Higher criticism. It is a science of interpretation. It deals with the internal aspects of the document. It seeks to confirm the truth of the content of the document. Its purpose is to establish the trustworthiness of the document. This is necessary because many of the documents are written with inadequate knowledge. In early times the court historians and in modern time the mercenaries have written accounts of their own view. Sometimes due to political fear truth is hidden. The travellers like Marco Polo interpret of their own what they observed. Therefore it is necessary for the historian to check the records carefully even though it looks authentic.

External criticism

External criticism is to find out the authenticity of the document and the veracity of the information found in it. It is a technique to detect and trace the historical evidences. It is a Lower criticism and a preparatory study of documentary evidence. The documents may bear the name of some persons as their authors but may not be true. Many of the ancient records give no dates or give wrong dates.

When some documents are copied from time to time, there are possibilities of mistake. In textual criticism, the document is checked to find out whether it is as exactly as the original. A second stage is the verification of authorship. This can be ascertained with the help of handwriting.

For its successful application of external criticism, it is important to utilise the knowledge of people in the allied fields like chronology, palaeography, sigillography etc.

Chapterisation

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After the historian has collected isolated facts on the basis of internal and external criticism he has to undertake the job of synthetic presentation of the facts. This he could do under the process of chapterisation. The facts presented in a disorderly manner are not likely to be understood. So the historian must arrange the facts in such a way that the reader draws the exact message. The historian must select relevant facts incorporated. For this he has some specific problem in mind which he wants to investigate. In this regard he must eliminate all the material which does not answer his questions.

By the time the historian reaches the writing stage, there should be the unifying proposition. It must be remembered that the decision regarding what is relevant is largely a matter of personal judgement.

Arrangement of material

The arrangement can be made on the following basis

Chronological arrangement

Chronological order sometimes may not pay any attention to the history of the subsequent year, unless finish the study of the previous year.

Topical Approach

Arrangements of materials can be done on the basis of subject instead of time. This is known as topical approach.

In addition to the above mentioned two methods some other methods such as geographical and another based on personality. Arrangements by localities may sometimes desirable. The arrangement of grouping of people can be adopted. But we cannot consider any particular method as the best one.

Foot notes

It refers to the additional piece of information at the bottom of a page in the thesis. Numbered consecutively chapter by chapter, they are given at the foot of every page. They are intended to indicate the source from which the material is taken and to furnish additional information.

The foot notes should contain enough information so as to render them meaningful. Primarily their function is to furnish bibliographical evidence to the statements. The first citation of a source should give full details such as the name of the author with initials, title, date and place of publication, volume number if any and page number.

Bibliography

It consists of notes on the sources and a list of the sources. It deals with the adequacy of the sources, the studies that are already made. In the list, the primary and secondary sources are separately furnished.

The different sources are to be listed in alphabetical order. The title and the number of volume and edition are to be specified. In case of published works, the name of the author, title of his work, the number of edition, the name of the publication, the place and date of publication should be given correctly.

A working bibliography is prepared while selecting a suitable topic for research. The final bibliography contains a list of sources along with the notes on them. There are different kinds of bibliography viz; (i) Select bibliography (ii) Reference cum bibliography. The first kind of bibliography is the most common form of referencing system.