M.A. HISTORY
SEMESTER - II (CBCS)

PAPER - V
PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

SUBJECT CODE: 93313

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January 2022, Print - 1

Published by: Director,
Institute of Distance and Open Learning,
University of Mumbai,
Vidyanagari,Mumbai - 400 098.

DTP composed and Printed by: Mumbai University Press

CONTENTS

M.A. HISTORY

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PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

SYLLABUS

Objectives: To equip students with the trends of the comprehension of the past and to make them understand the relationship between Philosophy and History.

Module

1. **Philosophy of History**
   (a) Meaning and Relevance
   (b) Philosophy of History in Early India
   (c) Theological School, Idealistic School, Rationalist School and Positivist School

2. **Materialist Schools**
   (a) Marxist view of History – Marx & Engels
   (b) Neo- Marxist view of History – Eric Hobsbawm& E.P. Thompson
   (c) Subaltern Studies – Main Concepts, and Contribution of Subaltern Studies

3. **Post-Marxist Concepts and Approaches**
   (a) Historicism, New Historicism and Cultural Materialism
   (b) Annales School: Ideas, Methods and Contribution
   (c) Postmodernism and History

4. **Perceptions of Indian History**
   (a) Orientalists, Imperialists and Cambridge Schools
   (b) Nationalist and Marxist Schools
   (c) Unconventional Sources and Recent Methods

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MEANING, RELEVANCE AND PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY IN EARLY INDIA

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After the study of this unit, the students will be able to

- Understand the meaning of philosophy.
- Grasp the meaning of philosophy of history.
- Perceive the relevance of philosophy of history.
- Comprehend the Philosophy of History in Early India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is a search for the knowledge of all that exists around us. Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Theology and Philosophy of Natural Science were the traditional philosophies acknowledged by European scholars upto the 18th century. They regarded historical knowledge as impossible. However compilation of sour material and critical methods developed by historians in the 18th century produced histories of all sorts. This form of knowledge could not be ignored. In the 19th century besides critical philosophy of History speculative philosophy of History was put forward by German, Italian, French and English philosophers. This part of Philosophy of History is in the formative stage. Theories about the advent of man, his civilizations, future of the civil society, patterns of life and movements are being discussed. It is now accepted that historical knowledge is possible and theories and principles underlying the historical process deserve to be studied seriously.

Historical knowledge should form the basic of human societies. The natural phenomena can be discovered and explained by scientific method such as observation and experiment. Human sciences have to deal with the mind of world. Philosophy of History does not deal with psychology or sociology for understanding the functions of the mind or an organized society. Its concern is with the historical process and discovering truth and reality as exemplified by the study of individual events.

The study of History would be meaningful only when we understand the principles and philosophical concepts that make it an autonomous discipline. We will confine our attention to the conceptions of History as a special form of philosophy.

1.2 MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY

Before we proceed to examine the problems relating to the philosophy of history, it seems necessary to know what philosophy is. Its simplest meaning is love of wisdom, but surely it is something more than love of wisdom. It stands for systematic thought to explain such phenomena as are not subject to direct observation and scientific study. Philosophy is an attempt to know the unknown through extra scientific methods, Philosophy is a hypothetical interpretation of the unknown; though not knowing the nature of the phenomena, a philosopher advances his hypothesis on the basis of reason and logic for explaining their possible nature.

Philosophy is the collective name for questions which have not been answered to the satisfaction of all who have asked them. In science we are sure where we stand, as we deal with such problems as plant life or animal life or solids, or liquids or gases, but philosophy is an area yet to be conquered; it deals with such abstract concepts as human soul, ultimate reality, truth, honour, beauty, value virtue, and morality. The problem of pure philosophy is to make people adopt virtue without the stimulus of supernatural hopes and fears. Philosophy is an attempt to find out the meaning of our ideas, to synthesise concepts that elude explanations, and to seek good things of the mind. It calls for clear thinking, and to think clearly one should study the doctrine of ideas, causality, natural laws, behaviour pattern, regularities and direction of development, law and the ideal and a host of other concepts that have a direct link with history.

Philosophy is the mother of all knowledge, and it traverses strange and unknown areas. It attempts to synthesise ideas to arrive at broad conclusions. Science deals with analysis, philosophy deals with synthesis. Science studies the 'outer world', philosohpy studies the 'inner world'. Science tells us how to heal and how to kill; philosophy tells us how to live and how to be happy. Science gives us knowledge; philosophy gives us wisdom. Science coordinates the observations and philosophy subordinates them to a principle. Science is mainly concerned with nature, and philosophy is immersed in man and his problems. In short philosophy is the science of sciences, the knowledge of the ultimate, the adviser to man, and the search for the meaning of life.

We commonly regard Philosophy as something beyond the comprehension means something of a common man. It is something very high, an intellectual exercise undertaken by very serious men. We need not make it so abstract and difficult.

1.3 MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Having defined what philosophy is, let us proceed to find out the meaning of philosophy of history. To Voltaire, the father of philosophy of history, it was no more than critical or scientific history in which the historian thought for himself instead of repeating the stories contained in earlier works. From this simple meaning it has grown into a complex body of thought dealing with many complicated problems of historical knowledge.

Hegel used it to mean universal history. Comte used it for the discovery of general laws governing the course of the events. Some used it to mean the explanation of human events by exploring their causes. Yet others thought that its main business was to disentangle the speculative element from the works of ancient thinkers.

To some it signifies an effort of human thought to trace 'man in the process of civilisation'.

To others it stands for an attempt to find a rational plan if any, in the events that have taken place.

To some others it is an inquiry into the forces and factors that have precipitated historical transformations and retardations.

To a few it is a science of culture, a mechanism of culture and the composition and character of culture. Likewise, it has been used in several other ways, to mean analysis of the fundamental assumptions relating to causation and progress, to mean an interpretation of history in accordance with a principle by which historical events and successions are unified and directed towards an ultimate meaning', and to mean that all history is the history of thought.

Collingwood thought that philosophy of history is concerned neither with the past by itself nor with the historian's thought by itself, but with the two things in their mutual relations. The former is the sum of past events and the latter the inquiry conducted by the historian.'

Herbert Butterfield imagined history as a force moving forward on its own account.

Bury, Black, Becker and Beard held the view that historical synthesis was truly relative to the needs of the age.

Marx thought of it in terms of economic determinism.

Toynbee emphasised societies.

To Croce it was intellectual intuition.

To many twentieth-century thinkers it is historical relativism. Thus endless interpretations have been put on the simple phrase, 'philosophy of history'.

Philosophy, concerned as it is with the problem of human life, will necessarily have much to do with history which is the study of man in society. The phrase philosophy of history was used by Voltaire. But he meant by it not the philosophy of history, but a kind of philosophical history. He complained that history, as written by many, was only a confused mass of minute details without connection and sequence, a mass that overwhelmed the mind without illuminating it.

The philosophers of the Seventeenth Century notably Sir Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes had divided knowledge into poetry, history and philosophy ruled by the three faculties of imagination, memory and understanding.

To Bacon history was recalling and recording the facts as they actually happened in the past.

Descartes argued that since the past events cannot be seen happening they cannot be true. He did not believe that history was a branch of knowledge at all. This view prevailed right upto the 18th century. However historical research in the 18th century had produced critical knowledge about the past. Philosophy could not ignore the problems of thought raised by historical research.

Hundred and fifty years before Benedetto Croce who believed that history should be written only by philosophers, Voltaire, the philosopher, was to write history. His two masterpieces, The Age of Louis XIV and The Essay on the Manners and Customs of Nations from Charlemagne to Louis XIII dealt in a philosophical interpretative manner with universal history.

The traditional philosophies do not deal with problems of History and therefore the historical problems require special treatment. The philosophy of History has to be worked out in a relatively isolated condition. The traditional philosophies carry with them the implication that historical knowledge is not possible. We have therefore to leave them alone till we can build up an independent demonstration of how History is possible.

Further Philosophy of History has to work out connexions between this new branch of philosophy and the traditional doctrines. We have to bear in mind that the establishment of a new philosophy of science makes it necessary to revise the old ones. The establishment of modem natural science produced revision of the syllogistic logic substituting for it the new methodology of Descartes and in theology the conception of God. Similarly the establishment of a new philosophy of History would necessitate a change in the theory of knowledge in general.

Check your Progress

Q.1. Describe the meaning of philosophy?

Q.1. What is the meaning of philosophy of history?

1.4 RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Since Voltaire's time, the term 'philosophy of history' has come to mean the deeper philosophical problems involved in history, a search for its meaning. At this point, we must distinguish two rather different types of philosophy of history: the speculative philosophy of history and the critical philosophy of history. The two are, of course, related branches of philosophical inquiry into the subject of history.

These two branches are also known by other terminologies as well. speculative philosophy is formal and material and critical philosophy of history is analytical and synoptic, and The first or speculative philosophy attempts to discover some meaning of significance in concepts which transcend the intelligibility achieved by ordinary historical works.The second deals with the philosophical analysis of historiography, and inquires into logical, conceptual and epistemological characterisation of what historians do. We shall examine the two branches at some length.

1. The Speculative Philosophy of History

The speculative philosophy of history is concerned with finding a pattern or meaning or intelligibility in the past itself, often "as the expression of some universal or cosmic design and having an ultimate goal. It represents a search for unity in the bewildering complexity of events, an aspiration to comprehend the mechanism of growth and decay. It tries to discern laws and patterns of historical development. Speculative philosophy attempts to determine the fundamental factors that direct historical forces and ends up in the formulation of overarching theories of history. Such theories have had great influence on history writing. Hegel, Comte, Marx, Spengler, Croce and Toynbee have more or less viewed history as the past, and as a process that goes on independently of the working historian. In nature and character, speculative philosophy is formal and synthetic.

The ancient Greeks held a cyclical view of history of similar events and movements endlessly recurring in human history. In contrast to the cyclical view, the Hebrew tradition represented by Judaism and Christianity advanced a specific unilinear view-the whole historical process culminating in the end of the world and a last judgement of all mankind. Paul. Eusebius and Augustine seized upon the concept of a meaning, a plan, and elaborated a Christian view according to which human history conformed to a divine plan the end of which was the end of history itself and the establishment of the kingdom of god. But the Christian view of history was eschatological and prophetic rather than historical because it looked to what was to come in the next world, rather than in this one."

Vico's Scienza nouva (1725) advanced a secular view of the evolution of human societies. The Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century and the limitless potentialities of science had already encouraged thinkers to advance ideas of general and indefinite progress. The idea of progress became the favorite doctrine of the Enlightenment. It was believed that progress was inherent in the historical process. Most of the Enlightenment historians - Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Voltaire, Turgot and Condorcet retained the Judeo-Christian teleological view that history was moving and progressing towards a goal. But they consciously shed its theological aspect, rationalized the historical process, and secularized its goal.

History became not the realization of god's purpose, but progress towards perfection of man's estate on earth. The idea of progress became the central theme of Turgot's Discourses on Universal History (1750). But in Condorcet's Tableaux of the Progress of the Human Spirit (1754), the idea became the vision of an earthly paradise-the secularized version of theKingdom of God.

The true heirs to the Judeo-Christian tradition in the philosophy of history were the German idealist philosophers, notably Kant, Herder, Schelling, Fichte, and above all. They discerned in history not merely a universal pattern of development, common to every human society, but the unfolding of a universal providential plan, a plan in which the unit of change was a collective entity, a people or a nation or state. For Hegel the moving spirit of history was the dialectical progression and self-realization of the absolute spirit or human freedom, from primitive times to the civilization of his own day. Hegel's was a purely idealistic system maintaining that all history was the history of thought.

The confident optimism of the nineteenth century had come to assert that history was scientific knowledge providing the basis for the understanding of mankind, such as the natural sciences were doing for the understanding of nature.

Positivists and social theorists like Auguste Comte. Henry Thomas Buckle and Herbert Spencer saw science as the highest stage of human development. Comte and Buckle used the concept of the philosophy of history to discover general laws governing the course of history. But the philosophy that went farthest in this direction was Marxism. Marx and Engels borrowed Hegel's dialectical method but employed it to erect a purely materialistic system of thoughts called historical materialism, the Marxian system seeks the essence of historical process in the material conditions of human life. The motivating force for the development from one historical stage to the other is the 'class war'. This dialectical process of the class struggle would end up in the establishment of a classless society.

After Marx, grand theorizing in history seemed to go out of fashion. Objection was raised to the philosophy of history on the ground that such theorizing was against the proper functions of history. Philosophy of history was based on thought, nor facts. For this reason, perhaps, Charles

Omen considered the philosophers of history as the enemies of history. G.M. Trevelyan categorically stated that for history there was no philosophy of history.

But in the early twentieth century there was a renewed interest in historical philosophy. Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, though not philosophers like Hegel or Marx, aimed at revealing some of the general laws behind the rise and decline of civilizations. But unlike their nineteenth century forerunners, they were more convinced of the ultimate decline of cultures and civilizations than their apotheosis. In the atmosphere of gloom left by the First World War. Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West pronounced see all judgement that Western civilization, reaching its height at about 1800, was doomed to a miserable decline. The law of history was the cyclical law of rise, growth and decay of cultures. Arnold Toynbee's immense work. A Study of History, tried to understand the genesis, growth and decline of civilizations in terms of what he call zrwas the challenge and response mechanism. In the growth stage, a civilization successfully responds to a series of ever new challenges. When the efforts to answer the challenges fail, civilizations die.

2. Critical Philosophy of History

The critical philosophy of history may be said to have originated in the attempt of Niebuhr and Ranke to develop history as a systematic discipline and present it as a science. Unlike the speculative philosophy of history, the critical philosophy is concerned with the actual activities of the historian himself, i.e., the historian's attempt to reconstruct the past. Analytical in nature, the critical philosophy inquires into the logical, conceptual and epistemological problems of historiography. Historiography had gained from the Scientific Revolution in the matter of method. The critical spirit was growing.

Tillemont, the Bolandists and Jean Mabillon had devised certain rules of method to determine the authenticity of documents. Far more important was the definite advance made by Vico. His Scienza nouva met Descartes's condemnation of history at the philosophical level and established it as an epistemologically justifiable form of knowledge. According to his verum-factum doctrine man can fully understand only what he himself has created. It followed that civil society being man's creation, history was ideally fit for human understanding.

The Italian philosopher had also laid down certain rules of method for historical investigation and suggested positive methods by which the historian can transcend exclusive reliance on written sources and extend the frontiers of historical knowledge.

Yet the most important step in the critical philosophy of history step towards the creation of an autonomous discipline of history was taken by Barthold Niebuhr and Leopold Von Ranke who together developed the modern scientific methodology of historical investigation. In the manner of his theories through strict observation and inductive discovery and correlation of evidence, so through an impartial and critical study of sources, the historian was to present a complete knowledge of the past as it had actually happened.

The great problem that critical philosophy is called upon to resolve is whether by a scientific study of the evidence, i.e.. of the sources, it is possible to show, to lay bare what actually happened as Ranke thought was possible. The problem touches upon almost every aspect of historiography, that is, the historian's activity the nature of historical facts and their significance, the problem of objectivity or the subjective element in history writing, causation, the nature of historical explanation, generalization in the writing of history, and the problem of value judgement. The critical philosophy of history is the grammar, the science of history.

By the 1880s there set in a kind of reaction against the Rankean scientific and positivistic approach to history. Windelband, Rickert and Wilhelm Dilthey in Germany tried to maintain the distinctiveness of history as a separate kind of knowledge making it more fit to be classed with cultural or human studies. Dilthey showed that 'unlike science which studied the processes of nature and history studied man as an intelligent being acting according to conscious intentions and choices. History for Dilthey is 'mind affected', a quality of which nature does not partake.

This view found adherents in Collingwood, Croce and Oakeshott. Reacting against the positivistic practice of merely collating events recorded by their sources, Collingwood held that the proper study of history involved going beyond external occurrences to the thoughts which lay behind them. Going perhaps a step further, Croce and Oakeshott treated all history as contemporary history, as the present knowledge of the historians.

The relevance of Philosophy of History is inherent in the nature of historical enquiry. Bolshevik Revolution, World War I and defeat of Japan in the Second World War may be three isolated events. Philosophical enquiry about each of those past events have significance world-wide. Critical philosophy of history of those events touch upon the present problems of human thoughts and actions. The meaning of those events or speculative Philosophy of History of those events is also a form of knowledge deserving serious considerations.

History deals with facts which took place in time and place. The happenings have real existence and a definite location. Reflections on realities of life have more significance in human societies than mere abstract theories. For example devastation brought about by Americans - dropping of an atomic bomb in Japan during World War II and cruelty perpetrated in Vietnam after World War II raise many problems.

Speculative Philosophy of History in the form of some theories like classless society as the goal of historical life of man or theories of human civilization and progress signify that historical process demands closer study for understanding human activities.

Finally truth and reality in human societies have to be discovered and explained not as mere intellectual exercise but as a timely warning that unwillingness to know them would be dangerous to all organized human societies.

The Scope of philosophy of History is very wide. It is expanding with the growth of researches carried out in various fields of historical events. The historical data on various events of the past are used by sociologists, economists, psychologists and even by natural scientists. Examples of each of the above forms of knowledge can be given as follows:

(a) Sociology- makes use of the information provided by historical evidence. In ancient India the family and the society was at a food gathering stage. The social life of the Aryans as described in History helps sociology to know about the caste-system.

(b) Economies- The data provided by History of the economic condition of the people in Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution enabled Economists to test the validity of Marxist's Doctrine.

(c) Psychologists- Plutarch's 'lives' provide useful information about the Greek and Roman statesmen and rulers.

(d) Natural Sciences- The record of the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and the consequences detailed in historical records do serve the cause of science.

All these examples refer to the utility of History. We are now concerned with the scope of Philosophy of History. According to Donald Donagan and Barbara Donagan Philosophy of History may be divided into a critical part and a metaphysical or speculative part.

Organized and systematic research in History in the 18th and 19th centuries forced philosophers to consider the special problems or group of problems to be taken up seriously. They could not ignore the claim of historical knowledge even when the current theories were directed towards the special problems of science.

Check your Progress

Q.1. Explain the relevance of Philosophy of History?

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1.5 PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY IN EARLY INDIA

In the Early times men were faced with many problems of thought. In India the great problem was that of how the universe came into existence and what will be its end. The six systems of philosophy which evolved from 5th to 2nd centuries B.C. created a favourable climate for philosophy, Kanad, Gautam, Jemini, Kapil, Patanyali and Badarayan put forward their theories about the commentaries and annotations on their systems continued to enliven the minds of intellectual elites in India and abroad up to the 10th century A.D. The Jain philosophers Universe. The developed "Syatvada" the seven different ways in which a proposition could be argued. The tenor of the thinking of Ancient Indian philosophers was mostly concerned with other-worldly things and therefore ignored the historical knowledge.

1. The Lack of Historical Sense:

The central defect of the intellectual life of the early Indians, in spite of the antiquity and developed character of their civilization, is an almost complete lack of its historical and chronological sense. A.B. Keith writes: "...despite the abundance of its literature, history is so miserably represented...that in the whole of the great period of Sanskrit literature, there is not one writer who can be seriously regarded as a critical historian."

Abundance of Source Material and the Absence of Histories

There existed throughout the subcontinent and throughout the period up to AD 1200, various categories of sources written chiefly in Sanskrit, Pali and Tamil. The Brahmanical puranas, the Buddhist Pali canon and the Jain pattavalis contain, amid vast masses of religious and social matter, much historical material though their treatment of such material is anything but historical. Hsuan Tsang refers to the archives, official annals and nilopitu (state papers) of the Indians. Al-Biruni attests to the existence of similar material in India. And, in the lithic inscriptions, copper plates and coins, early India possessed a corpus of historical information unmatched by any country or civilization. Yet the melancholy fact remains that with such material for historical reconstruction, early India produced no great historian. No developed civilization in the annals of mankind has been represented so meagrely in its historical literature as the Hindu. The only professedly formal history undertaken in early India is the Rajatarangini of Kalhana.

2. Explanation of the Absence of Historical Sense:

How is this lack of the historical and chronological sense of the early Indians to be accounted for? According to Vincent Smith: "Most of the Sanskrit works were composed by Brahmans, who certainly had not a taste for writing histories, their interests being engaged in other pursuits." But the statement almost begs the question since the problem to be resolved is the reason why the ancient Hindu mind veered at a tangent unhelpful to historiography. A.B. Keith has suggested that the "cause of this phenomenon must lie in peculiarities of Indian psychology aided by environment and the course of events," admitting, however, the difficulty of giving an entirely satisfying explanation.

Environment and the Course of Events

Of environment and the course of events, Keith writes that India produced no oratory, which flourished best in an atmosphere of political freedom. Again, national feeling and the resultant popular action which are a powerful aid to the writing of history was not evoked in India by all the foreign invasions during the period up to AD 1200- the Persian, Greek, Saka, Parthian, Kushan and Hun in the sense in which the Greek repulse of the Persian attacks called forth popular action and evoked the history of Herodotus. The Muhammadan invaders found India without any real national feeling; their successes were rendered possible largely because the Indian chiefs disliked one another far more than they did the mlechcha (foreigner).

Belief in the Doctrines of Karma and Rebirth, and Fate

The factors which worked against the development of a genuinely historical consciousness among the early Indians are to be sought in their religion and philosophy which are often seen integrally related to each other and which have deeply influenced their basic attitude towards life, their psyche, and their ethos. Of such factors, Keith identifies the doctrines of karma and rebirth, and the operation of almighty fate. The effects of belief in these doctrines are uncalculable, unintelligible, and beyond all foresight. If men's lives were the outcome of actions in their previous births, no one could tell what deed in the remotest past might not come up to work out its inevitable end; and fate might spring surprises on men's plans and actions-favoring or thwarting them. All the three major Indian systems of thought and belief -subscribed to these doctrines. Hindu, Buddhist and Jain- subscribed to this doctrine

Impossibility of Progress: Belief in Regression

In India the accepted idea was a fixed order of things or an eternal system of values from which there could only be degeneration. Early Indians believed that movement in time-yuga succeeded by yuga-meant regression for societies, a continuous fall from a state of excellence which would culminate in the worst excesses of the Kali era. The idea of regression - the notion that the preceding ages were progressively better than the present - is clearly an idea even more unhistorical than the idea of changeless continuance.

Preference for the General to the Detriment of the Particular

The history of doctrines or of philosophy noting differences and tracing change was foreign to the ancient Indian mind. The names of some great authorities in philosophy or in the other departments of knowledge might be preserved, but little interest was shown in the opinions of predecessors as individuals. A text might be quoted, but not its author. This tendency to prefer the general to the particular developed and froze into a deprecation of individual personality and opinion, rampant anonymity in art, literature and philosophy, a lack of care for accurate knowledge and exact detail, and worship of tradition and authority. Sadly, all such features are anti-historical.

Philosophy of Life-negation

We may add that all the above anti-historical tendencies of the Indian mind noted by Keith might be traced in their origin to an enervating philosophy of life-negation in the place of a positive, man-making philosophy of life-affirmation. It must be stressed that a necessary condition for engaging in historical pursuit-pursuit of knowledge of the past in our sense of the term - is an interest in the problems of the present and the future, an interest which does not seem to have occupied the thoughts of the early Indians in the same manner or to the same degree as in the case of other civilized peoples. The present life with all its constituents was thought to be transitory, just a link in an endless chain of births and rebirths-a release from which was sought as its highest goal. The Hindu's highest aim lay not in what was redundantly taught to be the transient, fleeting, withering stubble of life, but in an escape from it. Buddhism advocated that the will to life has to be destroyed in order to achieve nirvana.

Belief in the transitoriness of things developed into a melancholy view, an unrelieved pessimism, in which human life was seen as a deception, maya (illusion), and as in bondage to misery, despair, grief and affliction and necessarily evil. In contrast, the after-life was shown to be one of release. By the side of the life-temporal as a vale of woe and wickedness was placed what was believed to be the life-eternal the glories of which were emphasized in all possible ways. The first had only a relative value whereas the second had an absolute quality.

Knowledge of the life-temporal suffered in comparison with the knowledge of the life-spiritual, brahmavidya-knowledge par excellence. The idea got itself entrenched in the Hindu mind and anything which aided such knowledge was considered important. Other kinds of knowledge, though useful, could not claim an absolute substantialistic quality, History which was essentially of this world, could flourish only in an atmosphere of life-affirmation. Life-negation and otherworldliness are anti-historical tendencies.

Surrender of Rationality

The elements in the Indian psyche discussed above constricted human volition and freedom and left life helplessly dependent on the transcendental. Understanding the past is a rational process; where rationality itself is at discount, mundane history would be impossible. And every position resigned by reason was sure to be occupied by faith- faith in the contingent, the miraculous and the supernatural, which only prayer, magic and witch craft could hope to propitiate and control. The habit of the mind which seeks to find natural causes for natural occurrences, if it ever existed, fell out of vogue in India. for nature itself was thought to be capable of being affected by divine or demonic instrumentalities. All three religions- Brahmanical Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism favored asceticism not only as a spiritual exercise but as a means of acquiring superhuman magical powers capable of affecting even the course of nature.

3. The Problem of Chronology

Closely related to the comparative lack of a full-fledged historical sense is the comparable lack of a chronological sense which makes it difficult to ascertain precise dates for the events of early Indian history. Historical knowledge is the knowledge of past events in the order of their priority and posteriority of occurrence, related to an index of time. Knowledge of events even when accurate, if unaccompanied by the time of their occurrence, is not historical. In early Indian history even when a fact is ascertained as such one is left to grope for the date. This chronological difficulty is of two kinds-one, the absence of the dates of events; and the other, the lack, even when the date is indicated, of a basic date of universal applicability such as the Christian or the Islamic era, a date of reference to which the several eras (Vikram, Saka, Gupta, etc.) and innumerable dates in the history of the subcontinent could be converted. In the absence of a proper historical sense, and also perhaps of a unitary religion with a definite founder, no such universal chronology was developed by the early Indians. Where the date of an event is given in the regnal years of a monarch, or say after the birth or death of a teacher like the Buddha, one is still adrift on a featureless sea of time as to the occurrence of the event. A classic example is Asoka's otherwise clear statement that in his eighth regnal year he attacked and conquered Kalinga which leaves one in doubt as to the date either of his coronation or of the Kalinga war.

Chronology of Events and the Hindu Idea of the Sequence of Actions

The problem of chronology, as that of history in ancient India should be understood in relation to the Hindu conception of time which was generally viewed in terms of the sequence of actions. The punctilious care the Hindu bestows on time in his daily religious and domestic rites has nothing to do with the time factor in its historical sense. At one end of the scale, time is counted in such particles of it as yama, nadika, vinadika, muhurta, and so on at the other, in eons- Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali. For purposes of history one is too small and the other too large. Events of the past are not described as having occurred in their chronological sequence, i.e., as having occurred in specific durations of time months or years.

4. Beginnings of the Indian Historical Tradition Gatha, Narasamsi, Akhyana, Itivrtta, Vamsa and Vamsanucharita

Love of the past is an inborn quality of man and the early Indians had, in fact, a lively sense of the past though it did not develop into the sense of a worldly, human, historical past. An oral tradition of history, as in the gatha and the narasamsi (hero-lauds or praises celebrating men) existed in India in a nebulous and amorphous form even in Rig Vedic times. To these were added in the later Vedic Age and after, other forms of quasi-historical compositions the aklyana, itivrtta, vamsa and vamsanucharita, purana and itihasa. At times the gatha and narasams were welded together and absorbed by the akhyana, which simply meant historical narrative such as Devasuram and Pariplavani mentioned in the Brahmana literature. Itivrtta meaning occurrence or event, denotes traditional account of men and things of times past. Vamsa or royal genealogies and the line of priestly succession is another class of ancient lore. Such stray historical works when collected and systematized developed into the vamsanucharita, the material out of which those political parts of the puranas were constructed at a later date. This confused mass of myth, legend and history is to be called quasi-history of both the theocratic and mythical kinds.

A class of important court officials in the later Vedic Age (c. 1000-600 BC) were the sutas, also called magadhas, whose special duty was to compose, collect and preserve vamsa, i.e., royal and priestly genealogies. Between 400 BC and AD 400 this oral tradition of history and legend had been given a fixed literary form. The sutas disappeared as the proper organization of royal archives at least from the Mauryan times seems to have made the work of the sutas and magadhas redundant. The Arthasastra lists the kinds of records kept by these archives, and Hsuan Tsang and Al-Biruni testify to the existence of such archival material though they are now not extant.

The Purana and Itihasa

The earliest forms of oral tradition - the gatha, narasamsi, akhyana, itivrita and vamsanucharita - seem to have been absorbed by the purana and itihasa. The purana and the itibasa, mentioned first in the Atharva Veda, occur together in the Brahmanas, Aranyaka the Upanishads. A question of fundamental importance is where the purana and the itihasa, which represent the ancient Indian conception of history, can be regarded as real, genuine history.

The ancient Indians pictured their past as one in which gods, sages, demons, nymphs and fairies took an active part in the affairs of men. Men who looked up to supernatural agents for grace and redemption easily found in the itihasa and purana an ideal and a substitute for history.

Historical Value

There can be little doubt that the royal genealogies in the puranas embody many genuine historical traditions of great antiquity. Without the puranic account, the reconstruction of a reliable history from the period of the Mahabharata war to the rise of Jainism and Buddhism (c. the tenth to the sixth century BC) - an apparently impossible task accomplished by H.C. Raychaudhuri-would have been well nigh impossible. The puranic dynastic lists for the period from the sixth century BC to the beginning of the fourth century AD, with collateral and corrective information from Buddhist and Jain traditions constitute an invaluable base for the reconstruction of the political history of northern India. Again, the puranas are sure to yield valuable information for the cultural history of ancient India. And though the prophetic descriptions of the future evils of the Kali age do not provide any direct, authentic information of a historical kind, those gloomy brahmanic forecasts contain an oblique reference to the miseries which the country underwent in lawles, chaotic times such as during the unsettled conditions of Northern India in the early part of the fourth century AD.

5. The Vamsa and Charita

Freed from the suta tradition, the vamsa form developed a vast body of quasi-historical literature. The Buddhist Rajavamsa, Dipavam and the Mahavamsa, the Jain Harivamsa, the Hindu Raghuvamia Sasivamsa, the Nripavali of Kshemendra, the Parthivavali of Helaraja, and the Rajatarangini of Kalhana are only some of the vamsa genre of a vast body of a semi-historical literature.

Historical Kavya or Charita or Ornate Biographies

The historical charita or kavya is a romance woven around a strong historical kernel. Some of the most famous specimens of this kind are the Harshacharita, the Gaudavaha, Vikramankadevacharita, Navasahasankacharita, Kumarapalacharita, Prithviraja-vijaya, Somapalavilasa, and Ramacharita.

Bana Bhatta: Harshacharita

The first Indian work which may be regarded as historical is the Harshacharita of Bana Bhatta, an incomplete biography of Harshavardhana of Thanesvar and Kanauj, written in the first of the seventh century. It is the model of romance based historical kernel.

6. Vakpatiraja, Padmagupta, Atula, Bilhana, Bhulokamalla and Jayanaka

Vakpatiraja

There are adulatory biographical works bearing many marks of the Indian kavya but few of true history. One such is Gaudavaha written in the second quarter of the eighth century by Vakpatiraja to celebrate the defeat of a Gauda prince by the author's patron, Yasovarman of Kanauj, who himself was defeated and killed not much later (c. AD 740) by Lalitaditya of Kashmir.

Padmagupta

Again, far from serious history is the Navasahasankacharita of Padmagupta, also called Parimala. Written about AD 1005, the eighteen cantos of this work relate a mythical theme but allude at the same time to the history of King Sindhuraja Navasihasanka of Malwa. As the method, so the treatment and the results are not historical.

Atula: Mushikavamsa

The Muhikavama is one of the few epics of regional-nay, parochial history. The author, Atula, may have been the court poet of Srikantha, also known as Rajavarma, who is believed to have flourished towards the end of the eleventh century and in the beginning of the twelfth. In Atula's hands, the history of the Mushika kings begins in mythology and proceeds, without any sense of time and space, through incredible tales and marvels. The ancestors of the Mushikas were Hehayas who after their overthrow in their original home in the Vindhya region, seem to have trekked southward and settled on the west coast around Mount Eli near present-day Cannanore sometime before the sixth century AD.

Bilhana (1040): Vikramankadevacharita

The Vikramankadevacharita must have been written during AD 1083-89. Much cannot be said for Bilhana as a historian. Hailing from Kashmir with its tradition of chronicling events, Bilhana did not perform the duty of a chronicler. We may justly suspect his impartiality. In his case royal patronage can be shown to have compelled him to systematically distort facts.

Bhulokamalla

The only historian of royal blood in ancient India was Somesvara III Bhulokamalla (AD 1127-1136), the Chalukya king of Kalyani, and the son and successor of Vikramaditya VI. He is known to fame as the author of Manasollasa, an encyclopedic work on royal duties and pleasures completed in AD 1129. The royal author also wrote a biography of his father, entitled the Vikramankabhyudaya which, though discovered at Patan before 1925, has not attracted the attention of scholars. It is a historical prose narrative modelled on the famous Harshacharita of Bana. But the incomplete manuscript contains only three chapters.

Prithviraja-vijaya' (AD 1191) of Jayanaka

The Prithviraja-vijaya is a historical poem which has come down to us in a mutilated form, one-third of it having been lost. It does not mention the author's name, but Har Bilas Sarda has suggested that it was Jayanaka, a Kashmiri poet, who wrote it. The work in its present form contains eleven cantos with a part of the twelfth. It is, as usual, laudatory, celebrating the victory of Prithviraja Chahamana over Muhammad of Ghor in the first battle of Tarain (1191).

7. Kalhana: Rajatarangini

Kashmir's Tradition of Historical Writing

The Rajatarangini (River of Kings) is a long Sanskrit narrative poem of eight thousand metrical verses divided into eight cantos, each canto being called a taranga or wave by the author. It is a continuous history of the kings of Kashmir from mythical times (1184 BC) to the date of its composition (AD 1148-49). The Rajatarangini is the only Sanskrit work so far discovered which may be called a history, and Kashmir the only region of India with a tradition of historical writing.

8. Early Indian Philosophy: An Appraisal

There is truth in the charge that the early Indians, when seen alongside the ancient Greeks, Romans and the Chinese, had no historians and no historical sense. There is little that is genuinely historical in the definition of either the itihasa or the purana. For this reason the itihasa-purana tradition- the way in which the Indians tried to understand their past-was not easily comprehensible to those familiar with the usual Graeco-Roman or even the Islamic traditions of historiography. But the charge that the ancient Indians were an ahistorical people has been objected to, doubtless with a measure of truth.

Characteristics of Early Indian (Hindu) Philosophy

Pattern History

Ancient Indian (Hindu) philosophy conformed to a certain pattern in respect of theme, mode of treatment, and conclusions drawn. The pattern had little to do with problems of history writing such as chronology, the narration of facts and their explanation. Kalhana alone was an exception.

1. Theme:

As for theme, the histories of this tradition were the charitas or ornate biographies, mostly of kings. Works like the Harshacharita, Vikramankadevacharita and Prithviraja-vijaya are examples. But the charitas were not full-fledged biographies written from the historical point of view. The theme would be limited to some aspect of the king's life, usually the attainment of royal glory or victory over an enemy. The conventional digvijaya of ancient chakravartins and the swayamvara, which need not be true to fact. were important features of this pattern.

2. Causation and causal explanation:

Adhering to the law of causality enjoined by the medieval Indian philosophers, writers on history seem to have recognized the category of adrshta (unseen) causes where the seen causes failed to account for or explain a phenomenon. This meant resort to ideas of supernatural causation resulting in myth-making as in the Agnikula origin of the four Rajput dynasties. Myth-making became so rampant that every dynasty of early medieval India was connected with the solar or lunar lineage with a Kshatriya tradition. Supernatural causation figures even in Kalhana's work. Religiosity and the otherwordly ethos of the Hindu mind enhanced by belief in the doctrines of karma and punarjanma and the inscrutability of fate offered an easy way to bypass historical explanations by natural causation. Readymade explanations and incessant recourse to authority and tradition rendered doubt on such topics idle. And fate was always a potent cause.

3. Facts:

Divine intervention and supernatural occurrences in human affairs, the doctrines of karma and rebirth, and the role of destiny were all intrusive elements which vitiated ancient Hindu philosophy. To look for the meaning of human actions outside of those actions is to throw actual facts out of historical focus, persuading the historian not to search for facts at all. Only Kalhana had regard for facts as facts and the Rajatarangini is exceptional in its sense of sustained narrative and a near-complete freedom from legendary matter. When Bilhana or Arula or Jayanaka describes events, the description itself is without any sense of time and place, giving a mythological cover to what little of real events they cared to set down. Vikramaditya VI Chalukya was Rama whose digvijaya obliged Agastya to leave the shores of the ocean; Prithviraja III Chahamana was again Rama, fearful of whose wrath, the ocean gave just enough water to the rainclouds, neither too much to inundate Prithviraja's lands nor too little to scorch it. Fantasy took the place of facts, a trend which assumed an extreme form in the Navasahasankacharita, a tenth or eleventh century biography of Sindhuraja Paramara by his Jain court poet, Padmagupta. The author did not think it improper to introduce his historical characters in the garb of animals and supernatural beings and give a fictional character to historical incidents as in fairytales. From the point of view of facts - let alone their accuracy - the charitas cannot be considered as historical treatises.

4. Chronology:

Historical facts can be known as such only in a chronological framework. But a conception of the past which did not generally look for actual events would not insist on the exact time of their occurrence in dates and years. Keith blames the Indian disregard of chronology to the secondary character ascribed to time by the philosophies. The early Indians did develop a chronology of sequence- the beginning, the efforts, the hope of success, the certainty of success, and the attainment of success. But these are only logical stages of development, and unrelated to some point of time they are too different from the universally accepted meaning of chronology to be able to meet the requirements of history.

5. Anachronistic portrayal of historical characters:

The vivid sense of the past that the ancient Indians had - say, their nostalgia for the past-had nothing truly historical about it. They took to portraying contemporary history with religious and mythological models, a practice detrimental as much to religion and mythology as it was to history. Not only individuals, but issues and events were most anachronistically and unhistorically represented. Prithviraja III was Rama incarnate to restore and preserve the religious and social order threatened by Muhammad Ghori and his hosts, who automatically became Ravana and his rakshasa followers. If Jayanaka had extended his ridiculously anachronistic portrayal to a date after the second battle of Tarain, he would have had to tell the story not of Rama defeating and killing Ravana-but its opposite.

6. Meeting the present by the past. Since for the Hindus the Kali age was decadent in comparison with the glory of the preceding ones, it was idle to meet the past by the present. Hence, writes V.S. Pathak:

> these medieval historians tried to understand the contemporary history with the help of ancient forms and ideals. Here in their attempt to study the present in the light of the past, they offer a striking contrast to those modern historians who tend to study the past with direct and perpetual reference to the present.

7. Language and style:

The proper form of a narrative subject like history is prose, not poetry. Not only that all facts cannot be expressed in poetry, but a historical narrative, when rendered in poetry, is likely to be colored by dramatic and poetic embellishments. It must be said that verse was as familiar and normal to the early Indians as prose was to other peoples and that the anushtup metre in Sanskrit could be as matter of fact as prose in the other languages. Yet, early Indian historians were poets first and historians last-literary conventions, hyperbolic expressions, and chivalric, dramatic and poetic embellishment overwhelmed the little casual history they cared to write. The Harshacharita was not in fact an akhyayika or biographical narrative as Bana calls it, but a kavya in prose. The Rajatarangini, though written in verse, is happily a narrative of historical facts.

It must be said in conclusion that early Indian historiography did not make any real advance towards genuine history writing. With the sole exception of Kalhana, who remains a pleasant mystery, the early Indians left behind them no great work which we could call history. The modern idea of history, imported from the West, was rightly disinclined to accept the itihasa-purana-kavya tradition or any aspect of it as historical, and for the most part, modern historians of ancient India also unceremoniously discarded it.

Check your Progress

Q.1. Asses the Philosophy of History in Early India?

Q.2. Give an account of the characteristics of Early Indian Philosophy

1.6 SUMMARY

Philosophy may be taken to mean speculative thought aimed at comprehending phenomena that are not amenable to the scientific methods of observation, analysis and experiment. Science is the analytical description of parts; philosophy is the synthetic interpretation of the whole. Concerned with problems of matter. Science gives objective, verifiable knowledge, philosophy deals with such problems as human existence, the meaning of life, the nature and destiny of man-problems on which no conclusive data are at hand. Philosophy is the queen of sciences, the mother of all knowledge, the adviser to men, the teacher of wisdom. It is the love of truth.

In History we deal with the living past not the dead past. History is not a mere record but an attempt to discover and understand the truth about past events and also thoughts which have relevance to our present life. It is not a pass-time for complication of information and putting it in cold storage but an exercise for the intellect to grasp the meaning of the events in the past which arouse our interest. We have to go deeper to find the answers to the question 'what?' and also try to know the "Why?" and how? about the historical events.

1.7 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the meaning of Philosophy.
2. What do you understand by the term Philosophy of History?
3. Was there a need for Philosophy of History? Discuss.
4. Describe the relevance of Philosophy of History?
5. Asses the Philosophy of History in Early India?

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2

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL AND IDEALISTIC SCHOOL

Unit Structure

2.0 Objectives:

After the study of this unit, the students will be able to

- Know the approach of Theology and History.
- Understand the Theological approach to the study of Philosophy of History.
- Grasp the main characterstics of the christian theological approach to the study of philosophy of history.
- Understand the idealist approach to history.
- Know the idealist philosophers of history as Hegal, Croce and Collingwood.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss the Theological and Idealist approaches to the study of History of Philosophy. A theological approach to Philosophy of History will evidently concentrate on the creation of the world and man by God. It will try to accept revealed knowledge rather than facts of history. Human actions are seen as pre-ordained and Providential. All attention is concentrated on detecting the hidden plan running through the course of events. Knowledge has to be accepted on the authority of the revealed texts of the basis of religious doctrines. Philosophy of history which seeks to discover and understand human actions as chosen by his free will are set aside and God's purpose as understood by authors is given the central stage. Historiography, Philosophy of History could not make much progress until it was liberated from the control of theology.

While discussing 'Idealism and Idealistic approach to history the views of G.W.F. Hegel naturally figure predominantly. He was the first to give a comprehensive statement of the main features of his philosophy of history. The 'Idea' or 'Reason', Freedom, Progress and the dialectic of progress made strong impact on the minds of historians of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Theological and the Idealist schools gave historiography a wider vision. They concentrated on the philosophical aspect rather than the criticism of sources. They tried to find out the meaning in history and understand the historical process philosophically. Hegel, the philosophers of the 19th century with his theory of Idealism gave a new direction to the study of history.

2.2 THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

2.2.1 Theology and History

Theological theories are those that attempt to prove that there is some purpose or plan in historical events. This is an old concept. Christianity presented history as a drama with a divinely appointed beginning and end.

In the initial stages of human civilizations God and religious rites implying magic played a big part in social and political life of people. Tribal wars were not mere armed fights between two groups but were tests of superior capacity to propitiate Gods and Goddesses. The success in battles and wars was considered a divine favour. The mythologies of Ancient Greeks and Hindus are full of such intervention of Gods: The war of ten kings (Dashradnya Yudha) ended in the victory of 'Bharat tribe led by Sudas with the help of Sage Vasishta.

It was not in Vedic mythology that we come across the intimate relations between historical facts and spiritual influence but in Ancient times religion seemed to determine historical process.

In Greek mythology also the favours of Gods and Goddesses were sought. The wars ended in defeat or victory for the parties according to the favours of the divine grace. In short history and religious tales become indistinguishable in Ancient times. We shall now discuss some of the ideas of creation, a concept of philosophy to have a better understanding of their philosophical thinking in this respect.

2.2. 2 Theological approach to the study of philosophy of history

1. **Ancient**
2. **Mediaeval**

Philosophical thoughts with flights of imagination produced a class of written narrative which we call mythology. Here the man seeks an escape from the rigidity of rational representation. The problems of thought faced by the thinking group in a society needed not only sharp intellect but patient long-term research. The wise men of the ancient time were in a hurry to satisfy the curiosity of the people. They put forward certain theories about creation and the functions of Gods and Goddesses.

1. Ancient Philosophy of History

The most ancient civilization is obviously the Egyptian civilization but their mythology in written form is not available. "The Book of the Dead" is a guide for man after death. In Mesopotamia or the country between Tigris and Euphratis (Iraq) we come across such interesting speculative philosophy. The Sumerians, The Babylonians and the Assirians ruled this part of Western Asia. The Babylonian "Poem on Creation". The poem begins at the origin of all things. "Nothing existed as yet, not even the gods. Out of the nothingness appear the cosmic principles Apsu, fresh water and Tiamat, salt water." Theology begins with the birth of their son Mummu. There after there is an increase in the number of divinities. Then the new gods revotted against the old gods. Apsu decides to destroy them Ea the wise god used magic and cast a spell upon water element and put Apsus ancestors to sleep and made Mummu Captive. Tiamat was determined to meet the challenge of the new gods. She married Qingu, makes him head of her army and confided the tablets of fate. Ea came to know her plans and revealed them to the ancient god Anshar Tiamat was successful for a time but there arose a powerful leader of gods, Marduk who killed Tiamat in a combat. He cut her body into two. Out of one-half of the body he created heaven and placed stars and out of the other he made the earth. Man was made out of Mardukes blood.

There is also another Babylonian story of the flood "Gil Gamesh". In that poem a fish saved the life of a family when the whole world was swallowed by flood. This story of the flood became popular and 'Manu and the fish' found a place in Hindu mythology.

Vedic Mythology

In the tenth chapter (Mandal) of the Rig Veda we find the story of the creation of the universe described in the "Purush-Sukta". Dr. A.B. Keith has discussed the hymn of creation in his celebrated Volume No. 32 of Religion and Philosophy of Veda; The Harvard Series, 1925. The main features of the "Purush sukta" are as follows:

"In the beginning nothing existed nor non-existed. There was no atmosphere, no sky it is asked then what covered the vacuum ? Was there unlimited expanse of water? There was no death and no immortality; no day and no night. There was He alone who breathed without breath from that unlimited ocean of darkness Tapas' or 'Hiranyagarbh' the essence of creation was formed.

The formation of the Universe was the result of sacrificing the prime-eval being or Purush by gods in a symbolic offering to the sacrificial fire. Out of his body the whole Universe was created. His body covered the whole Universe and still some parts of his body extended above the created Universe. Out of his eyes sun, from his breath wind, from his mind moon and from his head heaven formed. Earth was formed from his feet and human society was formed from the different parts of his body. The priest class originated from his head, rulers and warriors from his arms, merchants and farmers from his abdomen and thies and menials or Shudras from his feet. The society thus originated is known as four-fold or Chaturvarnya society.

The theories of creation believed by the Hebrews (Jews) and Christians are found in the Old Testament. God created the world in six days. He created Eve and Adam. They disobeyed his commands and their troubles began. There will be Last Judgement for all in the end.

We shall discuss main characteristics of Christianity under, the subtitle. Christian theology' hence a mere reference to the broad outline here is sufficient. There are many theories about creation as envisaged by different people. Here we are concerned with the most ancient concepts only.

2. Medieval Philosophy of History

It will be clear from the foregoing pages that Philosophy of History in the early stage of development of human society was rudimentary in content. The men who ventured to know God and his creation could construct some theories on the basis of their worldly experience.

The ideas that dominated the minds of the ancient sages were such as struggle among gods for supremacy in Babylonian poem. Marduk emerging the successful hero among the Aryan tribes. Sudas guided by Vasishta and blessed by God Indra became the ruler. Another element in their thinking about the past was the efficacy of magic. Philosophers of this period were mystics and the events in the past happened as God wished them to happen.

In the Medieval period thinking of the intelligent men the society was on the old lines. In India they were satisfied in writing explanatory notes and commentaries on old scriptures, so no attempt was ever made to look at the past events in a rational manner. They produced a class of literature called "Puranas". It was more religious than historical. The approach of the Puranas to the historical events (which were referred to very sparingly) was that of explaining Gods Providence. In Europe the approach was to defend the religious doctrines.

Medieval Age in Europe began after the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D. but the feudal society took shape in the 9th century or so. The rise of Islam and the power of the Arabs and Turks brought about many complex situations in Europe. The Crusades (wars of religion between the Christians and the Muslims of West-Asia) changed the outlook on wordly affairs. Arab, Turk and Persian travellers visited many places and wrote their memoirs or composed histories of ruling dynasties. Men like Al- Beruni and Ibn Khaldun attracted the attention of scholars. The Crusades produced romantic literature stories of bravery, chivalry and loyalty. New winds of conception of History began to blow.

Check your progress:

1. Point out the main features of the ancient and medieval times to the study of Philosophy of history.

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2.2.3 Christian Theology - Main characteristics

Christian Philosophy of History in the Middle Ages was influenced by St. Augustine's book "The two cities- The earthly and the heavenly." This 5th century A.D. monk from Hippo (North Africa) maintained that whatever happens accords with God's Providence. This world Age is the career of the two cities. The citizens of the earthly city live by civic obedience and rule, those of the heavenly city by faith in the happiness in store for them.

From St. Augustine in the fifth century to Bossuet in the seventeenth century a number of Christian writers believed in a providentially or dained design. It was thought that divine intelligence causes empires and cultures to rise and fall. Whether it was plague, or famine or war or any event, good or bad, it was regarded either as punishment or reward for previous misdeeds or good deeds. The Church theory attempted to interpret history in terms of a principle by which historical facts are directed and unified towards an ultimate meaning. It makes God dwell in history.

St. Augustine expounded the idea of the city of God, which was divine and the city of man which was a sin. He held the view that there can be no peace or order in the world unless the divine will was fully acknowledged. According to the Church view, all historical events are chaotic which can be set right only by submission of man to the Divine Will. The motive force for historical events is the Will and Grace of God. Toqueville goes to the extent of saying, "The gradual development of the equality of the conditions is therefore a providential fact and it possesses all the characteristics of a divine decree; it is universal, it is durable, constantly eludes all human interference and all events as well as men minister to its development."

The result of this transcendental theory was the belief in fate, chance, accident and in supernaturagl things. Human intelligence and efforts were relegated to the background. This theory has been severely censured in modern times. Proudhon is its strongest critic. He is the theologian of the theory of progress. His view is that society acts by spontaneous impulses. It is man's privilege to apprehend fatality as a social instinct. There is a constant struggle between man and nature, in which his intelligence, skill and initiative play a vital role in turning the wheels of history. Modern science has attempted to bring about a change in history, and in this the divine will, according to Proudhon, has no part. He says, "The Providence of God is nothing but the collective instinct' or the ultimate reason of man as a social being. Voltaire and Condorcet were anti-religious and anti-church, but Proudhon is anti-God. He says, 'God is the evil' and that the Christian God is depriving man of his own creative power and precision'. Voltaire thought that if 'God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him.' But Proudhon felt, 'The first duty of a free and intelligent man is to chase the idea of God out of mind and conscience incessantly.' He thought further that 'we attain to science in spite of Him, to well-being in spite of Him, every progress is a victory in which we crush the deity. By and by man will become the master of creation and the equal of God. Instead of man being made in the image of God, God is made in the image of man's power of foreseeing and providing. Take away this Providence and God ceases to be divine is the view of such thinkers as Proudhon who is the prophet of progress. 'Eternal God and finite man are definite rivals in an irreconcilable competition, the prize of which is progress.' Thus a vehement attack is made on the theological or transcendal interpretation of history. With such thinkers as Proudhon, Comte, Buckle, Darwin, Marx and Bury, the transcendental theory was fully exploded.

Christian Theology is centred round the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Christians look at the events in human life as happening according to God's Providence. Historiography conceived in the spirit of Christianity therefore shows certain characteristics. English historian R.G.Collingwood says "Any history written on Christian principles will be of necessity universal, providential, apocalyptic and periodised." He has thus given four main characteristics of Christian historiography which we will discuss in detail.

1) Christian historiography will universal in character:

It will describe, not the career of one 'chosen people' but how the various races of men came into existence and occupied the various parts of the earth. It will describe the rise and fall of civilizations and powers. There is no single centre of gravity like Rome or Greece for universal history written on Christian principles. Hence historical knowledge covers the whole activity of man.

2) Role of Providence:

The Christian historiography will show another characteristics as all events are thought to happen according to God's Providence. It will not ascribe events to the wisdom of their human agents but to the workings of Providence pre-ordaining their course. It is however not theocratic like the history of Islamic people, as the former is universal not interested in particular people but all the people of the world. In theocratic history God who presides over the doings of the particular people are his chosen people.

3. It is apocalyptic:

The history written on Christian will try to detect an intelligible pattern in the general course of events. In that pattern a central importance will be given to the historical life of Christ. It will divide history into two parts: at the birth of Christ. The first part is a period preparing for an event not yet revealed. The second look backward as the revelation has now been made.

4. It is periodized:

After dividing the universal history into two parts it is subdivided into epochs or periods each with peculiar character of its own and marked from the preceding one by an epoch-making event.

Check your progress:

1. Examine the main features of the Christian theological approach to the study of philosophy of history.

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2.3 IDEALISTIC SCHOOL

2.3.1 Meaning of Idealism

Idealism centers round the significance of Idea; it has nothing to do with ideal or some model of perfection. In Meta-physics it is a belief that the underlying reality of the universe resides in Idea. Idealism is opposed to all types of materialism and relativistic belief.

The first clear statement of Idealism was that of Plato the Greek Philosopher who flourished in the 5th century B.C. He recognized the importance of the 'Idea', the general form as the basis of true reality, permanent and sure behind all appearances. 'Knowledge is when true, eternal and unchangeable general ideas may be obtained by the logical process of dialectic through induction and may be classified. In the modern times Hegel was the most thorough going philosopher in his doctrine of the 'Absolute and the unchanging laws by which change takes place. Among the later idealists Bosanquiet and AN. White head are the foremost.

2.3.2 Idealist approach to history

In the 19th century more and more facts about past ages were brought to light. They were subjected to critical tests and their authenticity was established beyond doubt. It was not the history of a particular nation but the history of the world through different periods which stimulated thoughts on the meaning of the course of world history. It was the problem of reality and truth perturbed their minds. The philosophers of the 19th century had accepted new ideas from physical sciences now they had to tackle the facts of the past. Those events had actually taken place and there was no question of their reality. The researchers in history had established truth about those facts of the past by following critical methods. The universal history of mankind provided with material not known to them until the 19th century. The thought about the historical process was the proper subject for speculative philosophy.

The survey of world history from the past ages to the present day suggested thoughts about origin, development and culmination in different forms e.g. civilizations of the world. The idea of progress and the rise and fall of states and empires engaged the minds of some thinkers. Some historians like Ibn Khaldun a 14th century Arab scholar hinted at 'Al Asabiyah' and the ancient Greeks had spoken about world-soul. Hegel detected the free play of world spirit.

Check your progress:

1. What is the idealistic view of History?

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2.3.3 Protagonists of Idealist Philosophy of History

George Wilhelm Frederick Hegel was the most influential philosopher of the Romantic-Idealist historical movement which began with Herder. Alongside the great philosophical edifices of history created by Spengler and Toynbee, there was also a philosophical reconsideration of the nature of history. The men who represented this trend were Benedetto Croce and R.G. Collingwood. These two men provided a philosophical justification of the relativist mood in historiography which had shown itself, particularly in America, at the beginning of the twentieth century.We shall review the thoughts of some of the leaders of the Idealist school such as G.W.F. Hegel, Benedetto Croce and R.G. Collingwood .

1. Hegel (1770-1831)

2. Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and

3. R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943)

1. Hegel (1770-1831)

This German Philosopher had served at Jena, Heidelberg and Beslin Universities. As a young man he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Great Revolution of France (1789). He was deeply impressed by the ideals of "Reason" and "Freedom" which the leaders of the Revolution had glorified upto the advent of Napoleon Bonaparte. After the fall of the Napoleonic Empire he joined the University of Berlin in 1818 and since then he made a great impact on leading philosophers and historians of modern times.

Distinctive Features

Hegel proposed a philosophy of history different from a philosophical reflection on history as in Voltaire, with history itself raised to a higher power to become philosophical. It was to be a "history not merely ascertained as so much fact but understood by apprehending the reasons why the facts happened as they did."

Influences behind Hegel

Hegel's historical thought owed much to his predecessors-Herder, Kant, Schiller, Fichte and Schelling. Hegel owed to Herder the idea of a universal history outlining the developmental pattern of mankind as a progress from primitive times to the present day civilization. Hegel follows Kant when he says that the plot of this story is the development of freedom, i.e., the moral reason of man as exhibited in an external system of social relations; in fine, it is to be the story of how the state came into being. And like Schiller before him, Hegel asserts that since the historian knows nothing of the future, history culminates in the actual present, not in a future Utopia. Hegel is in line with Fichte in regarding man's freedom as the development of the consciousness of his freedom, and the development itself as a process of thought or logical development. Lastly, following Schelling. Hegel's philosophy of history would exhibit not merely human process but a cosmic process, a process in which the world comes to realize itself in self-consciousness as spirit. Hegel showed extraordinary skill in weaving these threads of thought into a coherent philosophical system.

Nature and History are Different

Hegel insists that nature and history are different. The processes of nature are not historical but cyclical and repetitive: each sunrise, spring and high tide is like the last; the law governing the cycle does not change as the cycle repeats itself with no development; nothing is constructed or built up. History, on the contrary, never repeats itself, for it moves not in cycles but in spirals. If wars reappear, it is not repetition, for every new war is in some ways a new kind of war, different from the last one. "Thus," says Collingwood, "Hegel's conclusion is right, that there is no history except the history of human life, and that, not merely as life, but as rational life, the life of thinking beings."

Reason, the Mainspring of the Historical Process

If history is the history of rational human life, all history the history of thought. It follows then that reason is the mainspring, the underlying force, of the historical process. The historical process consists of human actions, human actions come by the will of man, and the will of man is nothing but man's thought expressing itself outwardly in human action. Human actions as events are knowable to the historian as the outward expression of thoughts. Hegel's philosophy of history was purely idealistic.

Historical Process is a Logical Process

Since all history is the history of thought exhibiting the self-development of reason, the historical process is ultimately a logical process. Historical transitions are logical transitions set out on a time scale. This means that the developments that take place in history are never accidental, they are necessary. The actual or the real is rational and versa, meaning that the real is the only logical and necessary result of its antecedents.

Historical Process is a Dialectical Process

The greatest philosophical achievement of Hegel was the systematic development of the dialectical method. Hegel conceived of the dialectic as the unifying metaphysical process underlying the apparent diversity of the world, of the historical phenomena. This process is essentially the necessary emergence of higher and more adequate entities out of a conflict between their less developed and less adequate anticipations. It is a process of progressive evolution through contradiction. A cannot be not-A. But Hegel would modify it thus: A may become not-A, as water may become ice or steam. All reality, Hegel contended in his Logic, is in the process not of being, but of becoming. All reality, all thoughts and things, are in constant evolution for an idea or situation potentially contains its opposite which struggles against it and unites with it to take another transient form. The dialectical structure is one of exposition, opposition and reconciliation; of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

The Hegelian system makes dialectics the moving principle of history. Every historical process is of necessity a dialectical process. Each historical age would be characterized by dominant ideas of a certain type- 'the thesis': each historical age being short of perfection, must also contain within it exactly contradictory ideas- 'the antithesis'; antithesis working against thesis would ultimately produce a 'synthesis'- the predominant idea of a new age. The historical process is a dialectical process in which one form of life, for example Greek, generates its own opposite, in this case Rome, and out of this thesis and antithesis arises a synthesis, in this case the Christian world.

Hegel contends that it is not merely a dialectics of change, it is a dialectics of progression. He found the fundamental meaning of the historical process in the development of the consciousness of freedom. Despotism tried to suppress the human hunger for freedom (democracy); the hunger broke out in revolt; the synthesis of despotism and democracy was constitutional monarchy. The German philosopher detected a dialectical progression of the consciousness of freedom from the despotism and slavery of the Oriental world, to the citizenship rights of the Greek and the Roman world, and to the individual liberties of the Germanic nations of his day. History or the past, then, is a grand design unfolding in four stages: Oriental, Greek, Roman and Germanič.

The Hegelian system is a totality of development. The dialectical progression has as its aim the self-development of the Absolute Idea, which, according to most interpreters of Hegel, is the totality of everything which exists. It is a development which would culminate in the form of the Absolute Truth. In politics it means the emergence of the perfect state.

Check your progress:

1. Briefly summarise the views of Hegel on the historical process.

2. Benedetto Croce (1866-1952)

One of the great self-taught students of history, Benedetto Croce was historian, humanist, and foremost Italian philosopher of the first half of the twentieth century. Croce served as minister of education in the Italian Government of 1920-21. An unbending and absolute opposition to Fascism made him the rallying point of all lovers of liberty. Croce published most of his writings and systematically expounded his 'Philosophy of the Spirit' in La Critica, a journal of cultural criticism which he had founded in 1903.

One part of the 'Philosophy of the Spirit' was history, which Croce held to be the mediational principle of all the moments of the spirit. This spirit, by which he meant human consciousness, is completely spontaneous, without a predetermined structure. Such is the essence of Croce's History as the Story of Liberty (1938). The consciousness of his role as the great moral teacher of Italy accounts for the unmistakable didactic character of his great historical works-History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century, History of Italy from 1871-1915, and History of Naples. Their lesson was intended for Europe and for the entire Western world. The new Italy, in its democratic form, was inspired by his spirit.

Croce wrote a number of philosophical essays on the nature of history. On the question of whether it was the idea or the economic imperative, the ideal or the material that was basic in social and historical studies, he firmly ranged himself on the side of the ideal. Insisting that historical and scientific knowledge are fundamentally different, Croce thought that the former was a kind of intellectual intuition. History, he thought, becomes a reality only in the mind of the historian; "all history," in our philosopher's celebrated aphorism, "is contemporary history. It means that the past (history) has existence only in the minds of the contemporaries, and that it consists essentially in seeing through the eyes of the present and in the light of its problems. Thinkers, in the exuberance of thought, sometimes lead themselves to untenable positions. Writes Arthur Marwick:

Croce, however, was also convinced that historical thinking was also superior to all other kinds of thinking: the relativity of history was not a confession of weakness but an assertion of intellectual and imaginative power. As a historian of Italy Croce was perceptive and liberal-minded; as a philosopher of history he left a confusing legacy, which, in the arrogant claims it made on behalf of the subject, perhaps restored some self-confidence to puzzled researchers in the age of relativity, but which did not contribute much to the development of historical studies.

Benedetto Croce has termed Hegel's philosophy of history as a gigantic blunder produced by confusing two quite different things, namely, opposition and distinction. Croce says that related by opposition and stand in a dialectical and necessary concepts are relation to each other. But the individual things that are the results of concepts are never related to each other by way of opposition: they are related only by way of distinction, difference, and the relations between them are not identical. In history which is the history of individual actions and persons and civilizations, there is consequently no dialectic, whereas Hegel's whole philosophy turns on the principle that the historical process is a dialectical process.

Check your progress:

1. Comment on the approach of Benedetto Croce to the philosophy of history.

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3. R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943)

Croce was an important influence on Robin George Collingwood. A practising archeologist and historian of Roman Britain, Collingwood held a lecturership in history along with his Chair of Philosophy at Oxford. His Religion and Philosophy (1916) was a critique of empirical psychology and an analysis of religion as a form of a knowledge, while the Speculum Mentis (1924), a major work, proposed a philosophy of culture based on the unity of the mind and a synthesis of five forms of experience-art, religion, science, history and philosophy. But Collingwood's fame rests primarily on the important contribution he has made to the critical philosophy of history in The Idea of History (1945).

Historical Relativism

Based on the Crocean idealist position that all history is the history of thought, Collingwood's pamphlet of 1930, The Philosophy of History, contained an elaborate justification of historical relativism. The contention that history is the creation of the historian, Collingwood is aware, is apt to make it arbitrary and capricious, yet he underlines the subjective element in all history in the sense that every age, every man, sees in a particular historical event things which another does not. The pamphlet ends with a fine exposition of the Crocean notion that all history is contemporary history; "every age," writes Collingwood, "must write history afresh."

History as Reenactment of Past Thought in the Historian's Mind

Collingwood's The Idea of History proposed history as a discipline in which the historian relives the past in his mind in the context of his own experience. The philosophy of history is concerned neither with "the past by itself", nor with "the historian's thought about it by itself", but with "the two things in their mutual relations." That is the meaning in which the word at present is used. "The history of thought, and therefore all history," Collingwood wrote, "is the re-enactment of past thought in the historian's own mind." A natural process, he contends, is a process of events, an historical process is a process of thoughts. Man is the only subject of historical process since he is the only animal that thinks, and thinks enough to render his actions the expression of his thoughts. But all human actions are not subject matter of history.

...so far as man's nature is determined by what may be called his animal nature, his impulses and appetites, it is non-historical; the process of these activities is a natural process. Thus the historian is not interested in the fact that men eat and sleep and make love and thus satisfy their natural appetites; but he is interested in the social customs which they create by their thought as a frame-work within which these appetites find satisfaction in ways sanctioned by convention and morality.

By discovering the thought expressed in an event, the historian comprehends the cause or causes of that event. Collingwood explains that the cause of an event for the historian means the thought in the mind of the person by whose agency the event came about. That thought is the inside of the event, its cause. Unlike the scientist, the historian is only concerned with those events which are the outward expression of thought. Historical knowledge is the knowledge of what man has done in the past, and at the same time it is the redoing, the reenactment of the past-the perpetuation of past acts or events in the present.

Collingwood reminds us that Croce's objection implies that in talking of history we should never use words like opposition or antagonism, and synthesis or reconciliation. We ought not to say that despotism and liberalism are opposite political doctrines, we ought only to say they are different. Empirically, that is, outwardly, we may talk of the colonization of New England without using any dialectical language; but when we try to see these events as a deliberate attempt on the part of the Pilgrim Fathers to establish a Protestant idea of life, we are talking about thoughts and we must describe them in dialectical terms. We must speak of the opposition between the congregational idea of religious institutions and the episcopal idea, and admit that the relation between the two is a dialectical relation.

As E.H. Carr observes, overemphasis on the role of the historian in the writing of history tends to make history subjective - history as what the historian makes of it - ruling out any objective history at all. Likewise, Collingwood's undue reliance on thought in his analysis of the nature of history has been criticized. Yet Arthur Marwick seems to be a bit too harsh on him:

Everyone interested in history should know something of Collingwood's ideas. But it must be stressed again that he does not stand in the mainstream of the development of historical studies: full of deep insights, he is no sure guide to what historians actually do or how they think.

The work of Croce and Collingwood did much to instill confidence into the wavering, doubtful mind of the twentieth century historian. The Idea of History has vastly improved our understanding of the subject, and its author's attempt to integrate history and philosophy has been recognized as a significant scholarly contribution. Convinced of the importance and dignity of history, Collingwood wrote in his autobiography that we might be standing on the "threshold of an age in which history would be as important for the world as natural science had been between 1600-and 1900,"

Check your progress:

1. Comment on the approach of Collingwood to the philosophy of history.

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2.4 SUMMARY

Theological theories are those that attempt to prove that there is some purpose or plan in historical events. This is an old concept. Christianity presented history as a drama with a divinely appointed beginning and end. From St. Augustine in the fifth century to Bossuet in the seventeenth century a number of Christian writers believed in a providentially or dained design. It was thought that divine intelligence causes empires and cultures to rise and fall.

Hegel in his 'Idealistic approach to history refers to many philosophical terms like 'Idea', 'Reason', 'Spirit', 'Freedom', 'Progress' and the abstract forces of dialectic of progress. They are all very complex concepts. Hegel treats "Idea" as 'Reason' and asserts that 'Reason' is the sovereign of the world and that History presents us with a rational process. We have mentioned the contribution of Croce and Collingwood who more or less followed his line of thinking.

2.5 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the relations between History and Theology.
2. Discuss the theological approach to the study of Philosophy of history.
3. Point out the main features of the ancient and medieval times to the study of Philosophy of history.
4. Examine the main features of the Christian theological approach to the study of philosophy of history.
5. Explain the meaning of 'Idealism'.
6. What is the idealist view of History?
7. Briefly summarise the views of Hegel on the historical process.
8. Comment on the approach of Benedetto Croce and Collingwood to the philosophy of history.

2.6 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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RATIONALIST SCHOOL AND POSITIVIST SCHOOL

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- After the study of this unit, the students will be able to
- Know the Rationalist approach to History.
- Perceive the Views of Greeks, Ancient Indian, Chinese, Islam and Hegel on Rational Theory .
- Understand the Positivist approach to the study of Philosophy of History.
- Grasp the difference between Rankean and Comtean Positivism
- Explain the Positivist philosophers of history as Auguste Comte and Henry Thomas Buckle.
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3.1 INTRODUCTION

From the time Voltaire used the term 'Philosophy of History' the study of history gained momentum. The humanists and the rationalists widened the vision but the Romanticists gave it a new outlook. The methodological progress kept pace with the speculative philosophy of history, put forward vigorously by dedicated scholars. Nineteenth century witnessed a rapid growth of historiography enriched by many speculative philosophies of history. We shall now survey the historical thought in the nineteenth century with special reference to positivism.

Scientific research and scientific methods had come to be regarded as model for research in the field of social studies. R.G. Collingwood defines positivism as philosophy acting in the service of natural science as in the Middle Ages philosophy acted in the service of theology. "This definition however does not give us the full description of the term. Positivism is any system of philosophy which rejects metaphysics. It maintains that knowledge is exclusively founded on sense experience and positive sciences. The term positivism is specially applied to the thought of Auguste Comte. He maintained that man can have no knowledge of anything but phenomena. Further the knowledge of phenomena is relative not absolute.

3.2 RATIONAL SCHOOL

Those who rejected transcendental purposes and principles and founded their theories on empirical facts are called rational theorists. They adopt inductive methods.

3.2.1 Views of Greeks on Rational Theory

The earliest of them were the Greeks who attempted to explain human action on the basis of reason. They thought that history is a function of total cultural climate. Plato's Republic refers to a cycle of eternal recurrences when time and again society returns to monarchy after passing through other forms of government, and that only philosophers deserve to be kings. Polybius believes in this type of eternal cycles of history, and Aristotle too was fascinated by the beauty of the cycle. He thought that history could not have any goal, for a goal implied acessation and not a continuation of movement, and hence it could never lead to a fulfilment or an end. The Greeks believed in the study of events as facts which were linked one to the other in a rational and permanent manner. They appreciated the economic, material, climatic and social factors in determining the course of events. They also believed that history is philosophy teaching by examples.

3.2.2 Views of Ancient Indian on Rational Theory

The working concepts of the ancient Indian mind also centred round the idea of an unchanging reality. In the Puranas there are references to a cyclical concept of creation and destruction which does not go to the extent of the urch theory accepting transcendentalism. The idea of the yuga following one after the other in the definite order was elaborated. The traditional division of the historical process according to Hindus is fourfold, krita, treta, dvapara and kali. In the first, virtue or dharma reigns supreme, in the second it declines, in the third it becomes rare, and in the fourth it disappears. We are now supposed to be living in the Kaliyuga.

The Hindus give a moral basis to a mechanical process by making virtue the basis of change. The conception that a divine incarnation appears, to relieve the sufferings of the people and restore the balance of virtues, when the process of decline and decay reaches the nadir, robbed the mechanical nature of the cycle of ages of much of its inexorability. Besides, there were some purely deterministic schools like the Ajivikas. They imagined a fantastically vast expanse of time moving in an unalterable cycle. Thus Indian thought is wedded to the cyclical conception of history and avoids the extremes of determinism and pessimism.

Check your progress:

1.Review the Rationalist approach to History. Explain the Views of Greeks and Ancient Indian on Rational Theory .

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3.2.3 Views of Chinese on Rational Theory

The Chinese conception of historical change is the alternation of order and disorder. The Chinese also believed in the cyclical theory. Among them the cycle of three sequences, black, white and red, is important. Earlier they believed in the cycle of simplicity and refinement. Their philosophy too rests on the idea that the present is the period of decline. This belief is the corner stone of Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism. A notable exception to this view is that of Han Fei Tzu (d. 233 B.C.) who thought that the past was not superior to the present. His view is that one should not be a prisoner of the past, but be a pilgrim of the future. A story is related to illustrate the point. While a man was tilling his field he saw a hare rushing towards the stump of a tree and breaking its head. The man got his food without effort. Next day the man left his plough and stood waiting near the tree in the hope that he would catch another hare. Obviously he never caught one, and was ridiculed by the people. Han Fei Tzu drew the inference that those who wished to rule the people, would do exactly the same thing as the man who waited by the tree did. Therefore, the Chinese view is that affairs go on according to their time, and preparations are made according to affairs. They also believe in the philosophy of progress which prompts the world to pass through three periods: (1) the period of disorder, (2) the period of small tranquillity, and (3) the period of of great unity.

3.2.4 Views of Islam on Rational Theory

The idea of historical change in Islam is quite different. Islam conceives of the world as a cavern in which light battles with darkness. There is a perpetual struggle between good and evil. In the entire world-cavern there is but one cause which lies immediately behind all visible workings, and this is the Godhead, which acts without causes. Even to speculate upon causes in connection with God is sinful. In Islam the beginning of time, the creation of the world, man and woman, the age of the fall, the birth of prophets, the rise of religions, of empires and cultures are all regarded as specific events, the ultimate cause of which is the will of God. Later on the vogue of logic and the rational sciences enabled the Muslims to arrange the facts of history in an understanding pattern. Islamic thinkers compared states or dynasties to fruits. They just as fruits grow, ripen and decay. Simplicity and toughness are signs of mature and decline growth, and luxury and softness are the signs of decay. This view is closer to the organic view of Spencer and the biological view of Spengler. One of the Islamic philosophers writes, 'Dynasties are like fruits: too firm to be eaten at the beginning, they are of middling quality, as they grow and ripen. Once they are fully ripened, they taste good, but now they have come as close, as fruits can come, to rottenness and change.' The star of Islamic philosophers of history Ibn Khaldun, whose prolegomena on the science of culture is a remarkable treatise. He considers dynasties and empires as organisms, having fixed spans of life and prescribed periods of growth, maturity and decay. According to him, the decay of an empire is a natural process, analogous to the decrepitude of a living being, which cannot be cured, changed or altered. Like living beings, societies have their fixed spans of life. A society passes through two stages, the rural stage and the urban stage. The second inevitably follows the first, just as maturity follows adolescence. With the passage from the first stage to the second, the inner strength and cohesion dwindles although there is tremendous advance in arts, crafts and sciences, in the scales of production, in the standards of living and in courtesy, culture and politeness of the people. The presence of softness and sweetness indicates the absence of vigour and robustness. In the urban sedentary stage the ruling group develops a taste for power, monopolises all wealth and power, and excludes the masses who begin to exploited. This results in revolts and struggles compelling ruling classes to seek outside military help. Further, the luxury of the ruling class will drain the economic resources, which are compensated by higher taxation, until a point of no return is reached. Economic collapse, political anarchy and social strife will attract some element to overwhelm the empire, and the cycle begins afresh.

Ibn Khaldun further says that the cyclical view has three stages, the first one is of war, conquest and gallantry, the second one is of settlement and urbanisation and the third one is of decadence and destruction. This view is not much different from Spengler's view of history.

Check your progress:

1. Explain the Views of Chinese and Islam on Rational Theory .

3.2.5 Views of Hegel on Rational Theory

To Hegel the theme of the historical process is the development of man's consciousness of freedom exhibited in an external system of social relations, i.e., the state. On the question of the state and government he expressed himself in such conservative terms that the liberals of Germany denounced him as a time-serving place-seeker, and the philosopher laureate' of a reactionary government.

History for Hegel is the passage from primitive tribal life with all its inadequacies to the more adequate, fully rational state. "Freedom is the essence of life, as gravity is the essence of water: History is the growth of freedom; its goal is that the spirit may be completely and consciously free." The famous Hegelian pattern of the dialectical development of the state, that is, human freedom, is as follows: for the Oriental world (China, India, Persia), only one the despot - was free; in the slave-holding societies of Greece and Rome, some the citizens-were free; only in the constitutional monarchies of Hegel's own day was there the institutional possibility of all being free. It is in this modern stage that the rational spirit becomes conscious of its freedom, organizes that freedom in the state, and so makes all men free. It must have been in this sense that Hegel propounded his dictum that "the rational is real, and the real is rational. The state is man's highest achievement, the actuality of concrete freedom-freedom through reason. Such a state he saw in Prussia which he exalted claiming that there was more liberty there than in ancient Greece.

For Hegel the rational state is the nation-state, the largest social unit which he recognized. He had no time for Kantian style confederalism in the interests of peace. He maintained against Kant that to eliminate war in a world of nation-states is impossible. On the other hand, Hegel saw war itself not as a threat to civilization, but as ethically progressive, raising people from the selfish particularism of civil society to the 'universal'.

Check your progress:

1. Explain the Views of Hegel on Rational Theory .

3.3 POSITIVIST SCHOOL

3.3.1 Positivism

Positivism is the belief that the method of natural science provide the principal, or even the sole method for the attainment of true knowledge. Positive means beyond the possibility of doubt or dispute. Positivism stands for actual, absolute, dependable knowledge, i.e., knowledge derived by the application of scientific methods of inquiry, as in the natural sciences. The attempt to make historical knowledge scientific had begun in the wake of the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. With the methodological revolution associated with Niebuhr and Ranke historical understanding started on its 'scientific' and 'positive' course.

3.3.2 Romanticism and Positivism

Positivism in history was a reaction to Romanticism. Romanticism made historical works more imaginative, while positivism viewed all facts and events of the past in their evolutionary order. Romanticism made individuals the center of attraction, conceived of organic connections, and studied the concepts of liberty and progress; positivism rejected individualism and talked of masses, races, societies and tendencies. Romanticism had overthrown instructive, moralizing and serviceable history; positivism insisted on the interdependence of the social factors. Positivism boasted that it made history a science.

3.3.3 Difference between Rankean and Comtean Positivism

Niebuhr and Ranke had launched scientific history. But by 'scientific history they meant objective or unbiased history, or history strictly in accordance with facts and uninfluenced by subjective feeling or prejudice. This was the sense in which Lord Acton thought of scientific history and called upon the contributors to the Cambridge Modern History for complete objectivity and impartiality. It was, again, the sense in which J.B. Bury asserted that history was "simply a science no less and no more." The avowed aim of the Rankean scientific approach to history was the attainment of positive knowledge of the events of the past. For Ranke the function of scientific history was to lay bare the events of the past as nearly as they were without any subjective influence bearing on them; for him ascertaining new facts about the past was an ideal in itself. When this Rankean positive, particular approach to history was making progress, a different positivist approach to history was being pioneered in the 1830s by the French thinker, Auguste Comte. Comte looked upon the scrupulous study of the sources and the ascertainment of facts as only the first stage of the process of understanding history, the second was necessarily the framing of laws analogous to the laws of the natural sciences.

Check your progress:

1. Explain the meaning of Positivism in History. Discuss the difference between Rankean and Comtean Positivism.

3.3.4 The Philosophy of Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

Positivism, as applied to historical knowledge but different from the Rankean type, can be traced back in its origin to Francis Bacon. With the thinkers and historians of the Enlightenment like Hume, Montesquieu and Condorcet it became an attempt to construct a Newtonian 'science of society'. In the nineteenth century Henri de Saint-Simon, the French radical, endeavored to discredit all so-called metaphysical approaches and to establish instead a positive philosophy' wherein gravitation would serve as the model of systematic comprehension and of ultimate unity across every branch of knowledge.

It was St. Simon's secretary, Auguste Comte, who became the high priest of positivism. Born at Montpellier, Comte had grown up into a precocious rebel. After working as teacher for some time, he became secretary to St. Simon against whom after seven years, however, his independent spirit revolted. In an authoritarian religious strain he proclaimed himself high priest of humanity. He drove out his own long-suffering wife, and after her death worshipped another's as his 'virgin mother. Unstable, isolated and ridiculed, but ever optimistic, the founder of positivism and modern sociology died in 1857 in his celebrated rooms at 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince.

Collingwood defines positivism as "philosophy acting in the service of natural science, as in the Middle Ages philosophy acted in the service of theology. Comtean positivism and its impact on historiography were the direct result of the great strides the natural sciences were making in the nineteenth century. A mathematician by profession, Comte put the sciences in order, coined the word positivism, and strove to introduce into the study of society the same method of the natural sciences like physics and chemistry: firstly, ascertaining facts, and secondly, framing laws. Facts were immediately ascertained by sensuous perception; the laws were framed by generalizing these facts by induction. The positivist philosophy would use historical facts as raw materials to yield general laws of human society. Once the facts were meticulously ascertained in the Rankean manner, history, in the Comtean system, like any natural science, must go on to discover their causal connections. Such an intellectual position was the basis of the new science of sociology which Comte founded. The historian was to discover the facts about human life and the sociologist would discover the causal connections between the ascertained facts. The sociologist, writes Collingwood, would thus be a kind of super-historian, raising history to the rank of a science.

Comte explained the aims and principles of his philosophy in two works the Course of Positivist Philosophy (1830-42) in 6 volumes, and the System of Positivist Politics (1851-54) in 4 volumes. The basic view presented in these works is that all phenomena being subject to invariable natural laws, whose precise discovery and reduction to the smallest number possible is the aim of all our effort. Comte's system is called positivism by reason of the definite, explicit, absolute quality asserted in its name-just those qualities that mark laws in the physical sciences. The French philosopher claimed for his positivist approach two things: first, that it was possible to study man in society just the same way as scientists study natural phenomena, and second, that it was possible to discover definite laws of historical and social behavior. In a triumphant spirit Comte formulated his law of three stages. The law states that the history of all human societies and branches of experience must pass through three stages, each with its corresponding historical epoch: the theological-military (ancient). the metaphysical-legalistic (medieval), and the positive scientific industrial (modern). Comte thought that it would be possible to discover laws of human society through a study of the progress of the human mind. Have not laws governing the world of nature been discovered? An understanding of such laws of society would help the state to control the direction and predict the course of history, and build an Utopia. Comte's philosophy of history is the prospectus of a morally and materially superior life for the human race.

Though Comte's brilliant analysis and original interpretation of history did not appeal to historians in general, his influence was considerable. His treating of all social thought as an interrelated whole had a profound effect on the subsequent development of the various social sciences. To Emile Faguet, Auguste Comte was the most powerful sower of seeds and intellectual stimulator, the greatest thinker that France has had since Descartes. John C. Cairns writes that his works testified to a titanic ambition in his generation to show unity where most historians saw diversity, and scientifically to demonstrate the laws of collective progress.... He remains a commanding presence at the crossroads of history and sociology....

Check your progress:

1. Give an account of the Positivistic Philosophy of History as put forward by August Comte.

3.3.5 Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862)

Among those who had come under the spell of the Comtean positivist philosophy and who thought that history had to discover general laws of human development, none was more popular or perceptive than Henry Thomas Buckle. A sickly bachelor, an isolated self-taught historian and one-book author, Buckle aspired to accomplish for history what others had done for the natural sciences-collecting multitude of facts and deriving from them general laws of historical development. He intended to rescue history "from the hands of biographers, genealogists and collectors of anecdotes, chroniclers of courts and princes and nobles, and those babblers of vain things..." and to place it on a sound methodological basis. He planned a fifteen-volume work on the comparative history of the European civilizations but died soon after the publication of the second volume in 1861 having developed a fever on a trip to the Middle East. His boldly analytical two-volume History of Civilization in England "is in the tradition of the grand schematizers, from Montesquieu to Toynbee and Braudel. The first volume (1857) enjoyed an immediate success as it seemed to have caught the mood of the times with its timely plea that if historians would only search for and discover the hidden regularities of human action, then history would become a true science. Buckle maintained that a certain regularity and predictability of human actions could be discerned as such actions are governed by mental and physical laws. There is nothing in the actions of men and societies which is mysterious, providential orbsupernatural as to make them impervious to investigation; they are governed by fixed laws. Buckle avers that such an immense social and religious institution as marriage is completely controlled by the price of food and the rise of wages, not by personal feelings or wishes. Again, uniformity has been detected in the aberrations of memory in an invariable order though the cause thereof has not been unraveled. The returns published by the post offices of London and Paris show that year after year the same proportion of letter writers, through forgetfulness, omit to direct their letters. It shows that for each successive period we can actually foretell the number of persons whose memory will fail in regard to a trifling and seemingly accidental occurrence. Statistics could reveal these uniformities and regularities in human life. Though in its infancy in Buckle's time, statistics, according to him, are a powerful device for eliciting the truth and can throw more light on the study of human nature than all the sciences put together.

Buckle's emphasis on general laws in history and the usefulness of statistics for the induction of such laws were attacked by professional historians, so much so that his History of Civilization became a neglected classic. He forgot that there were important areas of human life where statistics do not illuminate. Buckle's book has been more admired by sociologists than historians. Yet, his highly original studies of the intellectual development of England, France, Scotland and Spain have lost none of their force or relevancy, and his belief that "the real history of the human race is the history of tendencies which are perceived by the mind, and not of events which are discerned by the senses," has come to be shared by many contemporary historians. "

Check your progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of Henry Thomas Buckle to Philosophy of History.

3.3.6 Herder (1744-1803)

This German philosopher and Father of Anthropology was a student of the Greek German philosopher Emmanuel Kant. He was highly connected and held high office in the German Protestant Church.

Herder was very much impressed by the effect of climate and geographic conditions on human life. He observed that "Everywhere on earth whatever could be, has been, according to the situation and needs of the place, the circumstances and the occasions of the times, and the nature or general character of the people. This is known as Herder's Law of History. Herder postulated that time, place and national character are the factor which determine all the events that happen among mankind and also the occurences in the Nature. This positivistic philosophy was explained in his Reflections on the philosophy of history of mankind.

3.3.7 J.S. MILL (1806-1873)

John Stuart Mill was the son of James Mill who was a disciple and associate of Jeremy Bentham. Mill insisted on the scientific study of Society. He talked about social statics and Dynamics. Social Statics' was stability of the society and social 'Dynamics' was the progress of the society. He looked at the historical process from the positivistic point of view. He maintained that the function of a social scientist is to discover universal laws hence historians had to do it. Influenced by the positive sciences he considered the states or stages of society. They represent different stages of growth of society as in the case of organism. According to Mill the Laws discovered by the historians about the succession of different state or stages of the society would indicate the true law of nature. However the laws of historical facts could only be empirical and would suggest probable causes and effects. They show general tendencies such laws if derived from psychological and Etheological laws can be scientific.

Check your progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of Herder and Mill to Philosophy of History.

3.3.8 Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)

This English Philosopher is described as the greatest living philosopher of 19th century. Spencer applied his theory of evolution to human thought. He says what we think for knowledge is the fashion of present day thought not true but at the most, useful in our struggle for existence. History is the history of thought. History, he says does not presuppose mind. It is the life of mind it itself. It lives in historical process. While talking about ideas he explains them in terms of evolution. In the 19th century knowledge was identified with scientific knowledge which was again equated with technology. Spencer also identified evolution of human ideas with the process of evolution in nature. He thus talks about progress towards rationality and an evolution from a lower to higher level as in nature.

3.3.9 KARL POPPER (1902)

He was professor of Logic and Scientific Method in the University of London.He lectured widely in America and Europe.

Popper has given a balanced view of Positivist approach to history. In his famous book 'The Open Society and its Enemies' he says, the sciences which have the interest in specific events and in their explanation may in contradiction to the generalising sciences (like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Sociology etc) may be called the Historical Sciences. Any attempt to equate natural science with history would be frustrating as they aim at two different ends. Further the part played by 'Point of View' in history is different from the point of view' in physical sciences. Usually in physical or natural sciences the point of view is expressed by a physical theory which can be tested by searching for new facts but in history the re-enactment of the individual fact to know the truth is the supreme goal. In another book 'The Poverty of Historicism' he has attacked the views about the growth of knowledge and its historical effects.

Check your progress:

1. Compare and contrast the views of Herbert Spencer and Karl Popper on historiography.

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3.3.10 Positivism, an Assessment:

1. **The Influence of Positivism on Historiography- Unprecedented Increase of Detailed Historical Knowledge**

   The influence of positivism on historiography could best be seeri in the growth of a new kind of history marked by meticulous care for details. The positivists whether of the Rankean or Comtean type made a fetish of facts and a cult of details and historians set to work to ascertain all the facts they could. The result was an unprecedented increase of detailed and carefully sifted historical material, whether literary, epigraphic or archeological. Collingwood informs us that the best historians like Mommsen or Maitland became the greatest masters of detail, that the ideal of universal history was thought to be a vain dream, and the monograph became the ideal of historical literature.

2. A Corrective to the Rankean Approach

By tracing the connection between facts, between events, Comtean positivism proved itself to be a valuable corrective to the Rankean approach to history. The Rankeans were so concerned with unique events and exact detail, that at times their work seemed completely shapeless.

3. Elimination of the Subjective Element

To the Rankean and the Comtean positivists each fact of history is a separate entity capable of being ascertained by a separate act of cognition. Thus there was to be an infinity of minute facts. Each such fact was thought to be independent not only of the rest but of the knower himself, so that all subjective elements in the historian's point of view had to be eliminated. The historian must pass no judgement on the facts; he must only say what they were.

4. Possibility of Forming General Formulations

The Comtean positivist assertion that human society is amenable to scientific study is of outstanding importance. From positivism sprang modern sociology which seeks general laws in at least specific spheres of human activity. After Comte and Buckle, the effort to seek general laws in historical development was continued by Marx, Spengler and Toynbee. And, if not general laws of human behavior, historians have actually presented general formulations about certain common features of revolutions and about the processes of industrialization. After studying hundred and fifty-eight constitutions known to him, Aristotle was able to pronounce that the most general cause of revolutions is the struggle between the haves and the have-nots. Formulations of such a general nature, might be made regarding imperialist conquests, movements of populations, rise of dictatorships and so on.

Check your progress:

1. Discuss the assessment on Positivism.

3.3.11 Criticism of Positivism

1. Unhistorical Approach

Historians have been reluctant to accept the positivist approach, suspecting it as basically unhistorical. This is because, the historian, as Arthur Marwick observes, must start off from the particular and the unique; he must be more interested in what actually did happen than in abstract general laws about human and social behavior,

2. Historical and Natural Processes are not Analogous

Positivism, in its Comtean garb, observes Collingwood, was of little service to historiography. The assumption that the historical process is analogous to the natural process was wrong; equally wrong was the belief that the methods of natural science were adequate to the study and interpretation of the historical process. History is a knowledge of individual facts, science the knowledge of general laws. The task that historians had to perform was to discover and state the facts themselves and not to enunciate general laws, a rask in which positivism had nothing useful to teach them.

3. Attention to Small Problems to the Exclusion of Larger Ones

Again, according to Collingwood, the legacy of positivism to modern historiography was a combination of unprecedented mastery over small-scale problems with an unprecedented weakness in dealing with large-scale problems. Positivist insistence on microscopic details barred the historian from treating great events or large problems as such. Mommsen, the greatest historian of the positivistic age, had collected a vast corpus of historical material with incredible attention to detail. But his attempt to write a history of Rome broke down exactly at the point where his own contribution to Roman history began to be important. His History of Rome ends at the Battle of Actium.

E.H. Carr likewise speculates whether it was the nineteenth century fetishism of facts that frustrated Acton as a historian. Acton lamented that the requirements pressing on the historian threatened "to turn him from a man of letters into the compiler of an encyclopaedia."

4. Crippling Effect of the Positivist Ban on Value Judgement

Finally, Collingwood shows that the positivist rule against passing judgements had an effect on historians no less crippling. The rule, for one, prevented the historians from discussing the wisdom of a policy, soundness of an economic system, or whether a particular movement in art, science or religion was an advance or not. Because of the positivist ban on value judgement, positivist historians could not understand what the ancients thought about slavery or what the people of the Roman world felt about their practice of emperor-worship. Enquiries such as these were quite legitimate for Romantic historians who tried to get into the inside of things; but such problems were out of the purview of their successors, the positivists.

The refusal to judge the facts came to mean that history could only be the history of external events, not the history of the thought out of which these events grew. This was why positivist historiography erroneously identified itself with political history and ignored the history of art, religion, science etc. All the errors of positivist historiography flowed from a certain error in historical theory, namely, the false analogy between scientific facts which are empirical facts, facts perceived as they occur, and historical facts which being now gone beyond recall or repetition, cannot be objects of perception.

Check your progress:

1.Assess the criticism of Positivism.

3.4 SUMMARY

Positivism had a special appeal to historians as it regards description of facts as more important than explanation. Positivism also stand above opposition between materialism and idealism. However positivism considered scientific knowledge as the only true knowledge.

The Scientific Method of the 19th century had dominated studies in various spherds of human activities. Comte who view Scientific Method as capable for tackling all problems of knowledge thought that human mind passed through three stages 1)Theological 2) Metaphysical and 3) Scientific. In order to have a better understanding of events he wanted to concentrate on the invariable relations which constitute natural law. He explained that social phenomena can only be understood historically.

3.5 QUESTIONS

1. Review the Rationalist approach to History.
2. Explain the Views of Greeks, Ancient Indian, Chinese, Islam and Hegel on Rational Theory .
3. Explain the meaning of Positivism in History.
4. Give an account of the Positivistic Philosophy of History as put forward by August Comte.
5. Discuss the contribution of Herder and Mill to Philosophy of History.
6. Compare and contrast the views of Herbert Spencer and Karl Popper on historiography.
7. Form an estimate of the achievement of the Positivistic school of history to historical knowledge in general.

3.6 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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4

MARXIST VIEW OF HISTORY- MARX AND ENGELS

Unit Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Materialist Schools.
- To understand Karl Marx's Materialist view of History.
- To orient learners about Frederick Engel's Materialist view of History.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Marxism is a body of doctrine developed by Karl Marx and, to a lesser extent, by Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century. It originally consisted of three related ideas: a philosophical anthropology, a theory of history, and an economic and political program. Henri Chambre mentions that there is also Marxism as it has been understood and practiced by the various socialist movements, particularly before 1914. Then there is Soviet Marxism as worked out by Vladimir Lenin and modified by Joseph Stalin, which under the name of Marxism-Leninism became the doctrine of the communist parties set up after the Russian Revolution (1917). Branches of this included Marxism as interpreted by the anti-Stalinist Leon Trotsky and his followers, Mao Zedong's Chinese modification of Marxism-Leninism, and various Marxisms in the developing world. There were also the post-World War II varieties of Marxisms that have modified Marx's thought with borrowings from modern philosophies, principally from those of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger but also from Sigmund Freud and others.

Marx's work is a fundamental critique of philosophy, especially of G.W.F. Hegel's idealist system and of the philosophies of the left and right post-Hegelians. It is not, however, a mere denial of those philosophies. Marx declared that philosophy must become reality. One could no longer be content with interpreting the world; one must be concerned with transforming it, which meant transforming both the world itself and human consciousness of it. This, in turn, required a critique of experience together with a critique of ideas. In fact, Marx believed that all knowledge involves a critique of ideas. He was not an empiricist. His work is filled with concepts of appropriation, alienation, praxis, creative labour, value, and so on that he had inherited from earlier philosophers and economists, including Hegel, Johann Fichte, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill.

Chambre elaborates that what uniquely characterizes the thought of Marx is that, instead of making abstract affirmations about a whole group of problems such as human nature, knowledge, and matter, he examines each problem in its dynamic relation to the others and, above all, tries to relate them to historical, social, political, and economic realities.

In 1859, in the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx wrote about his hypothesis for his analysis of society. In the social production that men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are essential and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men which determines their existence; it is on the contrary their social existence which determines their consciousness.

Raised to the level of historical law, this hypothesis was subsequently called historical materialism. Marx applied it to capitalist society, both in The Communist Manifesto and Das Kapital and in other writings.

Check your progress:

1] Define Marxism.

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2**] Name the thinkers who influenced Marx.**

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4.2 BACKGROUND

Philosophies vary so widely, yet overlap in so many points, that no one classification is ever satisfactory. Mechanistic materialism and dialectical materialism are forms of realism.

Types of Materialism:

Mechanistic Materialism

The term materialism may be defined in various ways: as the view that there is nothing in the world except matter; as the theory that atoms of matter in motion are the constituent elements of the universe, and that mind and consciousness — including all psychical processes — are mere modes of such matter and are reducible to the physical elements. These definitions tend to represent the traditional forms of materialism. In recent times the doctrine may be expressed in terms of "energism," which reduces everything to some form of energy, or as a form of "positivism," which emphasizes the positive sciences. It is more likely to take the form of mechanism or mechanistic materialism.

From a negative point of view, mechanistic naturalism rejects supernatural agencies. There is no controlling or directing intelligence at any point in the cosmic processes. Man and the world are the products of non-intelligent forces. While modern materialists do not find it necessary to deny the "self," they do insist that a physical bedrock underlies all mental phenomena and that the self does not exist prior to experience. The self is neither an entity nor an autonomous thing. It is socially created, and it can be understood only in relation to the environment. For the mechanistic materialist, all changes in the world, from the atom to man, are strictly determined. There is a complete and closed causal series. This causal series is to be explained in terms of the natural sciences alone, and not as the expression of purpose.

Mechanistic materialism is the doctrine that the world is governed by natural laws. It is that type of metaphysics which stresses the mechanical nature of all processes, organic as well as inorganic. If it does not reduce all processes to the terms of physics and chemistry, it does claim that all phenomena are subject to the same methods of explanation. That is, the concepts mechanism, determinism, and natural law have universal application. The only world which men know or can know is the one that reaches them through the physical sense organs.

Most men are occupied most of the time with physical things. The problem of obtaining the necessary food, clothing, and shelter is a constant one. The materialist is impressed with the stability and permanence of these physical things and their necessity as a basis for life. For this reason it is easy to believe that the material things are the real things of life and that nonmaterial things depend upon the physical. If there are "things" which are not based on physical processes, they are said to be the result of imagination or wishful thinking. Again, mechanism is the method of the natural sciences. These sciences have made great progress not only in the direction of mechanistic explanations but in the practical use and application of mechanistic methods.

As a science develops it tends to become more mechanistic rather than less. Men do not feel that they can explain things adequately until they can interpret them in such terms. In this sense intelligibility appears to be synonymous with a mechanistic and a materialistic explanation. Mind and its activities are forms of behavior, according to materialism. There is no mental life which is not associated or correlated with material processes. Apart from a brain and a nervous system, no conscious states are present. Psychology becomes a branch of biology. Mind and consciousness are interpreted in terms of physiological behavior — muscular, neural, or glandular. These processes, in turn, may be explained in the terms of physics and chemistry. In this way everything may be reduced to the terms of the physical world.

Values, meanings, and ideals become subjective labels for different physical situations and relations. Materialism appears in numerous forms from the materialistic atomism of earlier times to the "metaphysical behaviorism," "animistic materialism," and "physical realism" of more recent times. Today there is a tendency to replace the mechanical outlook of the traditional materialism with the notion of a dynamic universe. Some adherents of this approach recognize a plurality of systems or orders of nature which have evolved from a physical basis. All seek to employ one basic principle of explanation which does not look beyond the purely objective methods of the natural sciences. In addition to its simplicity, mechanistic materialism, in its thoroughgoing forms, seems to relieve man of a sense of personal or moral responsibility.

Moral standards and appeal to ideals have meaning only if man is to some degree a free agent. For some men this lack of responsibility is comforting, because it causes problems of ethics and morality to drop out of the picture or to become purely subjective and relativistic.

If the sciences are able to explain all things in terms of simple mechanical causation, then there is no God and no purpose in the universe. The same laws operate in man as in the lower animals and the stars. Consciousness and thinking are the result of changes in the brain or the nervous system. The universe is governed by the physical laws of matter, even to the most refined and complex processes of the human mind. A complete mechanism implies complete and universal determinism. There is no real freedom of choice. One must merely accept the physical facts as they occur and as they are described by the natural sciences. These are the implications of a thorough going mechanistic naturalism.

Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism grew out of the intense social struggle that arose as a result of the Industrial Revolution. It is connected with the names of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Dialectical materialism received added impetus from the success of the Communist revolution in Russia, where it became the official philosophy of the Soviet Union. It receives quite general support from communists throughout the world. Dialectical materialism has little in common with the mechanistic materialism. It is an approach from the point of view of history and politics rather than from objective science, although it holds science in high esteem.

In order to understand dialectical materialism, we need to go back to Hegel (1770-1831). Marx was a student of Hegel. Hegel was an idealist who said that reality is mind or idea out of which develop the processes of nature, human history, and the organizations and institutions of society. Matter, for Hegel, was the least real of all things that existed. Marx rejected the idealism of Hegel. He turned Hegel's philosophy upside down and said that matter, not mind or ideas, is fundamental. Matter, especially in the form of the economic organization of society and the mode of production, determines the social and political institutions of society. These in turn influence ethical, religious, and philosophical ideas.

While Marx and Engels reject Hegel's idealism in so far as it places the emphasis upon mind and ideas, they do accept his logical method almost completely. The world, according to Hegel, is in an organic process of development. All such organic processes of change are dialectical. The theory of dialectic is that everything is in a process of continual change and that these changes proceed through an affirmation or thesis to some denial or antithesis. Finally this leads to an integration or a synthesis. All development, both of things and of thought is brought about through the overcoming of contradictions. For example, the idea of "being" leads one to think of "non-being." Non-being and being, when united, give the concept "becoming."

In society, a trend in the direction of extreme individualism tends to generate a counter-movement toward collectivism, or the opposite. Out of these extremes may come a society which recognizes the value of both individual freedom and collective action. Marx and Engels accept the dialectic. They say that while the early Greeks had discovered it, Hegel was the first to explain it in a fully conscious way. His mistake was to give it a mystic form. When stripped of its idealistic form and turned around, it is a profound truth. The dialectical process, Marx and Engels contend, is a pattern which has been discovered in nature. It is an empirical fact derived from the order of nature and supported by the causal interconnections brought to light by historians and scientists. They do not think of it as a metaphysical principle nor as a mechanistic or a completely determined process. They do emphasize pluralism and causal interaction in which the production of the means of life is the predominate factor. Change and development take place continuously. When a synthesis has been reached, it tends in time to generate its own contradictions, and so the process proceeds. There is a continuous emergence of new qualities which grow out of the interaction and unity of opposites.

Historical Materialism

Materialism means that matter, nature, or the observable world is accepted as real in its own right. Dialectical materialism rejects the primacy of mind, since mind is not regarded as an independent and spontaneous activity in the world. It also rejects all dualisms of man and nature, as well as all forms of supernaturalism. Material forces are determinative in society and give the clue to evolutionary development, as well as to all phenomena — inorganic, organic, and human. Dialectical materialism is a physical realism which is sometimes spoken of as "historical materialism" and as "economic determinism." The decisive factor in historical change and in human society is the production and reproduction of life in its material aspects. The first need is to live and therefore to care for the necessities of life. Thus the mode of production at any particular stage of history is of prime importance.

Marx and Engels were students of the inorganic, organic, and social sciences. The sciences, they claim, disclose a world in constant change. Fixity and rigidity can no longer be accepted, since the physical universe has a history and exhibits change in time, just as does the world of life and human society. There was a time when no man existed; there was an earlier time when there was no life. Quite clearly, they assert, everything has had a natural development from the inorganic, or from matter. Dialectic materialism is not a mechanistic nor a completely deterministic philosophy. Man can influence his own life and history, but only within the framework of the materials at hand. Life comes from the inorganic, and man is a part of nature. Man and animals differ in degree rather than in kind. Man is able to make nature serve his ends, however. Man alone can create the conditions in which he lives and, in a sense, help to make his own history. The springs of action reside not in ideas, nor in men's desires, nor in their brains, but primarily in the processes of production and the class relations in society.

For dialectical materialism, action is primary and thought is secondary. An activistic theory of knowledge is accepted. Knowledge is inseparably bound up with action, and it changes the thing known. There is no such thing, it is claimed, as knowledge which is a mere contemplation of the world of nature. Men who live differently think differently. Consciously or unconsciously, men derive their ideas from the practical relations and conditions in the midst of which they live. Theory and practice are one; to refashion society is to remake men.

In the past, Marx tells us, philosophers have explained the world in many different ways. The present task is to change it, and that is the task and historic mission of the communists. In this task the communists do not hesitate to use direct action and violence to obtain their objectives. In fact, they believe that violence is the only way out if the evils in society are to be eradicated. Society, like all particular things and persons, is in a process of change. It cannot be static, since matter itself is dynamic and not static.

Check your progress:

1] Describe Mechanistic Materialism.

2**] Describe Dialectical Materialism.**

4. 3 KARL MARX

Karl Heinrich Marx, (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a German philosopher, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary. He was born in Trier, Germany. Marx studied law and philosophy at university. He married Jenny von Westphalen in 1843. Due to his political publications, Marx became stateless and lived in exile with his wife and children in London for decades, where he continued to develop his thought in association with German thinker Friedrich Engels. His important works are the *The Communist Manifesto* and the *Das Kapital* (1867–1883). Marx's political and philosophical thought had massive influence on consequent intellectual, economic and political history.

Marx's theories about society, economics, and politics, known as Marxism, propose that human societies develop through class conflict. In the capitalist mode of production, this manifests itself in the conflict between the ruling classes (known as the bourgeoisie) that control the means of production and the working classes (known as the proletariat). The working classes or the proletariat sell their labour in return for wages. Employing a critical approach known as historical materialism, Marx predicted that capitalism produced internal tensions. These were seen in the previous socioeconomic systems. It would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system known as the socialist mode of production. For Marx, class conflict under capitalism would create the working class's development of class consciousness. This would lead to their conquest of political power and eventually the establishment of a classless, communist society.

Marx wanted that the working class should carry out organized proletarian revolutionary action to topple capitalism and bring about socio-economic emancipation. Marx has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history, and his work has been both appreciated and criticized. His work in economics laid the basis for some current theories about labour and its relation to capital. Many intellectuals, labour unions, artists, and political parties worldwide have been influenced by Marx's work. Marx is considered as one of the chief architects of modern social science.

Childhood and early education: 1818–1836

Karl Heinrich Marx was born on 5 May 1818 to Heinrich Marx (1777–1838) and Henriette Pressburg (1788–1863). He was born at Trier, an ancient city then part of the Kingdom of Prussia. His family was originally Jewish, but converted to Christianity in his early childhood. His father, earlier known as Herschel, received a secular education. He became a lawyer and he also owned a number of vineyards. Heinrich was interested in the ideas of the philosophers Immanuel Kant and Voltaire.

Marx was the third of nine children. Marx was privately educated by his father until 1830 when he entered Trier High School. The headmaster, Hugo Wyttenbach employed many liberal humanists as teachers. This was not liked by the local conservative government. Therefore, police raided the school in 1832. Many teachers were replaced when Marx was a student. So it is evident that Marx grew in a politically charged atmosphere. His father and teachers were against the status quo.

In October 1835 at the age of 17, Marx travelled to the University of Bonn wishing to study philosophy and literature. But his father wanted him to study law. Due to a medical condition Marx was excused from military duty. While at the University at Bonn, Marx joined the Poets' Club, a group containing political radicals that were monitored by the police. Marx also joined the Trier Tavern Club drinking society where many ideas were discussed. Marx was also involved in certain disputes. Although his grades in the first term were good, they soon became bad in the second term. So his father transferred him to the University of Berlin.

Hegelianism and early journalism: 1836–1843

Marx became more serious about his studies and his life. He became engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, an educated member of the nobility. Seven years after their engagement, on 19 June 1843, they married in a Protestant church in Kreuznach.

In October 1836, Marx arrived in Berlin and enrolled in the university's faculty of law. During the first term, Marx attended lectures of Eduard Gans who represented the Hegelian viewpoint. Gans elaborated on rational development in history and the importance of social question. Marx also attended the lectures of Karl von Savigny who represented the Historical School of Law. Although he was studying law, he was fascinated by philosophy and looked for a way to combine the two. He believed that without philosophy nothing could be accomplished. Marx became interested in the recently dead German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, whose ideas were then widely debated among European philosophical circles. He joined the Doctor's Club, a student group which discussed Hegelian ideas. Through them he became involved with a group of radical thinkers known as the Young Hegelians in 1837.

Like Marx, the Young Hegelians were critical of Hegel's metaphysical assumptions, but adopted his dialectical method to criticise established society, politics and religion from a left-wing perspective. Marx's father died in May 1838, resulting in a diminished income for the family. Marx had been emotionally close to his father and treasured his memory after his death.

By 1837, Marx was writing both fiction and non-fiction. Marx soon abandoned fiction and began the study of both English and Italian, art history and the translation of Latin classics. He began co-operating with Bruno Bauer on editing Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* in 1840. Marx was also engaged in writing his doctoral thesis, *The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, which he completed in 1841. The essay was controversial, particularly among the conservative professors at the University of Berlin. Marx decided instead to submit his thesis to the more liberal University of Jena, whose faculty awarded him his Ph.D. in April 1841.

Marx was considering an academic career, but this path was blocked by the government's growing opposition to classical liberalism and the Young Hegelians. Marx moved to Cologne in 1842, where he became a journalist, writing for the radical newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhineland News*), expressing his early views on socialism and his developing interest in economics. Marx criticised right-wing European governments as well as figures in the liberal and socialist movements. The newspaper attracted the attention of the Prussian government censors, who checked every issue for seditious material before printing.

Marx in Paris

Between late 1843 and early 1845, Marx lived in Paris, a cosmopolitan city. He was later expelled by the French government due to Prussian pressure. In his last months in Germany and during this Paris exile, Marx produced a series of early writings. Papers that actually saw publication during this period include: “On the Jewish Question” and the “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction” (1844). It contains a critical account of religion, together with some remarks about the emancipatory potential of the proletariat.

Marx in Brussels

Between early 1845 and early 1848, Marx lived in Brussels, the capital of a rapidly industrialising Belgium. A condition of his residency was to avoid publishing on contemporary politics. He was expelled after political demonstrations involving foreign nationals took place. In Brussels Marx published *The Holy Family* (1845), which includes contributions from his new friend and close collaborator Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). In this work they attacked Bruno Bauer and his followers. Marx also worked, with Engels, on a series of manuscripts known as *The German Ideology* (1845–46). Marx also wrote and published *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) which criticizes the social theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865). All these publications show Marx developing his own views. He attacked contemporaries who were more established than himself.

Marx was politically active throughout his adult life. Two important texts here are *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) which Marx and Engels published just before the February Revolution, and, *The Class Struggles in France* (1850)

Marx in London

From late 1849 until his death in 1883, Marx lived in London, a city providing a secure haven for political exiles. It was also the best place to study the world’s most advanced capitalist economy. This third and longest exile was dominated by an intellectual and personal struggle to complete his critique of political economy. Between 1852 and 1862 Marx also wrote well over three hundred articles for the *New York Daily Tribune*. Many criticised it as an attempt to earn some money from journalism. But in these articles, he attempted to explain contemporary European society and politics. He also wrote about European colonialism in India and China to an American audience.

The second of Marx's two especially intense periods of political activity centred on his involvement in the International Working Men's Association between 1864 and 1874. After the death of his wife, in 1881, Marx's life was dominated by illness, and travel aimed at improving his health. Marx died in March 1883, two months after the death of his eldest daughter. His estate was valued at £250.

Engels's wider role in the evolution of, and, more especially the reception and interpretation of, Marx's work is much disputed. The truth here is complex, and Engels is not always well-treated in the literature. Marx and Engels are sometimes portrayed as if they were a single entity, of one mind on all matters, whose individual views on any topic can be found simply by consulting the other. Others present Engels as the distorter and manipulator of Marx's thought, responsible for any element of Marxian theory with which the relevant commentator might disagree. Despite their familiarity, neither caricature seems believable or fair. The best-known jointly authored texts are *The Holy Family*, the "German Ideology" manuscripts, and *The Communist Manifesto*, but there are nearly two hundred shorter items that they both contributed to.

Many of Marx's best-known writings remained unpublished before his death. The attempt to establish a reliable collected edition has proved lengthy and loaded. the edition will contain some 114 volumes. In addition to his various published and unpublished works, it includes Marx's journalism, correspondence, drafts, and some notebooks. Texts are published in their original language, variously German, English, and French.

Check your progress:

1] Describe the early life of Karl Marx.

2**] Examine the major works of Karl Marx.**

4. 4 MARX'S VIEW OF HISTORY

Karl Marx's view of history is known as historical materialism. It is also known as the materialist conception of history. It is a methodology used by Marxist historiographers to understand human societies and their development through history. It argues that history is the result of material conditions rather than ideals. This was first articulated by Karl Marx as the "materialist conception of history". It is principally a theory of history which states that the material conditions of a society's mode of production fundamentally determine society's organization and development. Historical materialism is a fundamental aspect of Marx and Engels' scientific socialism. They argue that applying a scientific analysis to the history of human society reveals fundamental contradictions within the capitalist system. This will be resolved when the proletariat or working class seizes state power and begins the process of implementing socialism.

Historical materialism is materialist as it does not believe that history has been driven by individuals' consciousness or ideals. It believes that matter is the fundamental substance of nature and therefore the driving force in all of world history. In contrast, idealists believe that human consciousness creates reality rather than the materialist conception that material reality creates human consciousness. This put Marx in direct conflict with groups like the liberals who believed that reality was governed by some set of ideals. He stated in *The German Ideology* that Communism is not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, or an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. He called communism as a real movement which abolishes the present state of things.

In studying the causes of developments and changes in human society, historical materialism focuses on the means by which humans jointly manufacture the requirements of life. It states that social classes and the relationship between them are based on economic activity. Even the political structures and ways of thinking in society, are founded on and imitate contemporary economic activity. Since Marx's time, the theory has been modified and expanded by some writers. Many Marxists argue that historical materialism is a scientific approach to the study of history.

History and development of Marx's ideas

Attempts at analyzing history in a scientific, materialist manner originated in France during the Age of Enlightenment with thinkers such as Montesquieu, Condorcet and the Turgot. Inspired by these earlier thinkers, the Utopian socialist Henri de Saint-Simon formulated his own materialist interpretation of history, similar to those later used in Marxism. Saint Simon analyzed historical periods based on their level of technology and organization and divided them between eras of slavery, serfdom, and finally wage labor. Karl Marx never used the words "historical materialism" to describe his theory of history; the term first appears in Friedrich Engels' 1880 work *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. By 1892, Engels had accepted the broader usage of the term "historical materialism,.

He used the term "historical materialism", to designate that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another. Marx's initial interest in materialism is evident in his doctoral thesis as well as his close reading of Adam Smith and other writers in classical political economy.

Max Stirner was a scholar whose 1844 work *The Unique and its Property* prompted Marx and Engels to theorize a scientific approach to the study of history. They first laid it out in *The German Ideology* (1845) along with a lengthy rebuttal of Stirner's own critique of socialism.

Marx and Engels first state and detail their materialist conception of history in The *German Ideology*, written in 1845. Structural Marxists such as Louis Althusser regard this book as Marx's first 'mature' work. It is a lengthy criticism against Marx and Engels' fellow Young Hegelians and contemporaries Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and Max Stirner. Stirner's 1844 work *The Unique and its Property* had a particularly strong impact on the worldview of Marx and Engels: Stirner's burning assessment of morality prompted Marx and Engels to prepare a conception of socialism along lines of self-interest rather than simple humanism alone. They based their conception in the scientific study of history.

Perhaps Marx's clearest formulation of historical materialism is in the preface to his 1859 book *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.

Development of Marx’s philosophy

Three years after Marx's death, Engels claimed confidently that the Marxist world outlook has found representatives far beyond the boundaries of Germany and Europe and in all the literary languages of the world. Definitely, after Marx and Engels' deaths, "historical materialism" was identified as a distinct philosophical doctrine. It was further developed by Orthodox Marxist and Marxist–Leninist thinkers such as Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky, Georgi Plekhanov and Nikolai Bukharin. In the early years of the 20th century, historical materialism was often treated by socialist writers as interchangeable with dialectical materialism. But this was never used by Marx or Engels. According to many Marxists influenced by Soviet Marxism, historical materialism is a specifically sociological method, while dialectical materialism refers to the more general, abstract philosophy in Marx and Engels' body of work.

The substantivist ethnographic approach of economic anthropologist and sociologist Karl Polanyi bears similarities to historical materialism. The most notable recent investigation of historical materialism is G. A. Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence,* which inaugurated the school of Analytical Marxism. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, much of Marxist thought was seen as out of date. A major effort to revive historical materialism came from historian Ellen Meiksins Wood.

Historical materialism was persistent on the historicity of capitalism. This focus on capitalism, with historical origins as well as an end, encourages a truly historical sense lacking in classical political economy. This was useful for the historical study of other modes of production too.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the features of Historical Materialism.

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2**] Examine the response of scholars to Historical Materialism.**

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4. 5 FREDERICK ENGELS

Friedrich Engels was born on Nov. 28, 1820, at Barmen, Rhine province, Prussia [Germany] and he died on Aug. 5, 1895, at London. He was a German socialist philosopher, and the partner of Karl Marx in the foundation of communism. They coauthored *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), and Engels edited the second and third volumes of *Das Kapital* after Marx’s death.

The initial years

Engels grew up in a family which had liberal political views. It was loyal to Prussia, and they were Protestant Christians. His father was the owner of a textile factory in Barmen and also a partner in the Ermen & Engels cotton plant in Manchester, England. Engels always received financial aid from home. The influence of his mother was a factor in preserving the tie between father and son. His father disciplined the gifted and rebellious son. His father forced his will on Engels in deciding upon a career for him. Engels did attend a *Gymnasium* (secondary school), but he dropped out a year before graduation. Engels showed some skill in writing poetry, but his father insisted that he go to work in the expanding business. Engels spent the next three years (1838–41) in Bremen acquiring practical business experience in the offices of an export firm.

In Bremen, Engels had a very hectic schedule. During regular hours, he operated effectively as a business apprentice. He was an outgoing and extroverted person. He became an expert swimmer, and practiced fencing and riding. Engels also had a great flair for learning languages. In all, he learnt twenty four languages. Gradually he developed an interest in liberal and revolutionary works. He was very keen in reading the banned writings of "Young German" authors such as Ludwig Borne, Karl Gutzkow, and Heinrich Heine. Later he was very much impressed by the more systematic philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel's philosophy was propagated by the "Young Hegelians," a group of leftist intellectuals, including the theologian and historian Bruno Bauer and the anarchist Max Stirner. They accepted the Hegelian dialectic that rational progress and historical change result from the conflict of opposing views, ending in a new synthesis.

The Young Hegelians were criticizing all that they considered irrational, and outdated. As their first assault was directed against Christianity, they helped convert Engels into an atheist. In Bremen, Engels also demonstrated his talent for journalism by publishing articles under the fictitious name of Friedrich Oswald. He wrote under the fictitious name so that his family's feelings would not be offended. He had critical abilities and a clear style and these talents were utilized later by Marx in expressing their revolutionary goals.

Engels retuned to Barmen in 1841, and enlisted as a one-year volunteer in an artillery regiment in Berlin. He served wonderfully as a recruit. In fact, military matters later became one of his specialties. In the future, friends would often address him as "the general." Military service allowed Engels time for more compelling interests in Berlin. Though he was not formally eligible, he attended lectures at the university. His Friedrich Oswald articles gained him enty into the Young Hegelian circle of The Free. Earlier it was known as the Doctors Club. Karl Marx frequently visited the Doctors Club. There Engels gained recognition as a strong character in philosophical battles, mainly directed against religion.

After his discharge in 1842, Engels met Moses Hess, the man who converted him to communism. Hess was the son of wealthy Jewish parents and an advocate of radical causes and publications. He demonstrated to Engels that the logical consequence of the Hegelian philosophy and dialectic was communism. Hess also stressed the role that England had to play. This was because it had advanced industry, a growing proletariat, and all the potential of class conflict, which was destined to play a major role in future struggles. Therefore Engels enthusiastically grabbed the chance to go to England, apparently to continue his business training in the family firm in Manchester.

In England (1842–44), Engels again functioned successfully as a businessman. After business hours, however, he pursued his real interests. He spent his time writing articles on communism for continental and English journals. He also read books and parliamentary reports on economic and political conditions in England. He spent time interacting with workers, meeting radical leaders, and gathering materials for a predictable history of England that would stress the rise of industry and the miserable situation of the workforce.

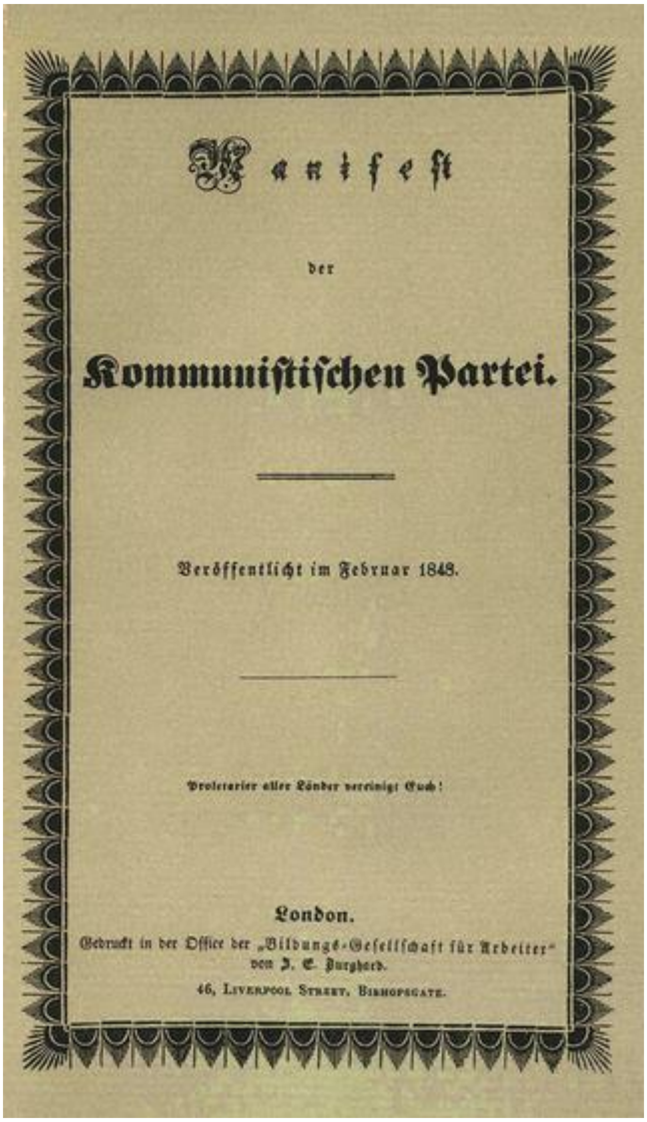
In 1844 Engels contributed two articles to the German-French Yearbooks, which were edited by Marx in Paris. In them Engels put forth an early description of the principles of scientific socialism. He revealed his thoughts on the contradictions in liberal economic doctrine. He wanted to prove that the existing system based on private property was leading to a world made up of “millionaires and paupers.” The revolution that would follow would lead to the elimination of private property and to an understanding of humanity with nature and itself.

Collaboration with Karl Marx

On his way to Barmen, Engels went to Paris for a 10-day visit with Marx, whom he had earlier met in Cologne. This visit resulted in a permanent partnership to promote the socialist movement. Back in Barmen, Engels published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. It was acknowledged as a classic and this field later became Marx’s specialty. Their first major joint work was The *German Ideology*, which, however, was not published until more than 80 years later. It was a highly bitter critique that denounced and ridiculed certain of their earlier Young Hegelian associates. Then they went on to attack various German socialists who rejected the need for revolution. Marx’s and Engels’s own constructive ideas were inserted here and there as corrective responses to the views they were condemning.

Upon rejoining Marx in Brussels in 1845, Engels promoted his newly formulated economic, or materialistic, interpretation of history. He predicted an eventual communist triumph. That summer he escorted Marx on a tour of England. Thereafter he spent much time in Paris, where his social engagements did not interfere significantly with his major purpose. He wanted to convert various German worker groups to his and Marx’s viewpoint. He tried to convert a socialist secret society, the League of the Just, as well as leading French socialists to his and Marx’s views. When the league held its first congress in London in June 1847, Engels helped bring about its transformation into the Communist League.

Marx and he together persuaded a second Communist Congress in London to adopt their views. The two men were authorized to draft a statement of communist principles and policies, which appeared in 1848 as the *Communist Manifesto*. It included much of the preliminary definition of views prepared earlier by Engels in the *Principles of Communism*. But by and large it was primarily the work of Marx.



The original cover of the Communist Manifesto

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Oscar J Hammen mentions that the Revolutions of 1848, which were the attempt of the German states to throw off an authoritarian, political system and replace it with a constitutional, representative form of was a momentous event in the lives of Marx and Engels. It was their only opportunity to participate directly in a revolution and to demonstrate their flexibility as revolutionary tacticians with the aim of turning the revolution into a communist victory. Their major tool was the newspaper *Neue Rheinische Zeitung,* which Marx edited in Cologne with the able assistance of Engels. Such a party organ, then appearing in a democratic guise, was of prime importance for their purposes; with it they could furnish daily guidelines and incitement in the face of shifting events, together with a sustained criticism of governments, parties, policies, and politicians.

After the failure of the revolution, Engels and Marx were reunited in London, where they reorganized the Communist League and drafted tactical directives for the communists in the belief that another revolution would soon take place. But how to replace his depleted income soon became Engels's main problem. To support both himself and Marx, he accepted a subordinate position in the offices of Ermen & Engels in Manchester, eventually becoming a full-fledged partner in the concern. He again functioned successfully as a businessman, never allowing his communist principles and criticism of capitalist ways to interfere with the profitable operations of his firm. What a remarkable contradiction. Hence he was able to send money to Marx constantly, often in the form of £5 notes, but later in far higher figures.

When Engels sold his partnership in the business in 1869, he received enough to live comfortably until his death in 1895 and to provide Marx with an annual grant of £350. Engels, who was forced to live in Manchester, corresponded constantly with Marx in London and frequently wrote newspaper articles for him; he wrote the articles that appeared in the *New York Tribune* (1851–52) under Marx's name and that were later published under Engels's name as *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany in 1848* (1896). Among both of them, Engels was the specialist in nationality questions, military matters, international affairs, and in the sciences. Marx also turned to him repeatedly for clarification of economic questions, notably for information on business practices and industrial operations.

Marx's *Das Kapital* (*Capital*), his most important work, bears the stamp and influence of Engels. Engels was a very gifted writer. Marx similarly called on Engels's writing facility to help spread their joint views far and wide. While Marx was the brilliant theoretician of the pair, it was Engels, who functioned as the publicist of Marxism. He directed the attention of people to *Das Kapital* through his reviews of the book. Engels almost alone wrote *Anti-Dühring*, the book that probably did most to promote Marxian thought. It destroyed the influence of Karl Eugen Dühring, a Berlin professor who threatened to displace Marx's position among German social democrats.

Last years of Friedrich Engels

After Marx's death (1883), Engels served as the foremost authority on Marx and Marxism. He wrote occasionally on a variety of subjects. He also wrote introductions to new editions of Marx's works. Engels completed volumes 2 and 3 of *Das Kapital* (1885 and 1894) on the basis of Marx's uncompleted manuscripts and rough notes. Engels's other two late publications were the books *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. All the while he corresponded extensively with German social democrats and followers everywhere, so as to perpetuate the image of Marx. His work was interrupted when he was stricken with cancer; he soon died of the disease.

During his lifetime, Engels experienced the same attacks and adoration that fell upon Marx. He was an urbane individual with the outlook of an English gentleman. Engels normally was a gay and witty associate with a great zest for living. He had a code of honour that responded quickly to an insult, even to the point of violence. He could be most offensive and ruthless, so much so that in 1848 various friends attempted unsuccessfully to persuade Marx to reject him.

Except in the Soviet Union and other communist countries, where Engels received due recognition, posterity has generally lumped him together with Marx without adequately clarifying Engels's significant role. The attention Engels does receive is likely to be in the form of a close scrutiny of his works to discover what differences existed between him and Marx. As a result, some scholars have concluded that Engels's writings and influence are responsible for certain deviations from, or distortions of, "true Marxism" as they see it. Yet scholars in general acknowledge that Marx himself apparently was unaware of any essential divergence of ideas and opinions.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the early life of Frederick Engels.

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2**] Discuss the collaboration of Engels with Karl Marx.**

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4. 6 SUMMARY

Marx's Theory of Historical Materialism

Marx's general ideas about society are known as his theory of historical materialism. Materialism is the basis of his sociological thought because for Marx material conditions or economic factors affect the structure and development of society. His theory is that material conditions essentially comprise technological means of production and human society is formed by the forces and relations of production.

Marx's theory of historical materialism is historical. It is historical because Marx has traced the evolution of human societies from one stage to another. It is called Materialistic because Marx has interpreted the evolution of societies in terms of their material or economic bases. Materialism simply means that it is matter or material reality, which is the basis for any change.

According to Friedrich Engels, the theory of historical materialism was discovered by Karl Marx, but Marx thought it was Engels who has conceived the materialist formulation of history independently. We shall say that both of them used this theory, to quote Marx, as the “guiding thread” of all their works.

4.7 QUESTIONS

1. Analyse the Materialist School of History.
2. Discuss Karl Marx’s view of History.
3. Examine the life and thought of Frederich Engels.

4.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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http://www.uop.edu.pk/ocontents/MATERIALISM%20and%20ITS%20TYPES.pdf

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5

MATERIALIST SCHOOLS

Unit Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Materialist Schools.
- To understand Eric Hobsbawm’s view of History.
- To orient learners about E. P. Thompson’s view of History.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

There was a rapid rise of science in the nineteenth century. It led to the rise of scientific thought. Charles Darwin became very famous in biology due to his theory of evolution. In his theory Darwin spoke of the survival of the fittest. Gradually there was the application of Darwin's theories to people. This theory was applied to science and "social sciences". The scientific method could be applied to relationships between people. It came to be applied to economic relations. There was the growth of disciplines like sociology. Science and social science led to transition in worldviews about the manners of investigation.

In History, there was emphasis on professionalization and objectivity in history writing. The 19th century historian Leopold von Ranke stressed on writing history as it actually happened and giving a faithful account of the past. Thus science led to the need for a new approach to historical writing. Objectivity and not subjectivity became crucial in history writing. It meant distancing from emotions of history to get at the facts. One had to keep their bias aside while writing history. As Leopold von Ranke said, history had to be written as it actually happened. There was no space for distortion or partiality. It was easier said than done as a historians emotions dominated.

At the end of the 19th century, there was the emergence of professional programs in history. It led to the appearance of the AHA, a professional body of historians in USA. There were yearly conferences which were meant to be critical in evaluating the past and to bring a sense of accountability. Karl Marx saw himself as a historical scientist and like Ranke, he saw himself as an objective witness. He explained the materialist view of history and the progression of history in terms of the economic struggle between the classes. This is what the Marxist school of history believes.

But there is a difference between Marxism and Neo-Marxism. Marxist Historians focus on the fact that revolution has to take place. There has to be a struggle of the classes to end economic injustice. In order to believe that ownership will become common and people will no longer be exploited, there has to be a belief in revolution. According to Marx, "the history of all hitherto societies has been the history of class struggle." Class struggle moves history forward. What is it? It's a struggle between those in charge and those that are not. In Marx's time it was the struggle between capitalist and worker—bourgeoisie and proletariat. These two groups will fight it out and eventually the bourgeoisie will lose. The bourgeoisie are smaller in numbers, they exploit the proletariat or the workers. But gradually the exploited will develop a consciousness.

Traditional Marxists are unwilling to challenge the theoretical inadequacies in Marxist philosophy. They believe that all societies are class societies. They believe that revolution is necessary and inevitable. They are of the firm opinion that economic determinism is at the root of all history. And according to them, class consciousness is a necessary prerequisite for revolution. Neo-Marxists are more sophisticated in their understanding of the ways in which Marxist theory connects to historical practice. Neo Marxism emerged with the rise of British Marxists like Christopher Hill, EP Thompson, and Eric Hobsbawm.

These Marxists were puzzled by the seeming success of Soviet Project. They observed the first communist state and how people lived in the fear of tyrannical governments. Many Marxists fought against Stalin and Franco. Until 1940s, the USSR looked like it was doing very well and its experiment with communism was successful. Neo Marxists wanted to explore history carefully through a Marxist Lens. They studied economy and the relations of production. According to Neo Marxists, social relations are very important and show more complexity. They studied historical development and analyzed class struggle and class consciousness which is central to Marxist theory. They came to the conclusion that these are not the same thing as Economic Determinism.

The journal Past and Present (1952) provided a platform for Marxist historians to present their work. Gradually a point in time came when Marxist Historians broke away and became disillusioned with USSR and the Communist Party. The Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin died and many truths emerged about his oppressive regime. The success of the Soviet project no longer seemed democratic. After Stalin’s death, the next Soviet

Russsian President Nikita Khrushchev began a process of deStalinization and allowed a certain level of freedom to the Soviet satellite states like Poland and Yugoslavia. But Khrushchev was not prepared to go beyond a limit and he ordered Russian tanks to surround Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

This marks the breaking point in 20th-century Marxism. Western Marxists realized that Marxism in practice was not committed to the theoretical tradition of absolute equality. It was a tight hierarchy, in fact a dictatorship, which suppressed freedom of thought and action, as shown by the tanks moving into Hungary. The question before scholars was how to reconfigure a newly non-aligned Marxism? Was it possible to have a historical Marxism without being committed to a particular political practice in the present? The answer that they found to their question was yes and that is what Neo Marxism is.

The New Left consisted of the Neo Marxists who became pacifist. EP Thompson worked his whole life against nuclear proliferation. So these Marxists who were no longer practicing communists reconfigured their theoretical base and emerged as the New Left. That is, it was a new beginning for left-leaning historians. They established their own journal called the Radical History Review in 1972. Gradually other journals also emerged. So, Marxist historians moved away from the teleology of Marxist theory. They accepted certain things, like class struggle, but they developed their own theories. They realized that they could develop a working theory that drew on Marx's strengths while rejecting his theoretical inadequacies. Hence they were now Marxian, or like Marx. This is how we get such sophisticated works as Eric Hobsbawm and Thompson's essays.

Check your progress:

1] Define the Marxist philosophy of history.

2**] Examine how Neo Marxism differs from traditional Marxism.**

5.2 BACKGROUND

Neo-Marxism is a Marxist school of thought surrounding 20th-century approaches that modify or extend Marxism and Marxist theory. It generally incorporates elements from other intellectual traditions such as critical theory, psychoanalysis, or the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre. Some theorists and groups who are designated as neo-Marxists have attempted to supplement the supposed deficiencies of orthodox Marxism or dialectical materialism. Many prominent neo-Marxists, such as Herbert Marcuse and other members of the Frankfurt School, have historically been sociologists and psychologists.

Neo-Marxism comes under the broader framework of the New Left. In a sociological sense, neo-Marxism adds Max Weber's analysis and perception of social inequality, such as status and power, to Marxist philosophy. Examples of neo-Marxism include analytical Marxism, French structural Marxism, critical theory, cultural studies, as well as some forms of feminism. Neo-Marxist thought includes Weberian sociology, critical criminology, and anarchism.

Neo-Marxism developed as a result of social and political problems that traditional Marxist theory was unable to sufficiently address. Neo Marxist thinking tended toward peaceful ideological dissemination, rather than the revolutionary, and violent, methods of the past. Economically, neo-Marxist leaders moved beyond the era of public outcry over class warfare and attempted to design viable models to solve it. There are many different branches of neo-Marxism often not in agreement with each other and their theories. Following World War I, some neo-Marxists dissented and later formed the Frankfurt School.

The Frankfurt School refers to a group of researchers associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany. They applied Marxism to a radical interdisciplinary social theory. The Institute for Social Research was founded by Carl Grunberg in 1923 as an attachment of the University of Frankfurt; it was the first Marxist-oriented research centre affiliated with a major German university. Max Horkheimer took over as director in 1930 and recruited many talented theorists, including T.W. Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin.

The members of the Frankfurt School tried to develop a theory of society that was based on Marxism and Hegelian philosophy but which also utilized the insights of psychoanalysis, sociology, existential philosophy, and other disciplines. They used basic Marxist concepts to analyze the social relations within capitalist economic systems. This approach, which became known as “critical theory,” yielded powerful critiques of large corporations and monopolies, the role of technology, the industrialization of culture, and the decline of the individual within capitalist society. Fascism and authoritarianism were also prominent subjects of study. Much of this research was published in the institute’s journal, “Journal for Social Research”.

Most of the institute's scholars were forced to leave Germany after Adolf Hitler's accession to power (1933), and many found refuge in the United States. The Institute for Social Research thus became affiliated with Columbia University until 1949, when it returned to Frankfurt. In the 1950s the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School diverged in several intellectual directions. Most of them criticised orthodox Marxism, though they remained deeply critical of capitalism. Marcuse's critique of what he perceived as capitalism's increasing control of all aspects of social life enjoyed unexpected influence in the 1960s among the younger generation. Jurgen Habermas emerged as the most prominent member of the Frankfurt School in the postwar decades, however. He tried to open critical theory to developments in analytic philosophy and linguistic analysis, structuralism, and hermeneutics.

Since the initial interest in evolutionary theory, sociologists have considered deterministic theories to replace social Darwinism. This search for new approaches began prior to World War I as emphasis shifted from economic theory to geographic, psychological, and cultural theory—roughly in that order.

The first theory, economic determinism, reflects the interest many sociologists had in the thought of Karl Marx, such as the idea that social differentiation and class conflict resulted from economic factors. This approach had its greatest popularity in Europe, where it remained a strong influence on some sociologists until the 1980s. It did not gain a significant foothold in the United States, because American society was thought to be socially mobile, classless, and oriented to the individual. This neglect of Marxism by American sociologists, however, was not due to scholarly ignorance. Sociologists of all periods had read Marx as well as Charles A. Beard's economic interpretation of American history and the work of Werner Sombart who had been a Marxist in his early career. Instead, in the 1960s, neo-Marxism which was a combination of theories of stratification by Marx and Max Weber gained strong support among a minority of sociologists. Their enthusiasm lasted about 30 years, ebbing with the breakup of the Soviet system and the introduction of postindustrial doctrines that linked class systems to a bygone industrial era

Toward the end of the 20th century, neo-Marxism and other Marxist theories became abomination in democratic and capitalistic Western cultures. The term attained negative connotations during the Communist scare. For this reason, social theorists of the same ideology since that time have tended to disassociate themselves from the term neo-Marxism. Examples of such thinkers include David Harvey and Jacque Fresco. Even Noam Chomsky has been labelled a neo-Marxist by some. Some consider libertarian socialism an example of rebranded neo-Marxism.

In the most sophisticated version of neo-Marxism, that of Cohen, 'there is … a conflict between social equality and the liberty of some people,' but that should not stand in the way of 'the pursuit of social equality, since a humane concern for liberty must first of all direct itself to the condition of those who enjoy hardly any of it.' Neo-Marxists thus agree with liberals that freedom of the individual is the most important political value, and that modern capitalism delivers it to all members of society, including proletarians, in several important ways. First, all members of a capitalist society (worker and capitalist alike) are legally free. Second, any particular worker is always legally free, and often economically free, to leave the proletariat and become a petty bourgeois or even a capitalist. But, within a capitalist society, 'although most proletarians are free to escape the proletariat, indeed even if all are, the proletariat is an imprisoned class.'

Third, capitalism has delivered 'important freedoms beyond that of buying and selling.' These include 'freedom of speech, assembly, worship, publication, movement, political participation….' The neo-Marxist Cohen is committed to the view that only 'freedom to buy and sell belongs to capitalism's inmost nature.' But Marxists must still acknowledge that 'bourgeois freedoms' really are freedoms: '… when socialists suggest that there is no real liberty under capitalism, or that socialism promises liberty of a higher and unprecedented kind…their line is theoretically incorrect and politically disastrous. For liberty under capitalism is, where it exists, just that, liberty; and if socialism will not give us plenty of it, we shall rightly be disappointed.'

In recent writings, Cohen has begun to investigate the idea of real freedom, understood as 'autonomy, the circumstances of genuine control over one's own life.' With this turn, neo-Marxism returns to the old site of conflict, since we must 'ask what kind and degree of control over external things a person must have to enjoy autonomy, and then to ask whether such control is compatible with socialist equality.' Cohen's project now is to translate the idea of real freedom into terms that are applicable to the real world, and, where possible, quantifiable. His model is of 'equal access to advantage'. It thus forms part of a rich developing research program. Whether it should still be called Marxist is another question.

The terms "neo-Marxian", "post-Marxian", and "radical political economics" were first used to refer to a distinct tradition of economic theory in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s that stems from Marxian economic thought. Many of the leading figures were associated with the leftist *Monthly Review* School. The neo-Marxist approach to development economics is connected with dependency and world systems theories. In these cases, the 'exploitation' that classifies it as Marxist is an external one, rather than the normal 'internal' exploitation of classical Marxism.

Check your progress:

1] Describe the views of the Frankfurt school.

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2**] Describe the Marxist views of Cohen.**

5. 3 ERIC HOBSBAWM

Eric Hobsbawm was a British historian of the rise of industrial capitalism, socialism and nationalism. He was a life-long Marxist, and his socio-political convictions are reflected in his work. He has written extensively about the 19th century. His important works are *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848*, *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* and *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914*, *The Age of Extremes* on the 20th century, and an edited volume that introduced the powerful thought of "invented traditions".

Hobsbawm was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and spent his childhood mainly in Vienna and Berlin. Following the death of his parents and the rise to power of Adolf Hitler, Hobsbawm moved to London. Then he served in the Second World War, and later he obtained his PhD in history at the University of Cambridge. In 1998, he was appointed to the Order of the Companions of Honour. He was President of Birkbeck, University of London, from 2002 until his demise. In 2003, he received the Balzan Prize for European History since 1900 "for his brilliant analysis of the troubled history of 20th century Europe and for his ability to combine in-depth historical research with great literary talent."

Initial life

Eric Hobsbawm was born in 1917 in Alexandria, Egypt. His father was Leopold Percy Hobsbawm, a Jewish merchant. His early childhood was spent in Vienna, Austria and Berlin, Germany. Although the family lived in German-speaking countries, he grew up speaking English as his first language. In 1929, when Hobsbawm was 12, his father died, and he started contributing to his family's support by working as an English tutor. Upon the death of their mother in 1931, he and his sister Nancy were adopted by their maternal aunt, Gretl, and paternal uncle, Sidney. Hobsbawm was a student at the Prinz Heinrich-Gymnasium Berlin when the Nazi Party came to power in 1933. That year the family moved to London, where Hobsbawm enrolled in St Marylebone Grammar School.

Hobsbawm attended King's College, Cambridge, from 1936. Here he joined the Communist Party of the university's Socialist Club. He did well in History and was active in the Cambridge College students’ circles. He was awarded his PhD in History from Cambridge University for his thesis on the Fabian Society. During World War II, he served in the Royal Engineers and the Army Educational Corps. He was not allowed to serve abroad. The reason was that during his army training he had edited a newspaper. There he argued for the opening up of a Second Front, which was a demand made by the Communist Party of Great Britain at the time. He applied to return to Cambridge as a research student, and was released from the military in 1946.

Academic Life

The Security Service also known as MI5 or Military Intelligence, Section 5 is the United Kingdom’s domestic counter intelligence and security agency, and is part of its intelligence machinery alongside the Secret Intelligence Service. It opened a personal file on Hobsbawm in 1942 and monitored his activities. It affected the progress of his career for many years. In 1945, he applied to the BBC for a full-time post. His job was to make educational broadcasts to help servicemen adjust to civilian life after a long period in the forces. He was considered "a most suitable candidate". The appointment was quickly banned by MI5 who believed Hobsbawm might spread propaganda and obtain recruits for the Communist party. In 1947, he became a lecturer in history at Birkbeck College, University of London.

He became reader in 1959, professor between 1970 and 1982 and an emeritus professor of history in 1982. He was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, from 1949 to 1955. Hobsbawm believed that there was a section in Britain that affected Marxist academics. Hobsbawm was denied a lectureship at Cambridge by political enemies. He was also blocked for some time from a professorship at Birkbeck for the same reasons. Later he spoke of his good fortune at having got a post at Birkbeck in 1948 before the Cold War really started to take off. Hobsbawm helped found the academic journal *Past & Present* in 1952. He was a visiting professor at Stanford University in the 1960s. In 1970s, he was appointed professor and in 1976 he became a Fellow of the British Academy. He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1971 and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2006.

Hobsbawm formally retired from Birkbeck in 1982, becoming Emeritus Professor of History, and was appointed as president of Birkbeck in 2002. He continued as visiting professor at The New School for Social Research in Manhattan between 1984 and 1997. Until his death, he was professor emeritus in the New School for Social Research in the Political Science Department. He spoke German, English, French, Spanish and Italian fluently.

Contribution

Hobsbawm contributed comprehensively on several subjects as one of Britain's most well-known historians. As a Marxist historiographer he has focused on analysis of the "dual revolution". By dual revolution he meant the political French Revolution and the British Industrial Revolution. He saw their effect as a driving force behind the predominant trend towards liberal capitalism today. Another recurring theme in his work was social banditry. Banditry is a kind of robbery. Hobsbawm placed it in a social and historical context, and countered the traditional view of it being a spontaneous and unpredictable form of primitive rebellion. He coined the term "long nineteenth century", which begins with the French Revolution in 1789 and ends with the start of World War I in 1914.

He published numerous essays in various intellectual journals, dealing with subjects such as barbarity in the modern age, the troubles of labour movements, and the conflict between anarchism and communism. Among his final publications were *Globalisation, Democracy and Terrorism* (2007), *On Empire* (2008) and the collection of essays *How to Change the World: Marx and Marxism 1840–2011* (2011).

Outside his academic historical writing, Hobsbawm wrote a regular column about jazz for the *New Statesman* under the fictitious name Francis Newton. He took this name from communist trumpet player, Frankie Newton. He had become interested in jazz during the 1930s when it was not much respected by the Communist Party. Hobsbawm occasionally wrote about other forms of popular music, such as in his 1963 article "Beatles and before".

Political leanings

Hobsbawm joined the *Sozialistischer Schülerbund* (Association of Socialist Pupils). This was a branch of the Young Communist League of Germany. He joined it in Berlin in 1931. Later he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1936. He was a member of the Communist Party Historians Group from 1946 until its demise. Later he was the president of its successor, the Socialist History Society until his death. The Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 led thousands of its members to leave the British Communist Party. But Hobsbawm remained in the party. Unfortunately he was distrusted by its leadership and ceased political work by the end of the 1950s. Hobsbawm maintained some ties to former colleagues such as E. P. Thompson and John Saville who had left the CPGB at this time. He became a leading light of the New Left in Britain, occasionally contributing to New Left publications but also providing intelligence reports on the dissidents to CPGB headquarters.

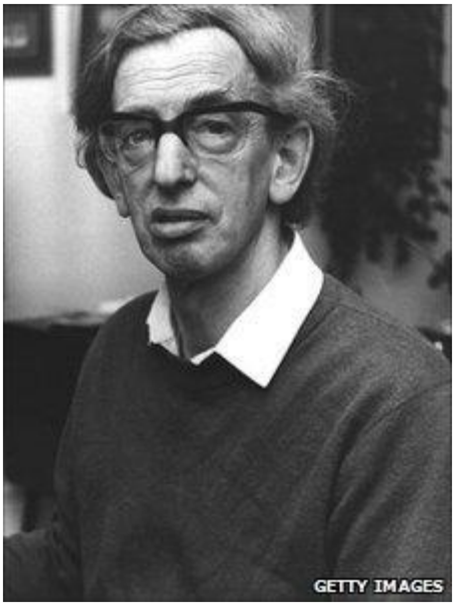
Hobsbawm was a principal light of the Eurocommunist group in the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). This group became strong after 1968, when the CPGB criticised the Soviet crushing of the Prague Spring. It also criticized the French Communist Party's failure to support the May 68 movement in Paris. In "The British Working Class One Hundred Years after Marx", that was published in *Marxism Today* in September 1978, he argued that the working class was inevitably losing its central role in society, and that left-wing parties could no longer appeal only to this class. Hobsbawm supported Neil Kinnock's transformation of the British Labour Party from 1983. His interventions in Kinnock's remaking of the Labour Party helped prepare the ground for the Third Way, New Labour, and Tony Blair, who later became the Prime Minister of England. He contributed to the magazine *Marxism Today*. Majority of the articles were contributed by Hobsbawm and majority of the interviews were with Hobsbawm.

In addition to his association with the CPGB, Hobsbawm developed close ties to the largest Communist Party in the western world, the Italian

Communist Party (PCI). He developed contacts with Italian left-wing academics and intellectuals in the early 1950s. He came into contact with the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's writings were a key influence on Hobsbawm's work on the history of subaltern groups. From the 1960s, his politics took a more moderate approach.

Impact

Owing to his status as a widely read and prominent Communist historian, and the fact that his ideology had influenced his work, Hobsbawm has been credited with spreading Marxist thought around the globe. His writings reached particular prominence in India and Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s at a time of lively debate about these countries' political and social future. Emile Chabal, in an essay for *Aeon*, wrote: "In the period from the early 1960s to the late '80s, Marxists in noncommunist countries were increasingly able to participate in a transnational discussion over the past and future of capitalism, and the most promising agents of revolutionary change. Hobsbawm played a starring role in these discussions – and, occasionally, set the agenda."



ERIC HOBSBAWM

Check your progress:

1] Describe the early life of Eric Hobsbawm.

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2**] Examine the major works of Eric Hobsbawm.**

5.4 HOBSBAWM'S VIEW OF HISTORY

"The Age of Revolution," the first of Hobsbawm's four volumes of modern history, opens with the French Revolution and Britain's industrial revolution. These were two explosions of the late eighteenth century that spurred "the greatest transformation in human history" since antiquity. For Hobsbawm, this "dual revolution" announced two different orientations to modernity. In the first, men and women sought to transform the world through action. In the second, there was transformation, but it happened by coincidence and indirection. It was through the choices of businessmen "whose only law was to buy in the cheapest market and sell without restriction in the dearest." These were the lead characters of modernity: the political and the economic. Both fought for mastery; each sought control of the situation.

Corey Robinson informs us that Hobsbawm begins with the industrial revolution, because according to him, without it we cannot understand the history of men and events. Initially, the economic situation takes or assumes the lead. Capitalist industrialization sets the stage for the political events that follow. As it gathers force, capitalism threatens to push political actors offstage, and at a certain point it seems to have triumphed. "The gods and kings of the past were powerless before the businessmen and steam-engines of the present," Hobsbawm writes. It is "traders and entrepreneurs"—not statesmen or generals—who are "transforming the world."

According to Hobsbawm, Industrial capitalism was the child of political parents. It is not the entrepreneur's acumen or inventor's know-how that industrialized Britain; technology was more advanced in France, after all. What mattered in Britain was statecraft. Through aggressive warfare with its European competitors and studied choices in colonial administration, Britain conquered a world market for its industry. Everyone agrees that cotton was the motor of the industrial revolution, but what made the "extension of Lancashire's markets" a "landmark in world history," in Hobsbawm's words, was not the heroism of the businessman or genius of its machines. It was that "India was systematically deindustrialized" by a British monopoly that had been "established . . . by means of war, other people's revolutions, and her own imperial rule."

The French Revolution, by contrast, was the most formidable statement of political agency since Aristotle declared man a political animal. Through their intentional and determined actions, the revolutionaries created a new world. Hobsbawm details the social and economic causes of the Revolution. But he gives a prominent role to ideas and intellectuals. Again he gives importance to intellectuals for the revolutions of 1848, in his next volume in the series, "The Age of Capital." The collapse of the monarchy was probably unavoidable, but it was the action of ideologues that "made the difference between a mere breakdown of an old regime and the effective and rapid substitution of a new one."

This was the contest that Hobsbawm used to frame the arc of history. The dual revolution was the starting gun that sent two marathoners on their race. The first ran under the flag of the market, following laws as if they were blind forces of nature; the second ran under the flag of politics, making laws through reason and speech. At stake was not who would make it to the finish line first but who would remain standing when the race was done. Initially, the bourgeoisie grabbed the flag of politics, joining forces with the laboring poor to transform the French monarchy into a republic and then to defend that republic against its counter-revolutionary enemies. Even under Napoleon, the bourgeoisie was willing to use the political instruments of war, law, and state-making to abolish feudalism. More than any compulsion of economics, Hobsbawm argues, revolution and war were the decisive factors in the emancipation of the French and parts of the European peasantry.

But that was the last time the bourgeoisie played such an important role in a revolution. After 1830, politics and revolution were filled with the social question of the emancipation of the working class. But here the bourgeoisie did not exercise the same role as in the French revolution. "The Age of Capital" opens in 1848, with a bourgeoisie that has been thoroughly depoliticized. Once upon a time, it played an important role in revolution. But now it saw order and stability as the fundamentals of capitalist expansion. This is Hobsbawm's next twist of the plot. The economy provided the bourgeoisie some opportunities for greatness. Industrialists built railroads, dredged canals, and laid submarine telegraph cables. They made the world a whole.

But according to Hobsbawm, their ambitions had a flaw. For them, "history and profit were one and the same thing." For Hobsbawm, the bourgeois drama was the "drama of progress," which, because it was thought to be inevitable, lacked the necessary elements of uncertainty, reversibility, and irony. When the bourgeoisie became a strictly economic actor, the play became the thing. "It was their age," Hobsbawm says of the bourgeoisie, but they were not its protagonists. The protagonist was capitalism. And so the flag of politics—whether of parties, mass strikes, or revolutions—was taken up by the working class. A consistent theme of Hobsbawm's work, not only in these four volumes but also in his many essays, is a focus on the working class as a political actor rather than as a socioeconomic category.

His signature style was to open with a powerful statement of a generalizing thesis. Then he would prove his thesis with hundreds of supporting arguments. The working class, Hobsbawm wrote, was born with everything going against it. After the revolutions of 1848 failed, the leaders of the new proletarian movements were in jail, exiled, or forgotten. Writing about social revolutions in the decades after 1848 "is rather like writing about snakes in Britain: they exist, but not as a very significant part of the fauna." In "The Age of Empire," the third of his volumes, which begins in 1875, Hobsbawm highlights more obstacles to the working class which is heterogeneity of language, religion, ethnicity, occupation, location, nationality, and more. In 1880, Hobsbawm notes, mass parties of the working class "barely existed" except in Germany.

But the situation changed because of the role of militants. Hobsbawm emphasizes the role of militants who understood the importance of politics. They understood the power of "ideology carried by organization." In the decades leading up to the First World War, socialists influenced by Marx brought to workers in towns, villages, and urban areas a new single identity known as 'the proletarian'. With that they got a tool for acting upon that identity: the party or the trade union. Though Hobsbawm explains, as he does with the French Revolution, the economic background to these efforts, he emphasizes the political roots of the economics. Throughout this period, the state was increasingly organizing the market and the workplace, creating integrated industries that made worker action on a national scale possible.

According to Hobsbawm, Marxism consisted of action, will and decision. What made modern history a story, in other words, was the attempt of men and women to subordinate economics to politics. Did that attempt succeed? The answer, for Hobsbawm, seems to have been no. The ancients believed that the economy was situated in the household, which was the site of production, and in the marketplace, where households traded their surplus. Beyond that lay the public life of the polity; politics began where the economy ended. But in the modern world, Hobsbawm declared in his Marshall Lectures, "history and economics grew up together." Any account of political agency had to confront the fact that economics was now the medium of political action. Capitalism was not the base to the superstructure of politics, as it is so often presented in textbook accounts of Marxism; it was politics itself.

That insight gave Hobsbawm astonishing historical vision. He observed that in the non-industrial world, politics was influenced the famine or feast of the harvest cycle. In the industrial world, it was governed by the boom and bust of the business cycle. He also noted, in "The Invention of Tradition," how public space was altered in response to the mass politics of capitalism. New spaces were stripped of all adornment, allowing attention to settle on the working class. Politically, the insight was a source of frustration and despair. As much as Hobsbawm hoped to launch the politicized worker to the top of the economic mountain, the mountain proved to be an unconquerable summit, as the events of the late twentieth century would demonstrate. "Radicals and socialists no longer know," he said, in the late nineteen-seventies, "how to get from the old to the new."

After 1956, when the Soviet Union invaded Hungary and Nikita Khrushchev revealed Stalin's crimes, most of Hobsbawm's fellow-historians quit the Communist Party. Hobsbawm stayed. For years, he was asked why chose to remain in the party. Hobsbawm had total emotional identification and entire dedication required by the Party. But he did have his moments of disagreement with the party. From the beginning, his membership included extended moments of distance and disagreement. Hobsbawm thought the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact, supported by the Party, was a bad idea. He refused to follow the Party line against Tito, who had broken with Stalin. When the Party sent Hobsbawm letters instructing him to change his policy, he refused.

Eric Hobsbawm was concerned with Marxism and social history. He believed in the concept of class and class struggle. He was the most 'theoretical' member of the Communist Party's Historians' Group. He was on the Editorial Commission of the Moscow-based publication of Marx and Engels's Collected Works and on the editorial board of Marxism Today from 1979. He helped initiate the first English publication of Gramsci's prison notebooks in 1957. He made an attempt to propose a dialectical materialist methodology for the study of working-class mobilization. Hobsbawm sought to modernize Marx. He drew extensively on the work of the French Annales school. The thoughts of Fernand Braudel echo through much of Hobsbawm's subsequent work, particularly his four volumes of world history stretching from the late eighteenth century to the Cold War.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the dual revolutions described by Eric Hobsbawm.

2**] Examine Thompson's view of History.**

5.5 E.P THOMPSON

E.P. Thompson (born Feb. 3, 1924—died Aug. 28, 1993) was a British social historian and political activist. His *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) and other works profoundly influenced post-World War II historiography. Thompson participated in the founding of the British New Left in the 1950s, and in the 1980s he became one of Europe’s most prominent antinuclear activists.

Michael Bess has written on the life and career of E.P. Thompson. He was born into a family of Methodist missionaries. During World War II he served in Africa and Italy as a tank troop leader. After the war, he completed his B.A. at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (1946). Later he joined the British Communist Party. In the next ten years, Thompson devoted himself to grassroots organizing and peace activism. He also taught evening classes at the University of Leeds, and conducted research on his first book. His first book was a biography of William Morris, the 19th-century socialist and leader of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In 1948 he married a fellow communist and historian, Dorothy Sale; their enduring intellectual partnership was a prominent feature of the postwar British left.

Thompson was outraged by the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, and he bitterly broke away from the British Communist Party. He remained a dedicated Marxist, however, and cofounded a new journal, *The New Left Review*, around which thousands of other disaffected leftists united in forming a noncommunist political movement, the New Left. Thompson always was a rebel. This rebellious nature also guided his historical thinking. It is reflected particularly in his most famous book, *The Making of the English Working Class*.

He had a very vivid and eloquent style of writing. Thompson criticized the existing Marxist stress on impersonal economic forces as the key agents of historical change. He was also against Marxism’s interpretation of 19th-century class consciousness as an automatic by-product of the new industrial factory system. His argument was that there was nothing automatic about the rise of the working class. 19th-century employees had daringly built their own collective identity. It was through a difficult and insecure process. It was all possible because of the inventiveness, moral conviction, and original efforts of individual activists. That was what had made a crucial difference.

He described himself as seeking to rescue British workers from the arrogance of the history writers. His book *The Making of the English Working Class* quickly became one of the most significant historical works of the post-World War II era. It created an interest among scholars in the field of grassroots history narrated from below. Equally important, the book helped to cultivate the comparatively new field of social history. It was due to his efforts that social history got a top spot within the social sciences and humanities.

Despite his growing influence, Thompson maintained an unsure relationship with the academic world. He regarded himself as an academic outsider and critic of the established system of academia. Even at the University of Warwick, England, where he taught from 1965, he sided with student protesters who demanded reforms in the university. At the same time, he defended the standards of professional scholarship and produced a regular stream of influential historical essays. He was very sharp and satirical in his writing. This was evident in his 1971 article “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century”. This article focused on the transition in the model of economic relationships. There was a change from an earlier moral kindness across class groups to cut throat market forces.

Thompson framed the term “moral economy” after studying cultural norms, social practices, and economic institutions. This term was very attractive to scholars from other fields also like anthropology and the history of science. In due course it became the most widely cited historical essay of the postwar period.

During the Cold War period, many developments took place. In the early 1980s, concern over new missile deployments in Europe by NATO and the Warsaw Pact drove Thompson to set aside temporarily his historical research and plunge into antinuclear activism. He had been active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since the late 1950s. He traveled constantly, giving speeches and publishing several books analyzing the Cold War. He promoted his vision of a Europe without superpowers. He was very just and fair. He equally criticized both Cold War blocs. It gave him widespread credibility among many western Europeans, who came to look upon him as one of their most popular and trusted moral leaders. Much of this peace activism was carried out in close collaboration with his wife, Dorothy. She taught history at the University of Birmingham and published books on the role of women in radical English politics and the antinuclear movement.

In his writings, Thompson always tried to fight against the arrogance of the powerful. In the same way, we see the fight against arrogance in his peace activism. He was always creating a space for grassroots human agency and for moral dissidence against the pride of the powerful. In both areas Thompson sought to tell his audiences that they placed too much stress on socioeconomic forces. But he wanted to say that individual personality was equally important. He wanted people to pay attention to the possibilities opened up by individual personality. Similarly, according to him moral choice and other expressions of human experience and initiative played an important role. Thompson made a conscious choice of attaching himself with British radical thinkers like the Levelers, Ranters, Thomas Paine and William Morris.

Thompson tried to show that downtrodden people in society should not be seen as helpless and submissive items of history. After his death, his *Witness against the Beast* was published. It was an account of the radical political and cultural movements of the Romantic era. Thompson always gave a healthy and critical analysis of the Communist Party bureaucracy, the boardrooms of corporate capitalism, the academic institution, and the vast military and political structures of the Cold War.

E.P. THOMPSON

Source: 60 Faces

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the early life of E.P. Thompson.

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2**] Discuss the writings of E. P. Thompson.**

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5.6 THOMPSONS VIEW OF HISTORY

The construction of culturalism was the work of E.P. Thompson. Thompson's 'culturalist' perspective was in relation to his socialist humanist politics within the New Left. Thompson believed that socialist scholarship needed to inform grassroots political struggles.

Thompson's most influential work was *The Making of the English Working Class*, published in 1963 while he was working at the University of Leeds. It is a huge book with more than 800 pages. It was a turning point in the foundation of the field of social history. He explored the ordinary cultures of the working people. He studied lots of documents of the working class people. He was a very hard working researcher. Thompson told the forgotten history of the first working-class political left in the world in the late-18th and early-19th centuries. Thompson discovered details about workshop customs and rituals, failed conspiracies, threatening letters, and popular songs. He took what others had regarded as scraps from the archives. He studied them carefully and understood what they told us about the beliefs and aims of those who were downtrodden and marginalized. It was a book that studied aspects of human experience that had never before been studied by historians.

'*The Making of the English Working Class* had a deep effect on the shape of British historiography. It is still an important reference book in many Universities across the world. It influenced an entire generation of young British leftists. In his preface to this book, E.P. Thompson set out his approach to writing history from below. He was trying to highlight the poor stock worker, the cropper, the outdated hand-loom weaver, the artisan, and the weakest sections of the society. Their crafts and traditions were dying. Their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward-looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been unreal dreams. Their rebellious conspiracies may have been foolish. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance and the privileged people did not live like that. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience. They were condemned in their lives as casualties of history.

Thompson's thought was also original and significant because of the way he defined "class." To Thompson, class was not a structure, but a relationship: And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences, feel and express the identity of their interests. It is an interest shared between themselves, and against other men whose interests are different from theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born—or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: personified in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms. If the experience appears as determined, class-consciousness does not. We can see a logic in the responses of similar occupational groups undergoing similar experiences, but we cannot predict any law. Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, but never in just exactly the same way.

By re-defining class as a relationship that changed over time, Thompson proceeded to show how class was worthy of historical investigation. He opened the gates for a new generation of labour historians, such as David Montgomery and Herbert Gutman, who made parallel studies of the American working classes. Thompson's book was a major work of research and synthesis. The book was also important in historiographical terms. In his book, Thompson demonstrated the power of a historical Marxism rooted in the experience of real flesh-and-blood workers. Thompson wrote the book while living in Siddal, Halifax, West Yorkshire and based some of the work on his experiences with the local Halifax population. In later essays, Thompson has emphasized that crime and disorder were characteristic responses of the working and lower classes to the oppressions imposed upon them. He argues that crime was defined and punished primarily as an activity that threatened the status, property and interests of the elites. England's lower classes were kept under control by large-scale execution, transportation to the colonies, and imprisonment in horrible cabins of old warships. There was no interest in reforming the culprits. The goal was to discourage through tremendously cruel punishment.

Thompson also explained the concept of Time discipline. Time discipline pertains to history, sociology and anthropology. It is the general name given to social and economic rules, conventions, customs, and expectations governing the measurement of time. It deals with the social awareness of time measurements, and people's expectations concerning the observance of these customs by others. Thompson authored *Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism*, published in 1967. It states that reliance on clock-time is a result of the European Industrial Revolution and that neither industrial capitalism nor the creation of the modern state would have been possible without the imposition of synchronic forms of time and work discipline.

An accurate and precise record of time was not kept prior to the industrial revolution. The new clock-time imposed by government and capitalist interests replaced earlier, collective perceptions of time. The earlier perceptions of time were natural rhythms of time like sunrise, sunset, and seasonal changes. Thompson believed that they flowed from the collective wisdom of human societies. However, it is likely that earlier views of time were imposed by religious and other social authorities prior to the industrial revolution, Thompson's work identified time discipline as an important concept for study within the social sciences. Thompson addresses the development of time as a measurement that has value and that can be controlled by social structures. As labor became more mechanized during the industrial revolution, time became more precise and standardized. Factory work changed the relationship that the capitalist and laborers had with time and the clock; clock time became a tool for social control. Capitalist interests demanded that the work of laborers be monitored accurately to ensure that cost of labor was to the maximum benefit of the capitalist.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss Thompson’s Philosophy of History.

2**] Examine the legacy of E.P. Thompson.**

5.7 SUMMARY

In conclusion we can summarize that Eric Hobsbawm and E.P.Thompson had their own brand of Marxism which was based on their understanding and personal experiences. That is what is known as the Neo Marxist School. Both were very influential. Rohan McWilliam has analysed E.P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm and the remaking of nineteenth century British history. He has coined the word Thompsbawm which is an amalgamation of Thompson and Hobsbawm. He writes that few historians mattered to their contemporaries as Eric Hobsbawm and E.P.Thompson. Both were shaped by political allegiances formed in the 1930s and 1940s. Both were role models who combined research with political commitment. Many historians tried to imitate their approach and style. Both analyzed issues about working class agency.

Both extensively studied about the possibilities and limitations of popular politics. Both showed how the world looked very different from the perspective of the middle class. This was the essence of what became known as history from below. The scholarship on both these legendary figures will increase in the years ahead. They will be studied in the same way that the great Victorian historians such as Macaulay are studied. They will be explored as guides to the intellectual history of the past. At the same time, they will continue to be integral to future research and perhaps more importantly to future politics. Much of Thompsons and Hobsbawms work was influenced by the Cold War, which shaped intellectual categories and debates in a prominent way.

5.8 QUESTIONS

1. Analyse the Neo Marxist view of History.
2. Discuss the contribution of Eric Hobsbawm.
3. Examine the philosophy of E.P. Thompson.

5. 9 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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6

SUBALTERN STUDIES – MAIN CONCEPTS, AND CONTRIBUTION

Unit Structure

6.0 OBJECIVES

After the study of this unit, the student will be able to :

- Understand the meaning of the concept of Subaltern.
- Analyze the various concepts of Subaltern Studies.
- Study the origin and development of Subaltern Studies.
- Grasp the contributions of various scholars of Subaltern Studies.
- Analyze the critique of Subaltern Studies.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Subaltern School of historiography emerged in the 1980s. In the academic context, Subaltern Studies attempted to foreground social categories, which were at the receiving end of a range of power structures at different locations of the Indian subcontinent. Subaltern studies bring to light the lower sections of the Indian people hitherto neglected by historiography. Based on the Italian philosopher and Neo-Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci's perceptions and deliberations, Subaltern Studies have come up with interdisciplinary methods to investigate and analyze the consciousness and voice of dissent of 'subaltern social categories.' The most visible research on these subject dates back to 1982 with Ranajit Guha's writings and his associates who were inspired by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). They adopted the concept of 'History from Below' and wrote the history of subaltern masses of India by giving emphasis on subaltern consciousness. They examined and analyzed the elitist approach of Colonial, Nationalists and Marxist history writing. Though there are some limitations to Subaltern historiography, Subaltern historians have initiated the new approach to understand Subalterns through their historical writings. They explained the resistance of suppressed and oppressed people systematically by following various theories, ideologies and methodologies.

6.2 SUBALTERN STUDIES – ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

During the nineteenth century colonial India, many peasant uprisings and tribal rebellions occurred against the exploitation, subjugation and oppression of the British government and landlords. The social and religious reform movement also started during this period. It is also seen that the Dalit movement and the tribal movement were growing. The rise of consciousness and clarity about subaltern self-identity occurred vis-à-vis the development of modern socio-cultural, economic and political relations in the mainstream. Subsequently, there was simultaneous documentation and crystallization of social categories and sub-categories based on class, caste, religion, gender, language and region. Throughout the history of modern India, most of the oppressed, dominated and exploited social groups were identified against the background of the means of new socio-economic, as well as, political structures, nation-making and the spread of modernistic principles. Subaltern consciousness is also reflected in literary forms that offer alternate aesthetics of beauty, identity and resistance. The various movements of these exploited masses in the Indian subcontinent were largely ignored. These social class movements do not seem to reflect in the Colonial (Imperialist), Nationalist and Marxist historiography. Nevertheless, the gap later on is bridged by emergent historiography that started in the 1980s through subaltern studies using new theories, methods and analysis of these social classes and their movements.

From its inception, it resulted into a major transition in South Asian historiography and posed a vigorous challenge to existing historical scholarship. It was largely by its relentless postcolonial critique that Indian history came to be seen in a different light. Indian History had thus found a new approach that was so critically needed. The Colonial and the Nationalist historiography became the focus of their criticism due to their elite based analysis of history. They also contested the Marxist historiography due to the fact that their mode of production-based narratives has a tendency of merging inevitably into the nationalist ideology of modernity and progress. Moreover, the Subalterns rightly pointed out that the Marxist found it really difficult to accept the ideology of caste and religion as crucial factors in Indian History, which to them was somewhat backward and degrading. They were thus, according to the Subalterns, totally unable to gather vital historical data from lived experiences of various oppressed classes, which were submerged in religious and social customs.

The academic response via Subaltern Studies has been pioneered by historians such as Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyanendra Pandey, Gyan Prakash, Susie Tharu, David Hardiman, Bernard Cohn, David Arnold, Shahid Amin, Gautam Bhadra and Sumit Sarkar (who later left the group), to name a few. They have produced a rich and complex body of work that continues to be thought-provoking. They adopted Antonio Gramsci's philosophy and E.P. Thompson's framework of 'history from below' to create new philosophical understandings, conceptual tools and methodological systems for documenting the socio-economic exploitation of Subaltern groups.

Check your progress :

1) Explain in brief the origin and development of Subaltern Studies.

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6.3 MAIN CONCEPTS

The concept of 'Subaltern' used by Ranajit Guha and his associates is taken from the famous Italian Marxist scholar and philosopher, Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci used this concept for those classes that are non-hegemonic and classless subordinate group of people and lower strata of society. The term 'Subaltern' is referred to the subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language and culture. Subaltern means the lower class or exploited masses. It is applied to the common mass of people in relation to political power, social hegemony, economic power-position, religious authority and intellectual excellence. Gramsci has used various concepts to study the consciousness of the subaltern masses such as 'hegemony', 'dominance', 'organic intellectuals', 'traditional intellectuals', 'common sense', 'civil society' etc. He used the concept 'subaltern' for the oppressed, excluded and marginalised groups, using newer methods to narrate their histories. Gramsci's analysis and the methodology of subaltern studies gave birth to a new stream of historiography. Gramsci used the concept of 'subaltern' for exploited people of Italian society whereas Ranajit Guha used this concept for subordinated people/class from class, caste, gender and administrative class of Indian society. Subaltern scholars wrote various articles to analyze the formation of society in Indian context. They studied the various revolts, movements and agitations of peasants, workers and tribal groups of the second half of nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century and try to locate their autonomous nature which was separated from mainstream elitist freedom struggle through their articles.

Subaltern scholars used the Gramsci's concept of 'common sense' for theoretical understanding and interpretation of Indian History. When the subaltern people understand the reasons of their subordination and exploitation, they expressed their discontent and ready to fight independently against it without any forcefully imposed corrupt leadership. They fought against their exploitation without any elitist leadership through their common sense spontaneously. An autonomous Subaltern consciousness has become the centre point of Subaltern historiography. They have their own action based on their own autonomous consciousness through which they started various movements, political resistance and revolts, which are not guided by the initiatives of superior classes, but they are emerged through their own autonomous consciousness. This has been created through their collective action that was studied by Subaltern historians.

Ranajit Guha and his associates used the thoughts of Gramsci to understand the consciousness of suppressed and oppressed people in India and therefore they used the concept 'Common Sense' of Gramsci, which highlights the Subalterns contradictory, conjectured, fractured, disjointed and episodic consciousness. The 'Common Sense' underlines the co-existence of two mutually contradicted elements and/or aspects (e.g., capitalist and workers). The suppressed and oppressed people have an autonomous consciousness that is imbedded unknowingly in the labour of working-class people, which tries to change the world through their labour. This is the aspect of 'common sense' and the other aspect is accepted as a past tradition without doing any enquiry. It is taken from the imitation of upper class and superior class.

Antonio Gramsci uses the concept of 'hegemony' to theorize not only the necessary condition for a successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat and its allies (e.g., the peasantry), but also the structures of bourgeois power in late 19th- and early 20th-century Western European states in his book Prisons Notebook. Gramsci, particularly in his later work, develops a complex and variable usage of the term; Gramsci's 'hegemony' refers to a process of moral and intellectual leadership through which dominated or subordinate classes of post-1870 industrial Western European nations *consent* to their own domination by ruling classes, as opposed to being simply forced or coerced into accepting inferior positions. It is important to note that, although Gramsci's prison writings typically avoid using Marxist terms such as 'class', 'bourgeoisie', and 'proletariat', Gramsci defines hegemony as a form of control exercised by a *dominant class*, in the Marxist sense of a group controlling the means of production; Gramsci uses 'fundamental group' to stand in euphemistically for 'class'. For Gramsci, the dominant class of a Western Europe nation of his time was the bourgeoisie, defined in the *Communist Manifesto* as 'the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour, while the crucial (because potentially revolution-leading) subordinate class was the proletariat, "the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live". Gramsci's use of hegemony can be understood through the study of his other concepts which he developed, including those of "state" and "civil society".

Gramsci spoke philosophically of relationship of human thought, feelings and will to 'objective' social processes. He added that rationality of all human behavior and products of his activity are related to the global historical processes. Speaking about the proletariat he called for intellectuals who could identify themselves with the struggling classes. He called them 'organic intellectuals'. The workers did not need those elites who could not express the actual experiences and feelings of the masses. He advocated ‘Open Marxist’ that is an attempt to turn the unrecognized and unconscious class of workers to class consciousness. He wanted the struggling wars of workers to establish cultural hegemony before gaining political power.

For Gramsci, intellectuals are a broader group of social agents than the term would seem to include in its definition. Gramsci’s category of “intellectuals” includes not only scholars and artists or, in his own terms, the “organizers of culture,” but also functionaries who exercise “technical” or “directive” capacities in society. Among these functionaries we find administrators and bureaucrats, industrial managers, politicians, and the already mentioned “organizers of culture.” According to Gramsci, the intellectuals are the “deputies” of the dominant group–the functionaries, exercising the subaltern but important functions of political government and social hegemony. The organic intellectuals of the working class are defined on the one hand by their role in production and in the organisation of work and on the other by their “directive” political role, focused on the Party. In particular, the organic intellectuals are most important since they are the ones who actually elaborate and spread organic ideology. Gramsci’s contribution to Marxist theory is two-fold. On the one hand, with concepts such as “organic ideology,” “civil society” and “political society,” “organic intellectuals,” “hegemony,” etc., as well as his unique distinction between political society and civil society, Gramsci brought new theoretical foundations into truly dialectical Marxist revolutionary theory. Most important, out of these foundations emerged new concepts that have given Marxism more consistency and relevance vis-a-vis contemporary Capitalist reality. Subaltern Studies historiography used these concepts of Gramsci and applied it in Indian context. They wrote several essays and published books to understand the formation of Indian society, polity and economy.

Check your progress :

1) Explain in short, the main concepts of Subaltern Studies.

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6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF SUBALTERN STUDIES

Subaltern Studies developed a new style of history writing in India by criticising the elitism of the colonial, nationalist and Marxist historiography. They were inspired by the works of Antonio Gramsci, Trotsky, Lukacs, Eric Hobsbawm, E.P. Thompson etc. British Marxist Historian E. P. Thompson provided philosophical basis to Subaltern history writing through their non-traditional Marxist approach i.e. ‘history from below’. Rosalind O’Hanlon observes that Subaltern Studies provides a new orientation within which many different styles, interest and discursive modes may find it possible to unite their rejection of academic elitism. Subaltern Studies scholars studied the revolts, movements and agitations led by the peasants, workers and tribal groups in the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. They discerned their struggles as autonomous to distinguish them from the elitism of the mainstream freedom struggle. Rosalind O’Hanlon states that the central emphasis of their writing was the emergence of consciousness of Subaltern people in South Asia through the study of Subaltern resistance to hegemonic social relations. Some scholars of the Subaltern Studies group wrote on the movement of the exploited masses at the grassroots and underlined their lives, ideologies and resistances.

Ranajit Guha was the first Indian historian who has presented the experiences of suppressed and oppressed people in his writings. He has augmented the system of inversion through the revolts of peasants. In the system of inversion, peasants rejected the local and colonial symbols of power and their subordination. He mentions that there was parallel movement of people during colonial period and that politics was not guided by elitist leaders and colonial bureaucracy. Subaltern historians believe that this was led by working class people and subaltern people and was not dependent on elitist but was autonomous in nature. But it was completely ignored in elitist unhistorical history writing. Guha considers the variation of subaltern people’s exploitation as an important feature of their politics. According to him, on one side the variation of exploitation and other side variation of relations amongst the labourers and he said, due to these two factors, the politics of subaltern class became an important feature. Due to these variations, subaltern classes’ politics, we cannot find homogeneity and gets the multiple dimensions and values. The factor of lack of homogeneity makes the politics of subaltern class separate and distinct from or with elitist politics. Guha observed that Indian labour movement was not developed properly enough and therefore they were not able to create the energy or efficiency to capture the national movement by taking the help of peasants and agricultural labour by keeping aside the bourgeoisie elitist leadership. Subaltern historian believes that the nation of India failed to develop the self-image (self-consciousness) or self - identity due to the stagnant phase or stage of bourgeois capitalists and workers.

Ranajit Guha believed that the politics of the subalterns constituted an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter. Subordination in its various forms has always been the central focus of the Subaltern studies. But throughout subsequent volumes the whole concept of subalternity underwent various shifts. The essays of the subsequent volumes reflect divergence in interest, motives and theories. But in spite of these shifts, one aspect of the Subaltern Studies has remained unchanged. It is an effort to see and rethink history from the perspective of the Subalterns and to give them their due in the Historical process. The new contributors ended up giving new form and substance subalternity.

Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasants Insurgency in Colonial India* is considered to be the most powerful example of Subaltern historical scholarship. By returning to the 19th Century peasants' insurrection in Colonial India he offered a fascinating account of the peasants' insurgent consciousness, rumours, mystic visions, religiosity and bonds of community. In this interesting work, Guha attempted to uncover the true face of peasants' existence in colonial India. He pointed out that the peasants were denied recognition as a subject of history in his own right even for a subject that was all his own. Elitist historiographies were unable to put the peasants' conditions and their insurgency in correct perspective as they could not go beyond limitations that were characteristic of their historiographical schools. He claimed that there existed in colonial India an 'autonomous' domain of the 'politics of people' that was organized differently than the politics of the elite. This in a sense summed up the entire argument put forward by Subaltern historians. Peasant uprisings in Colonial India, he argued reflected a separate and autonomous grammar of mobilization in its most comprehensive form. The Landlords, the money lenders and the Colonial Government officials formed a composite apparatus of dominance over the peasants. Their exploitation according to Ranajit Guha was primarily political in character and economic exploitation, so upheld and stressed by the other schools, mainly the Marxist, was mainly one of its several instances.

A number of earlier essays have revolved around these themes during the formative years, most important among them being Ranajit Guha's *Prose of Counter Insurgency*. The difference in the later essays lies in the fact that while the earlier works wanted to establish the subalterns as subjects of their own history, the latter works concentrated on various aspects of dominance confronted by the Subaltern sections. They also shed new lights on the domains of culture and politics of the period and their roles in the whole picture.

Ranajit Guha and Sumit Sarkar highlighted the role of common people in the anti-partition movement in Bengal, peasants' revolts in the Gangetic Doab and Maharashtra. They also discussed Quit India Movement of 1942 through the angle of Subaltern ideas. Ranajit Guha criticised the writers of Indian history both Indians and Englishmen for describing the struggle for Indian Freedom through the elitist's standpoint. The Indian leaders who led the nationalist movement thought of interest of educated elite and the bourgeoisie class more than the hopes and aspiration of the workers and peasants. However, Gandhiji the man who identified himself with the masses of people cannot be described as a narrow minded "elitist".

David Arnold brings to light the story of a long series of disturbances and rebellions of hillmen in the Gudem and Rampa hill tracts of Andhra during 1839-1924 (Subaltern Studies Volume I). Studying the Madras famine of 1876-78 (Subaltern Studies Volume III), the same author writes of peasant consciousness and peasant action in such crises of subsistence and survival. Arnold complains that the voluminous literature on Indian famine does not treat that phenomenon in terms of human experience, and that peasant experience of dearth and famine has almost invariably been subordinated to the descriptions of state policy and relief administration.

Gyan Pandey gives an account of the peasant revolts of Awadh during 1919-22 and its impact on Indian nationalism (Subaltern Studies Volume I). Stephen Henningham shows how in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh the "Quit India" movement of 1942 was a dual revolt consisting of an elite nationalist uprising combined with a subaltern rebellion ((Subaltern Studies Volume II). This combination called forth the enthusiasm and participation of a broad spectrum of society. If, in spite of its drama and intensity the 'Quite India' revolt has not received adequate scholarly treatment, Henningham's explanation is that, for historians operating within the confines of elite historiography "the substance of the 1942 revolt is difficult to swallow and impossible to digest."

Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak in an essay titled, *"Can the Subaltern Speak?"* wrote: "The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with woman as a pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe task which she must not disown with a flourish." She cited the examples of widows burnt at the pyre of the husband in her essay. She emphasized the condition of women who are doubly oppressed–firstly by patriarchy and secondly by colonialism.

Arvind Das demonstrates how erroneous it is to attribute agrarian changes in Bihar during 1947-78 to elite-sponsored land reforms (Subaltern Studies Volume II). The two major attempts at 'agrarian changes from the above', that is through zamindari abolition and the bhoodan movement, were not elite sponsored but responses to peasant discontent. The first followed after year; of agitation by Swami Sahajananda Saraswati and the powerful Kisan Sabha, and the second came 'on the militant Communist-led peasant upsurge in Telengana. Both were measures to preempt class war in the Bihar country side. Says the author: "Any interpretation of agrarian change primarily as an elite sponsored land reform, amounts therefore to chasing the shadow without trying to grasp the substances." In 'Agricultural Workers in Burdwan' (Subaltern Studies Volume II), N.K. Chandra reveals the appallingly poor condition of the mass of the agricultural labourers and poor peasant in terms of wages and earnings, underemployment and poverty.

Historians like Partha Chatterjee made notable contributions in this respect. His works proved crucial at this juncture to understand that engagement with elite themes is not altogether new to the subalterns. Partha Chatterjee, in his article '*Caste and Subaltern Consciousness'* discussed the feudal power system, capitalist (Bourgeoisie) power system and community power system and used the concept of community power system to show the subaltern resistance. He analyzed the resistance of Subaltern people in the context of religious beliefs by following the concept of 'common sense' of Antonio Gramsci. According to him, an individual and group gets the identity through the membership of community and therefore community remains prime important. Through community leadership, power is not centralized to an individual or position and it is ascribed to community. Community's relationship with the members of other community is based on the mutual relation rules and these mutual relations are based on popular system of religious beliefs, myths of their origin, folklore and sacred history. Such system creates the political code or rules of morality and such codification reflects in power-obedience, coercion-resistance relation directed actions and symbols. Partha Chatterjee's this interpretation is very useful to understand the subaltern consciousness. Subaltern historians approached the caste problem to understand the Subaltern resistance and consciousness through the collective behaviour and consciousness.

These writings have been able to outline the whole process of history being written from the point of view of elite nationalism and their limitations. Mention can be made in this respect to the essay by Shahid Amin called *Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern up, 1921-1922* (Subalterns Studies Volume III) and his other essay *Approvers Testimony, Judicial Discourse: The Case of Chouri Choura* (Subalterns Studies Volume V) Communalism also emerged as a significant theme in Subaltern writings of 90s. Gyan Pandey has some notable works to his credit about the Hindu Muslims riots in modern India. This theme has become all the more important with the resurgence of Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism in the recent times. Historian Gyan Prakash in one of his essays once said that the real significance of the shift to the analysis of discourses is the reformulation of the notion of subaltern.

The anti-partition agitation (1905) did not arouse as much popular enthusiasm in Bengal as did the Non-Cooperation khilafat movement of 1921-22. Sumit Sarkar informs us (Subaltern Studies Volume III) that the former did not go beyond the confines of Hindu upper class bhadralok group whereas in the latter "popular initiative eventually alarmed the leaders into calling for a halt." Tribal protest as that of Jitu Santhal's movement in Malda, northwestern Bengal (1924-32), is a favourite theme for subaltern historiography (Subaltern Studies Volume IV). In 1924, an anti-landlord tenant agitation developed in Malda under Jitu's leadership and continued till 1932 when the leader was shot. Even bhadralok opinion as expressed in the Amrita Bazar Patrika was sympathetic to Jitu's revolt but, as Tanika Sarkar shows, in true elitist fashion the responsibility for the revolt but was taken away from the tribal leader by imputing it comfortably to the Swarajist agitator from outside.

Gautam Bhadra observes in his 'Four Rebels of 1857 (Subaltern Studies Volume IV) that all the principal modes of historiography on the Great Revolt of 1857 'whether nationalist' as exemplified by the writing of S.B. Chaudhari or 'radical communist' as represented by Promod Sengupta and Datta have, with due elitist prejudice, portrayed the great event as an elitist venture. The ordinary rebel, his role and his perception of alien rule and the contemporary crises –all these have been left out of the historical literature of the Great Revolt. Bhandra's essay rehabilitates four of such rebel characters of 1857: Shah Mal, Devi Singh, Gonoo and Maulavi

Ahmadullah Shah. Their stories point to the existence in 1857 of what Gramsci calls ‘multiple elements of conscious leadership’.

The decade of the 80s assumes a special significance due to the fact caste, gender, and religion became important reference points in history writing, subaltern history in particular understood the need to document the lives of all the oppressed people, like peasants and workers, tribals and lower caste, women and Dalits, whose voices were seldom heard before in history. Subaltern studies group did not study in large the resistance and consciousness of working-class people except the article by Dipesh Chakrabarty. He studies the condition of the Calcutta jute mill workers between 1890 and 1940 (Subaltern Studies Volume II). In another essay on the jute mills workers during 1920-50 (Subaltern Studies Volume III), he shows how the elitist attitude has crept into socialist and Communist ranks, leader treating unions as their ‘zamindari’, their contact with the workers degenerating into the hierarchical terms of the babu-coolie relationship. He observes that the workers consciousness was not taking shape in the framework of class consciousness in jute mill industry whereas it has the basis of primordial loyalties. He challenges the Marxist view of emergence of class consciousness amongst the jute mill workers by crossing the religious ideology of ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’. He gives examples of working-class consciousness of pre-bourgeoisie aspects such as the appointment of certain castes on certain posts by Brahmins, Bengali worker do not allow his wife to work in factory or industry etc.

Kancha Illaiha’s article on caste system and labour consciousness is included in the ninth volume of Subaltern Studies in 1996. In this article, he has tendency to glorify the culture and values developed from the tradition of Dalit-Bahujan castes. He has expressed his appreciation towards the Dalit-Bahujan labour culture. But he ignored the fact that the division of labour and work culture, which was doing by Dalit-Bahujans, is an outcome of caste based graded exploitation. While glorifying the Dalit-Bahujan patriarchy as democratic patriarchy, he forgets that Brahmanical patriarchy is based on the principle of graded inequality, which is the form of caste exclusiveness. Mahatma Phule, through his counter culture, made the traditions of Shudra and Ati-Shudra’s exclusiveness as public due to its universal nature. Kancha Illaiha’s alternative has no universal basis and do not have vision to give the system the rational approach. However, Prof. Umesh Bagade states that’s Subaltern studies project included his article as it is convenient for them to suit their post-modernist ideology, which opposes universalism, reason and rationality. In this way, Subaltern studies has contributed a lot in the historiography of India and analyzed the contribution of subaltern classes in the making of modern India.

Check your progress :

1) Explain in short the contribution of Subaltern Studies.

6.5 CRITIQUE OF SUBALTERN STUDIES

Subaltern school has no doubt made great contribution in the realm of Indian historiography. But nevertheless, it is not totally free from shortcomings. Ranajit Guha used the framework of E.P. Thompson's point of view of 'History from below', Gramsci's philosophical role and phenomenology and later number of new philosophical understandings, conceptual tools and methodological systems to express the exploitation of Subaltern people in the social and economic structure. However, the later Subaltern historians were contended to understand the subordination of middle class of colonial period. They provided emphasis on locality, community and isolation of social conditions rather than analyzing the Subaltern people based on class, caste and Gender. However Subaltern historiography helps to understand the facets of Dalit consciousness. It can be a useful methodology to understand the anti-caste movement.

Subaltern historians studied caste as an important aspect of revolt and the aspect of its spread; however, they did not study the revolts of Subalterns. All Subaltern writings became the question of western cultural dominance and hegemony. They neglected the movements of Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar and anti-caste movements. They also neglected the history of left movements. They did not thorough light on caste movements. Though, there are some limitations of Subaltern historiography, Subaltern historians highlighted the 'autonomous' character of Subaltern consciousness. They have initiated the new approach to understand Subalterns through their history writings. They explained the resistance of suppressed and oppressed people systematically by following various ideologies and methodologies.

Subaltern Studies academicians focused on an isolated study of the subaltern people, rather than their structural exploitation by the mainstream. They highlighted the 'autonomous' character and agency of subaltern groups. However, as debates have underscored there are several problems that remain neglected. For instance, the rise of subaltern consciousness has been accompanied by the rise of mainstream modernism; a relationship that needs to be problematized. Moreover, the extent to which the subalterns contributed to mainstream movements needs exploration.

Critiques of Subaltern historiography by scholars such as Sumit Sarkar, Umesh Bagade, Vinay Bhal, Himani Banerjee, Hiren Gohain, Vinay Lal and others argued that they advocated monolithic and abstract perspectives in the name of the postcolonial. Sumit Sarkar argued for "The Decline of the Subaltern in *Subaltern Studies*" in his book *Writing Social History*. Partha Chatterjee has himself pointed to how this intellectual project "was perhaps overdetermined by its times". These critiques reveal that Subaltern Studies cannot singularly engage with the complexity of the oppressed and the exploited. Its canvas has to be expanded to intersectionality grounded in the local. Further, one cannot abandon the task of engaging with the socially vulnerable, nor dismiss Enlightenment and modernity as inadequate frameworks for critical analysis. Moreover, the privileged space any researcher occupies needs to be questioned. Vinay Bhal in his essay "Relevance (or Irrelevance) of Subaltern Studies in Reading Subaltern Studies" edited by David Ludden also observes the contribution and limitations of Subaltern Studies.

The texts of Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Kancha Illaiha deal with the issue of caste but this trend seems to have ignored the Dalit movement that has emerged in various parts of India. Jotirao Phule and Dr. B. R Ambedkar's emancipatory movement seems to have been completely ignored by Subaltern historiography. Before Ranajit Guha, Jotirao Phule and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar appear to have written on the subaltern movement and raised the issues of exploited and marginalised groups in India. Subaltern Studies group also used various post-structural and post-modern concepts in the later phase of their writings. Gopal Guru and Umesh Bagade has underlined the contribution of the new subaltern approach and also discussed its limitations. No special attention was paid to the Dalit, tribal, peasant, workers and women's movement which has emerged in various parts of India. Subaltern historiography seems to have completely forgotten the movement of tribal groups in the northeastern part of India.

Check your progress :

1) Explain in brief the main critique of Subaltern Studies.

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6.6 SUMMARY

There is no denying the fact that Subaltern Studies has contributed a lot in the study of history, economics and social sciences in South Asian countries in the end of the twentieth century. Subaltern Studies generated intense debates and critiques about social location and historiography by later historians and scholars. New generations of researchers working on the past experiences of subaltern masses need to explore a wide variety of perspectives that have not found space in earlier historiography. Ideas of gender and class inequalities have been at the centre of their historical enquiry and a considerable effort is now being made to study the convergence of multiple identities on life experiences and explored the intersectionality between gender, class, caste, and community to identify the systems, structures, experiences, politics and conflict and locate it historically.

6.7 QUESTIONS

1) Explain in detail the main concepts of Subaltern Studies.
2) Discuss the origin and development of Subaltern Studies.
3) Describe the contributions of various scholars of Subaltern Studies.
4) Analyze the critique of Subaltern Studies and their contribution in the Historiography in India.
5) Discuss the Subaltern School of History. Bring out the contribution of the Subaltern historians to histography.

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7

HISTORICISM, NEW HISTORICISM AND CULTURAL MATERIALISM

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Post Marxist Concepts and Approaches
- To shed light on the concept of Historicism and its features.
- To understand New Historicism and its characteristics.
- To orient learners about Cultural Materialism and its salient hallmarks.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As a discipline, History is not just a narrative of interesting events of the past. It is a systematic study which is based on hardcore evidence and research. At the same time there is a certain philosophy which is followed by every historian. The philosophy that the historian follows influences his narration of the historical account. Philosophy of history is the philosophical study of history and its discipline. The term was coined by French philosopher Voltaire. In modern philosophy a difference has developed between speculative philosophy of history and critical philosophy of history. Speculative philosophy of history questions the meaning and purpose of the historical process. Critical philosophy of history studies the foundations and impact of history and the historical method.

The philosophy of history and the method of narrating history has evolved over the years. The Greeks were regarded as the pioneers in history writing. In the beginning it was just passing on the story from one generation to another. Herodotus, a fifth-century BC personality, broke from the Homeric tradition of passing narrative from generation to generation in his work "Investigations", also known as *Histories*. Herodotus is regarded by many as the first systematic historian. Herodotus and later, Plutarch (46–120 CE) freely invented speeches for their historical figures and chose their historical subjects with an eye toward morally improving the reader.

According to them History was supposed to teach good examples for one to follow. The assumption that history "should teach good examples" influenced how writers produced history. Events of the past are just as likely to show bad examples that one should not follow , but classical historians would either not record such examples or would re-interpret them to support their assumption of history's purpose.

From the Classical period to the Renaissance, historians alternated between focusing on subjects designed to improve mankind and on a devotion to fact. History was composed mainly of hagiographies of monarchs or of epic poetry describing heroic gestures. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun, who is considered one of the fathers of the philosophy of history, discussed his philosophy of history and society in detail in his *Muqaddimah* (1377). His work represents a culmination of earlier works by medieval Islamic sociologists in the spheres of Islamic ethics, political science, and historiography, such as those of al-Farabi (c. 872 – c. 950), Ibn Miskawayh, al-Dawani, and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274).

Ibn Khaldun often criticized "idle superstition and uncritical acceptance of historical data". He introduced a scientific method to the philosophy of history and he often referred to it as his "new science", which is now associated with historiography. His historical method also laid the groundwork for the observation of the role of the state, communication, propaganda, and systematic bias in history.

By the eighteenth century historians had turned toward a more positivist approach—focusing on fact as much as possible, but still with an eye on telling histories that could instruct and improve. Starting with Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889) and Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), historical studies began to move towards a more modern scientific form. In the Victorian era, historiographers debated less whether history was intended to improve the reader, and more on what causes turned history and how one could understand historical change.

Check your progress:

1] Define Philosophy of History?

2**] Examine how the Philosophy of History has evolved over the ages.**

7.2 BACKGROUND

Early approaches to history can be found in theodicies, which attempted to reconcile the problem of evil with the existence of God. This approach provided a global explanation of history with belief in a progressive direction organized by a superior power, leading to death, judgement and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind, such as a Messianic Age or Apocalypse. Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, in his 1679 *Discourse On Universal History*, and Gottfried Leibniz, who coined the term, formulated such philosophical theodicies. Leibniz based his explanation on the principle of sufficient reason, which states that anything that happens, does happen for a specific reason. Thus, if one adopts God's perspective, seemingly evil events in fact only take place in the larger divine plan.

In this way theodicies explained the necessity of evil as a relative element that forms part of a larger plan of history. G. W. F. Hegel also represented the teleological philosophy of history. Teleology means the explanation of phenomena in terms of the purpose they serve rather than of the cause by which they arise. Hegel's teleology was taken up by Francis Fukuyama in his *The End of History and the Last Man*. Thinkers such as Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, Althusser, or Deleuze deny any teleological sense to history, claiming that it is best characterized by discontinuities, ruptures, and various time-scales, which the Annales School had demonstrated.

Schools of thought influenced by Hegel also see history as progressive, but they see progress as the outcome of a dialectic in which factors working in opposite directions are over time reconciled. Dialectic means the art of investigating or discussing the truth of opinions. It is also an inquiry into metaphysical contradictions and their solutions. It is the existence or action of opposing social forces, concepts, etc. History was best seen as directed by a *Zeitgeist*, and traces of the *Zeitgeist* could be seen by looking backward. *Zeitgeist* means the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time. Hegel believed that history was moving man toward civilization, and some also claim he thought that the Prussian state incarnated the *end of history*. In his *Lessons on the History of Philosophy*, he explains that each era had a philosophy.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a philosopher of absolute idealism who developed a dialectic conception of history. G. W. F. Hegel developed a complex theodicy in his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which based its conception of history on dialectics. The negative was conceived by Hegel as the motor of history. Hegel argued that history is a constant process of dialectic clash, with each thesis encountering an opposing idea or event antithesis. The clash of both was ended in the synthesis which was a contradiction between thesis and its antithesis. As Marx famously explained afterwards, it concretely that meant that if Louis XVI's monarchic rule in France was seen as the thesis, the French Revolution could be seen as its antithesis. However, both were merged in Napoleon, who reconciled the revolution with the *Ancient Régime*; he conserved the change.

Hegel thought that reason accomplished itself, through this dialectical scheme, in History. Through labour, man transformed nature so he could recognize himself in it; he made it his "home." Thus, reason spiritualized nature. Roads, fields, fences, and all the modern infrastructure in which we live is the result of this spiritualization of nature. Hegel thus explained social progress as the result of the labour of reason in history. However, this dialectical reading of history involved, of course, contradiction, so history was also conceived of as constantly conflicting: Hegel theorized this in his famous dialectic of the lord and the bondsman.

According to Hegel,

"One more word about giving instruction as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it... When philosophy paints its gray in gray, then has a shape of life grown old. By philosophy's gray in gray it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood."

Thus, philosophy was to explain *Geschichte* (history) afterward. Philosophy is always late, it is only an interpretation of what is rational in the real—and, according to Hegel, only what is recognized as rational is real. This idealist understanding of philosophy as interpretation was famously challenged by Karl Marx's *11th thesis on Feuerbach* (1845): "*Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.*"

Thomas Carlyle was a Scottish historian and philosopher of the great man theory. After Hegel, who insisted on the role of *great men* in history, with his famous statement about Napoleon, "I saw the Spirit on his horse", Thomas Carlyle argued that history was the biography of a few central individuals, heroes, such as Oliver Cromwell or Frederick the Great. He wrote that "The history of the world is but the biography of great men." His view of heroes included not only political and military figures, the founders or topplers of states, but artists, poets, theologians and other cultural leaders. His history of great men, of geniuses good and evil, sought to organize change in the advent of greatness.

Scholars in the late twentieth century have argued that Carlyle's position is slightly problematic. Most philosophers of history contend that the motive forces in history can best be described only with a wider lens than the one he used for his portraits. A.C. Danto, for example, wrote of the importance of the individual in history, but extended his definition to include *social individuals*, defined as "individuals we may provisionally characterize as containing individual human beings amongst their parts. Examples of social individuals might be social classes, national groups, religious organizations, large-scale events, large-scale social movements, etc." The great man theory of history was most popular with professional historians in the nineteenth century; a popular work of this school is the *Encyclopædia Britannica Eleventh Edition* (1911), which contains lengthy and detailed biographies about the great men of history.

After Marx's conception of a materialist history based on the class struggle, which raised attention for the first time to the importance of social factors such as economics in the unfolding of history, Herbert Spencer wrote "You must admit that the genesis of the great man depends on the long series of complex influences which has produced the race in which he appears, and the social state into which that race has slowly grown....Before he can remake his society, his society must make him."

Check your progress:

1] Describe Hegel's view of History.

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2**] Describe Thomas Carlyle's Philosophy of History.**

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7. 3 WHAT IS HISTORICISM?

The term Historicism is so widely used by so many authors in so many senses that it has become confusing. It can be defined in both positive and negative terms. In very general terms, historicism can be defined as the belief and philosophy that historical phenomena are situated in a particular context. Therefore historical phenomena are defined by their specific context. Therefore it is to be explained in terms of the factors that gave rise to the historical phenomena. It has been defined as a trend or mood rather than as a specific school of thought. Historicism is usually associated with the developments in the German Romantic philosophy of the late 18^{th} and early 19^{th} centuries. It is linked to the rise of hermeneutics. It turns away from the abstract universalism of the Enlightenment.

The major work is that of Johann Gottfried Herder's *Treatise on the Origins of Language*. It argues that a people's culture and thought are accessible only though its language. Another major work is Leopold von

Ranke's *Histories of the Latin and German nations.* It looks at national languages and nations themselves as particular expressions of human existence. It introduces a new sense of relativism into linguistic and historical studies.

Historicism means giving importance to space and time in history. It recognizes the importance of historical period, geographical place and local culture in the construction of history. The term *historicism* (*Historismus*) was coined by German philosopher Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel. Over a period of time, historicism has developed different meanings. Elements of historicism first appeared in the writings of French scholar Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) and Italian philosopher G. B. Vico (1668–1744). It was further developed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). The writings of Karl Marx also include historicism. Historicism values cautious and rigorous interpretation of information. It rejects ideas of universal and fundamental interpretations.

The historicist approach differs from individualist theories of knowledge such as empiricism and rationalism, which neglect the role of traditions. Historicism rejects the theory that all developments can be explained by fundamental principles. It is also against theories that say that historical changes occur at random.

Check your progress:

1] Define Historicism.

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2**] Examine the major scholars who contributed to Historicism.**

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7.4 FEATURES OF HISTORICISM

Historicism is a major German philosophy of social science. It is based upon an intense and omnipresent awareness of change over time. Historicism is a major philosophy of social science developed by a long line of German thinkers. It is a mode of analysis in which all of our thought about man, his culture, and his values is fundamentally historically-oriented. It has been discussed at length in several social science and humanities literatures. Historicism challenges several of the most fundamental environmental and epistemological assumptions of

Logical Positivist School and Empiricism. Such a challenge will stimulate re-evaluation of these assumptions and lead ultimately to stronger bases for investigation. Moreover, Historicism encourages as well as provides a strong theoretical rationale for, alternative forms of analysis. In particular, Historicism provides a sophisticated rationale for various forms of historical analysis.

Critical Ideas of Historicism

Ronald A Fullerton states that Historicism shares four basic characteristics with other German thought. These distinguish German from Anglo-American social science. First, it has a strong historical-dynamic orientation. Marx' "dialectical materialism" and Schumpeter's "creative destruction" are well-known examples of such an orientation. Second, it is strongly skeptical that empirical analysis can be the ultimate test of truth. Third, it emphasizes the natural structure of the mind, which structures experimental data according to its own dynamic, and which is thus far more important than the data itself. Fourth, it explicitly and emphatically rejects the belief that social science should emulate the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences.

The essential ideas of Historicism are as follows:

1. Change or a state of flux is the fundamental and universal reality of social life. Change is always there in thought as well as institutions and behavior. Social phenomena are viewed as being always in flux, as phenomena which are coming from somewhere in time and going on towards somewhere in time. Change is the dominant reality. Social analysis must face up to it. It cannot be ignored, or over-simplified, or assumed away as is typically done in social science. The emphasis upon change is based upon extensive thought about the indisputable changes which characterize social phenomena over historical time. We know in history that the only thing that is permanent is change itself. Since change is the normal state of affairs, the idea of equilibrium is rejected as strange and wrong.

2. While some social change is superficial and repetitive, a great deal of it is complex, unpredictable on the basis of past events, and fundamental. History is an immeasurable, incomparable abundance of always-new, unique, and individual tendencies. They all come up from undiscovered depths, and come to light in each case in unlikely places and under different circumstances. Thus the universal law of history consists precisely in this, that the Divine Reason, or the Divine Life, within history, constantly manifests itself in always-new and always-peculiar individualizations -and hence its tendency is not towards unity or universality at all.

   According to Historicism, therefore, even basic and longstanding behavior traits and institutions may change radically with time. The process is neither simple nor predictable. The assumption that change follows known and regular patterns is wrong. Since behavior, motives, and institutions are neither constant nor universal, the laws and generalities which explain them cannot be either constant or universal.

3. Ronald A Fullerton states that social phenomena should be seen as belonging to complex and time-bound systems. Social phenomena contribute to the identities of the era. The unifying element of such a system is a single central value, which unites with itself in a more or less clear and energetic manner all the other values. For example, the central value of the consumption system in advanced Western economies might be said to be aggressive consumption.

4. Ronald A Fullerton makes a very interesting point that Social systems are "Historical individuals". The phrase "historical individual" means, first, that each system has its own unique identity - its individuality. Second, it means that this identity is a dynamic, ever-evolving, one; it is "historical" in other words. As a social system evolves through time it picks up and is somewhat changed by some of the specific values, attitudes, and conditions which characterize the time periods through which it passes. The religious system of Christianity, for example, has no historical uniformity but displays a different quality in each age. The only constant thing has been the abstract idea of "Christianity". The specific values, beliefs, and institutions which build up the abstract idea have changed and continue to change over time and across place.

   The uniqueness, the individuality, of a system is both temporal and spatial according to Historicist philosophy. Behavior in one nation at one time, for example, will very likely be different from that in another nation at the same time -or the same nation at an earlier or later time.

4. According to Historicism, Social science must reject the search for timeless universals in the subject matter which it treats. The essence of Historicism is to have a process of individual observation rather than a process of generalization of human forces. Meinecke believes that Historicism has liberated Western social analysis from the simplistic search for "natural (i.e, universal) laws" applicable to all times and places. Thus liberated, social analysis can concentrate on probing individual systems and times in all their richness and complexity.

5. Historicism also believes that relativism must characterize social analysis. If there are no universals about social processes, then any generalizations must be relative. But the major Historicist thinkers explicitly reject a total, unrestrained relativism, which can be damaging and destructive. They see very clearly that Historicism taken to extremes would deny the possibility of any theory or generalization: every phenomenon would be seen as unique at every moment. This extreme, however, is considered as bad as the belief in "natural laws". So one should avoid both extremes.

   Historicism's major advocates put forward a restricted relativism. The most eloquent argument is Mannheim's. He argues that absolutes do exist in social phenomena but that they are absolute only for a finite time or a specific place. The Absolute is itself in a process of becoming; it is itself spatially bound. There are no formulations which are valid for all times, but rather the Absolute reconstitutes itself in a new, concrete, form in every age. Thus the "individualizing observation" which is to be the goal of Historicist analysis does not prevent generalizations; it only means that these are temporary.

6. Social knowledge is ultimately non-cumulative. Though it is not obviously stated in the classical works of Historicism, this point has recently been made forcefully by several historians. Within a historical era and specific culture, research findings may very well cumulate. The inevitability of fundamental change, however, means that after some time -or contemporaneously in another culture--they will no longer apply. Hence they are ultimately non-cumulative. Research findings in the natural sciences, on the other hand can be cumulative and apply for several ages or maybe even eternity.

7. Social science should focus its attention upon concrete social phenomena rather than upon the search for universals. By concrete social phenomena is meant phenomena which are temporally and spatially specific. 19th-Century Historicism usually treated the nation as the basic spatial unit. But there is no reason why other spatial demarcations such as regions or cities could not be employed. The basic temporal unit could be any time period.

8. Social science should strive to explain the culture of social systems and their distinctive guiding principles and characteristics. In attempting such explanation, the researcher has to keep in mind that systems are ever-evolving and that they are more than the sum of their component units. The whole and the parts of social systems exist in a dynamic relationship with one another; the distinctive overall ethos of each system is present in each of its components as well as the whole. If analysis is successful, it will enter into and succeed in explaining the deepest structure of this continuous change which characterizes every social system. Often the innermost structure of a system will consist of a major cultural or other motif whose process of development can be traced and under whose influence other components of the system can be shown to have developed.

   The process of discovering a system's inner structure encourages a creative yet disciplined and critical approach. Such European-originated analytical tools as hermeneutics and semiotics are ideally suited to the task because they permit one to infer a great deal of meaning from discrete phenomena. Conventional approaches, on the other hand, favor extreme restraint in interpretation. They would have difficulty in detecting the uniqueness which Historicist philosophy believes to mark the inner structure of each social system. Similarly, Historicism prefers verbal to mathematical representations, since the latter tend to blur unique characteristics and to imply greater similarity among phenomena than actually exist. One equation looks too much like every other.

9. Social science should strive to explain the process of development and change in social systems. Since change is the core reality of all social phenomena, they cannot be understood in any meaningful way until the process by which they have developed over time is made clear. Analysis of a system at a single moment in time is by itself of slight value; analysis which ignores the development process is of even less value. Much Historicist work envisions the development process as following one of three general models--the dialectical model, the organic model, or the teleological model. In the dialectical model a system is believed to evolve as opposed tendencies which emerge from an earlier system clash then form a near synthesis, which is the system. In time, however, the new synthesis will itself shatter into opposed tendencies.

   In the organic model, which was more popular in the 19th-Century than later, systems are envisioned as growing and eventually dying like plants. In the teleological model change is seen as progress towards some fine and predestined end. Of these models the dialectical is by far the most powerful and useful. It has been and continues to be employed by European social scientists.

10. Historicism contrasts with Logical Positivism and Empiricism. Both the philosophical underpinnings and the research goals of Historicism are radically different from those of Logical Positivism and Empiricism. Historicism challenges such core tenets of Logical Positivism and Empiricism as the possibility of universal laws. Historicism as we have seen avoids generalizations, and cumulative social knowledge. Historicism is doubtful about researcher objectivity. For those trained in Positivistically-oriented disciplines Historicism can be extremely disturbing. Even some of those who developed the philosophy sometimes used universal laws. But even if we cannot accept Historicism's full implications, we should recognize its emphasis upon confronting complex social change. Historicism shares some of the ideas of the contemporary philosophy of Relativism and Constructionism.

Historicism encourages the questioning of prior work--both conceptual and empirical--before it is accepted as currently applicable. Similarly, Historicism suggests that results from one culture have to be critically scrutinized before they are applied to other cultures. Historicism stresses the uniqueness of behavior in each culture, even at the same point in time.

Leopold von Ranke introduces a new sense of relativism into linguistic and historical studies. The sense of relativism or comparativism is further promoted by the developments in comparative religion and comparative philology. It further inspired hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts. Hermeneutics is a wider discipline which includes written, verbal, and non-verbal communication.

As a result of the efforts of comparativism and hermeneutics, both History and Linguistics begin to focus on the unique circumstances of individual examples rather than on the universal histories of the Enlightenment. Historians such as Ranke begin to attempt to stand aside from their own eras and cultures. They begin to think in terms of the consciousness of the age they are studying. They wanted to reproduce the way in which the world appeared to its contemporaries. A similar kind of approach is there in the history of 'mentalitites' or collective beliefs associated with the French Annales school. An example of that kind of Historicism is given by Lucien Febvre's study of the religion of Rabelais which reconstructs the mental world of the 16th century. The study shows that the modern notion of atheism was quite literally unthinkable in the world-view of that period.

Gyorgy Lukacs says that historicism is "the conception of history as the destiny of the people". He also gives importance to the writers "historical fidelity". Fidelity means faithfulness. Historical fidelity means the writers faithful reproduction of the great collisions, the great crises, and the great turning-points of history.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the features of Historicism.

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2**] Examine the difference between Historicism and the Positivist Approach.**

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7.5 HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Hegel believed that the main goal of history was the achievement of human freedom. According to him, this situation could only be achieved through the creation of the perfect state. This history can only be achieved through a certain process. There is a struggle between two forces i.e. 1) between the goal of humanity which is freedom and 2) between human attempt to modify the present unjust system to achieve freedom. However, because humans are often not aware of the goal of both humanity and history, the process of achieving freedom is one of self-discovery. It has to be discovered by oneself. Hegel said that this progress toward freedom was conducted by a “spirit” which he called Geist. This Geist was a kind of supernatural force that directed all human actions and interactions.

But Hegel also says that the spirit is a mere abstraction, and it can only work with the activity of concrete agents. So Hegel's forces of history may not have a metaphysical nature. But many of Hegel's critics have understood Hegel's philosophy of history as a metaphysical view of history. Karl Popper in his book *The Poverty of Historicism* interpreted Hegel's philosophy of history as metaphysical and deterministic, referring to it as *Historicism*.

Hegel's historicism also suggests that any human society and all human activities such as science, art, or philosophy, are defined by their history. Consequently, their essence can be sought only by understanding said history. The history of any such human endeavor, moreover, not only continues but also reacts against what has gone before; this is the source of Hegel's famous dialectic teaching usually summarized by the slogan "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis". Hegel's famous saying was, "Philosophy is the history of philosophy".

Hegel's position is against any fixed theory of human society. He is not ready to accept any fixed theory or model. He does not accept any theory of human societies or social activities that can be developed as an algorithm or a profile based on dozens of interactions. He is also against the theory of social contract. Hegel considers the relationship between individuals and societies as organic, not atomic: Even their social conversation is determined by language, and language is based on etymology and unique character. It thus preserves the culture of the past in thousands of half-forgotten descriptions. To understand why a person is the way he is, you must examine that person in his society: and to understand that society, you must understand its history, and the forces that influenced it.

According to Hegel, there is a particular spirit of an era or Age. It is called the ‘Zeitgeist’ or the “Spirit of the Age”. This Zeitgeist, or the "Spirit of the Age," is a kind of a spirit which functions among the people of that time. It is how the people are behaving in human history at that particular time. This is against the theory which states that all people at all times behave in a particular way due to their interactions.

There were different responses to Hegel’s ideas. The first response was from a group known as the Right Hegelians. They were in favour of Hegel’s opinion about the organic relationship between individuals and societies. They also agreed that history determined the nature of human societies. They interpreted Hegel's historicism as a justification of the unique importance of national groups. They believed in the importance of stability and institutions. Hegel believed that human societies were important entities and they were greater than individuals. This influenced the nineteenth-century romantic nationalism. It also led to aggressive nationalism and imperialism in the twentieth-century.

Another group was known as the Young Hegelians. They interpreted Hegel's thoughts in a different way. Hegel said that societies are influenced by social conflict. So the Young Hegelians said that we must have some doctrine of social progress. So they tried to manipulate the social forces to cause various results. Karl Marx also reacted to Hegel with his theory of historical materialism. Also Karl Marx's theory of alienation argues that capitalism disrupts traditional relationships between workers and their work. Hegelian historicism is related to his ideas on the ways by which human societies progress. He considers logic as an important inner essential nature of reality. Hegel says that this change is due to the "modern" need to interact with the world. In ancient times, philosophers were independent and not bothered about others. In medieval times, philosophers were monks and priests.

In his History of Philosophy Hegel writes:

"In modern times things are very different; now we no longer see philosophic individuals who constitute a class by themselves. With the present day all difference has disappeared; philosophers are not monks, for we find them generally in connection with the world, participating with others in some common work or calling. They live, not independently, but in the relation of citizens, or they occupy public offices and take part in the life of the state. Certainly they may be private persons, but if so, their position as such does not in any way isolate them from their other relationship. They are involved in present conditions, in the world and its work and progress. Thus their philosophy is only by the way, a sort of luxury and superfluity. This difference is really to be found in the manner in which outward conditions have taken shape after the building up of the inward world of religion. In modern times, namely, on account of the reconciliation of the worldly principle with itself, the external world is at rest, is brought into order — worldly relationships, conditions, modes of life, have become constituted and organized in a manner which is conformable to nature and rational. We see a universal, comprehensible connection, and with that individuality likewise attains another character and nature, for it is no longer the plastic individuality of the ancients. This connection is of such power that every individuality is under its dominion, and yet at the same time can construct for itself an inward world.

The basic opinion of Hegel was that involvement in society created some sort of an expression. This became a very important point in philosophy. Especially it led to the rise and demand of individuality. It was picked up by Nietzsche, John Dewey and Michel Foucault. It also inspired the work of many artists and authors. There have been diverse responses to Hegel's challenge. One response was during the Romantic period. The Romantic Period began roughly around 1798 and lasted until 1837. The political and economic atmosphere at the time heavily influenced this period, with many writers finding inspiration from the French Revolution. There was a lot of social change during this period. The Romantic period highlighted the ability of individual genius to go beyond time and place. According to this theory, the individuals could use the materials from their heritage to create works.

John Locke focused on the never-ending flexibility of the human being. Post-structuralism argued that history is not present. Only the image of history is there. So there might be an individual era or power structure that might dominate a particular history. But they argue that there would be many contradictions within the story and we cannot name only one individual as the central theme of any history.

G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831)

(Reproduction by Sichling).

Check your progress:

1] Discuss Hegel's Philosophy of History.

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2**] Discuss the response of scholars to Hegel's Philosophy.**

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7.6 RANKE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Leopold von Ranke, (1795—1886), was a leading German historian of the 19th century, whose scholarly method and way of teaching had a great influence on Western historiography. Ranke was born into a religious family of Lutheran pastors and lawyers. After attending the well-known Protestant boarding school of Schulpforta, he entered the University of Leipzig. He studied theology and the classics. He concentrated on the translation of texts. He later developed this approach into a technique of historical textual criticism. He loved history because he was very much interested in Martin Luther, the pioneer of the Protestant Reformation as a historical character.

Ranke was very religious and God fearing by nature. He was influenced by the philosophy of Friedrich Schelling, and he sought to understand God's actions in history. He attempted to prove that God's omnipresence revealed itself in the "context of great historical events." Thus Ranke the historian was both theologian and teacher.

The typical features of Ranke's historiographical work were his concern for universality and his research into particular limited periods. In 1824 he produced his maiden work, the *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations from 1494 to 1514*, which treats the struggle waged between the French and the Habsburgs for Italy as the phase that ushered in the new era. Ranke showed that the critical analysis of tradition is the historian's basic task. That is his most important contribution. As a result of these publications, he was appointed associate professor in 1825 at the University of Berlin, where he taught as full professor from 1834 to 1871. Many of the students in his famous seminars were to become prominent historians, continuing his method of research and training in other universities.

In his next book, Ranke, utilizing the extremely important reports of the Venetian ambassadors, dealt with the rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and Spain in the Mediterranean; from 1834 to 1836, he published another book that ranks even today as a masterpiece of narrative history. Rising above religious devotion, Ranke in this work depicts the papacy not just as an religious institution but above all as a worldly power.

Before this work appeared, Ranke the historian had been drawn briefly into contemporary history and politics. He expressed his scholarly and political convictions more directly. In his writings, he tried to explain the conflicts of the times from a historical and nonpartisan or objective viewpoint. Basically he sought to prove that the French revolutionary development could not and should not be repeated in Germany. Ranke believed that history evolves in the separate development of individual men, peoples, and states, which together constitute the process of culture. He gave the example of Europe to illustrate his point. The history of Europe from the late 15th century onward seemed to be similar for all the states. Every group of people seemed to be sharing one cultural tradition. In spite of that, each group was free to develop its own concept of the state. This seemed to him to confirm his thesis. Ranke dismissed abstract, universally valid principles as requirements for the establishment of social and national order.

He felt that social and political principles must vary according to the characteristics of different peoples. To him the individual entities of greatest historical importance were states. According to him, the states could be called as "spiritual entities, original creations of the human mind and the even 'thoughts of God.' Their essential task was to evolve independently and, in the process, to create institutions and constitutions adapted to their times.

In this respect Ranke's thinking is related to the philosopher G.W.F. Hegel's theory that what is real is also rational; yet, in Ranke's view, it is not reason that justifies what is real but historical continuity.

This continuity is the prerequisite for the development of a culture and also for understanding historical reality. Hence, it is the historian's duty to understand the essence of "historicism": that history determines each event but does not justify it. In practice, however, Ranke endorsed the social and political order of his time—the European system of states, the German Federation with its numerous monarchies, and Prussia before the 1848 revolution, with its powerful monarchy and bureaucracy, its highly developed educational system, and its rejection of liberal and democratic trends—as resulting from the European cultural process, a process that, according to him, would be demolished by democratic revolution.

The search for objectivity.

Ranke was an objective historian. He did not try to please anyone either the liberals or the conservatives. The liberals thought that he was too devoted to the state and the conservatives thought that he was not too rigid. He therefore returned to his historiographical work in which he thought he could more successfully attain his ideal of objectivity. From 1839 to 1847 *History of the Reformation in Germany,* 1845–47 appeared, which was the first scholarly treatment of that age. In 1847–48 there followed *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg and History of Prussia, During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,* 1849, which was later expanded to 12 volumes; in 1852–61 the *Civil Wars and Monarchy in France, in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A History of France Principally During That Period,* 1852; and, in 1859–69, *A History of England Principally in the Seventeenth Century,* 1875—each consisting of several volumes that, although partly rendered obsolete by later research, are still worth reading today for their great narrative skill. In these works, too, Ranke deals with the leading European states at decisive stages of their development within the European system. Ranke typically restricts himself to the Latin and Germanic nations as the pioneers of cultural development. From the 16th century onwards the Protestant states of these countries had increasingly assumed leadership. Ranke focuses on political history; *i.e.,* the foreign relations of states and their systems of government and administration. Because economic and social factors were hardly reflected in the sources he used, appearing only vaguely in the background as "forces" and "tendencies," Ranke found it increasingly difficult to understand the modern age of early social change.

His books on the late 18th and early 19th centuries are subtle accounts of complex political events but address themselves only indirectly to the central problems of a changing age. These books exhibit a certain bias against political and social change, especially the appearance of radical movements. In his lectures Ranke often dealt with the history of his time; they did not, apparently, differ in concept or emphasis from his books. History is regarded as a complex process of "historical life," which assumes its most effective "real spiritual" form in the great states and their tensions. The historian, as objectively as possible, must describe "how it really was," keeping the whole picture in mind while extracting the essence. Ranke was thus not an analyst but a "visual" historiographer. Aware of the limitations imposed by time and place on every historian, he attempted to achieve maximum objectivity principally by identifying himself not with a "party" but with the state. Yet his work demonstrates that his intellectual philosophy influenced his political views.

Ranke reached the peak of his fame as the most important living historian in the second half of the century. In 1865 he was ennobled and in 1882 made a privy counsellor. When Frederick William IV became mentally ill in 1857, Ranke finally withdrew from political life and, after his wife's death in 1871, from social life also. Rejecting liberal democratic nationalism and distrusting Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's policy because he believed that it jeopardized the continuity of German history and embraced cooperation with popular movements, Ranke nevertheless welcomed the foundation of the empire in 1871.

In the meantime, failing eyesight had turned him into a lonely scholar who depended on the help of assistants. Yet, despite this handicap, at the age of 82 he began what he claimed to be his greatest work, a "world history" (9 vol., 1881–88) leading up to the 15th century. Ranke thus fulfilled the task he had set himself as a young man: to tell the "story of universal history." Not a work of critical research or of historical and philosophical speculation but a wide-ranging account of the evolution of culture from the Greeks to the Latin-Germanic nations, it is actually a history of Europe in which the non-European world appears at best only marginally. He wrote it in the conviction that the peaceful evolution of culture was definitively protected against the danger of revolution and that the conflict between popular sovereignty and the monarchy had been settled once and for all in favour of the latter.

Legacy of Ranke

Ranke's concept and writing of history predominated in German historiography up to World War I and even after; it also influenced a great many distinguished foreign historians who studied in Germany. Unfortunately, many of Ranke's disciples simply continued, canonized, and debased Ranke's concepts, retaining all of their limitations without the universality of view that gave them meaning. Ranke's own achievements, however, remain unquestioned. He contributed greatly to the progress of historiography: it became more self-assured in its method and proved itself capable of transforming the widely felt need for a historical understanding of the world into an interpretation of the past based on scientific research. That is precisely what historicism is.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss Ranke's Philosophy of History.

2**] Examine the legacy of Ranke.**

7.7 CRITICS OF HISTORICISM

Ernst Bloch describes Historicism as the enemy of novelty. He calls it the "plundering and desecration of the past". He saw it being used a tool by the Nazi party to justify their supremacy. He called it the falsification of pedigree that allowed the Nazi party to pervert the medieval millenarian belief in the coming of a Third Reich. He also called it the diversion from the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit, into the nightmare of the totalitarian "Thousand-Year-Reich" of Hitler.

Perhaps the most famous critic of Historicism in the 20th century is Karl Popper whose *The Poverty of Historicism* describes it as an approach to the social sciences which assumes that the discovery of the rhythms, patterns or laws that underlie the evolution of history will allow future developments to be predicted with scientific accuracy. This approach according to Popper is based upon false analogies with the natural sciences. He says that it is based upon a failure to realize that the "laws of nature" are in fact hypotheses. According to Popper, History is characterized by an interest in actual, singular and specific events rather than laws and generalizations.

His book the *Poverty of Historicism* is actually targeting Karl Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*. Poppers main target is Marxism which he views as a variety of fatalism. He sees Marxism as a major threat to the open society of liberal democracy. It is widely accepted that Marxism is a form of historicism. But that view is vehemently rejected by Louis Althusser. According to Althusser, Historicism is a characteristic of the 19th century political economy which for ideological reasons cannot transcend its own presence or contemporaneity and cannot see beyond its own categories. Marxism makes an epistemological break with political economy by establishing itself as both a distinctive science of history which is known as Historical Materialism and a theoretical science which is known as Dialectical Materialism. These are not constrained by the Base/Superstructure model. Althusser also used the term Historicism to refer to the many deviations from the scientific Marxist theory which ignore the problem of "over-determination" and argue that History can be understood by taking or cutting an essential section through the social formation and reducing all contradictions to the expressions of an essence. Antonio Gramci, Lucio Colletti, Galvano Della Volpe and Jean–Paul Sartre are all accused by Althusser of succumbing to Historicism.

Finally in art, especially in architecture, Historicism is sometimes used to describe the introduction of stylistic or decorative features that quote from styles of the past.

7.8 NEW HISTORICISM

New historicism is a form of literary theory which aims to understand intellectual history through literature. It tries to study literature through its cultural context. It follows the 1950s field of history of ideas and refers to itself as a form of "Cultural Poetics". It first developed in the 1980s, mainly through the work of the critic Stephen Greenblatt, and became popular in the 1990s. Greenblatt coined the term new historicism when he collected a bunch of essays and wrote that the essays represented something called a 'new historicism'.

Harold Aram Veeser, has mentioned the features of new historicism:

1 . Every expressive act is rooted in a network of material practices;
2. Every act of unmasking, critique and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes;
3. Literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably;
4. No discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths, nor expresses inalterable human nature;
5. A critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe.

'Sub-literary" texts and uninspired non-literary texts all came to be read as documents of historical discourse, side-by-side with the "great works of literature". A characteristic focus of new historicist critics, led by Stephen Orgel, has been on understanding Shakespeare. They try not to give him too much importance as an independent great author of his times. Rather they try to study him to reconstruct the cultural milieu of Renaissance theatre. They attempt to analyse Shakespeare in the context of the complex social politics of the time. In this sense, Shakespeare's plays are seen as inseparable from the context in which he wrote. The prominent and influential historians who promote the new historicism are Lynn Hunt and Michael Foucault. Both of them taught at UC-Berkeley and they contributed towards the postmodern approach to history.

Even New Historicism can be compared with the discussions of works of decorative arts. Fine arts also have been discussed with regard to the historical context. It is similar to the literary New Criticism, under the influences of Bernard Berenson and Ernst Gombrich. Discussion of the arts of design since the 1970s have been set within social and intellectual contexts. They take account the changes in luxury trades, and the availability of design prototypes to local craftsmen. They study the cultural status of the patron, and economic considerations. They study "the limits of the possible" which was economic historian Fernand Braudel's famous phrase. An outstanding pioneer example of such a contextualized study was Peter Thornton's monograph *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland* (1978).

Background of New Historicism

In its historicism and in its political interpretations, new historicism is inspired by Marxism. But Marxism tends to see literature as part of a 'superstructure' in which the economic 'base' or material relations of production shows itself. On the other hand new historicist thinkers tend to have a different view of power. They see it not exclusively as class-related but extending throughout society. This is the view mainly from Michel Foucault.

So New Historicism sees society as consisting of texts relating to other texts. They do not assign them any great literary value. They try to understand how specific cultures read them in specific situations. So new historicism is a form of postmodernism applied to interpretive history. New historicism also shares many same theories with cultural materialism.

But cultural materialist critics focus more on the present. They position themselves in disagreement to current power structures. They are working to give power to traditionally disadvantaged groups. Cultural critics also downplay the distinction between "high" and "low" culture and often focus predominantly on the productions of "popular culture". New historicists analyse text with an eye to history. With this in mind, new historicism is not "new". Many of the critiques that existed between the 1920s and the 1950s also focused on literature's historical content. These critics based their assumptions of literature on the connection between texts and their historical contexts.

New historicism is somewhat similar with the historical criticism of Hippolyte Taine. He argued that a literary work is less the product of its author's imaginations than the social circumstances of its creation. According to Taine, the three main aspects are race, milieu, and moment. It is also a response to an earlier historicism, practiced by early 20th century critics such as John Livingston Lowes, which sought to de-mythologize the creative process by reexamining the lives and times of canonical writers. But new historicism differs from both of these trends. It gives more emphasis to ideology or the political outlook of the era which may be unknown to the author but it guides the author’s work.

Michel Foucault and New Historicism

It is believed that Michel Foucault played an important role in New Historicism. Foucault’s idea is that New Historicism in History is a sequence of epistemes or structures of thought that shape everyone and everything within a culture. Though people don’t agree with the periodization of academic history, but still the new historicists use Michel Foucault’s ideas of epistemes or structures of thought.

Criticism

Carl Rapp argues that the new historicists often appear to be saying, 'We are the only ones who are willing to admit that all knowledge is contaminated, including even our own'.

Camille Paglia likewise says that the New Historicism scholars think that they are going to reform the old bad path, but she strongly says in harsh language that I have been there before they have been, and I'm there to punish and expose them. Elsewhere, Paglia has suggested that new historicism is "a refuge for English majors without critical talent or broad learning in history or political science. ... To practice it, you must apparently lack all historical sense."

Sarah Maza has criticized the New Historicism scholars Catherine Gallagher and Greenblatt. Sarah Maza argues that "Catherine Gallagher and Greenblatt seem oblivious of the longer range of disciplinary development in history; they reject grand narratives as extensions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalist, or socialist programs, obfuscating the fact that such mid-twentieth century innovations as quantified social history, large in scale as they were, originated from a desire to make history more democratic and more inclusive."

So these are the criticisms of the approach to New Historicism and its practitioners and proponents.

7.9 CULTURAL MATERIALISM

Cultural Materialism is a major theory for understanding human societies. It is an anthropological perspective. It takes ideas from Marxism, cultural evolution, and cultural ecology. Materialism believes that the physical world has an impact on human behaviour. It also sets limits and restrictions on human behavior. The materialists believe that human behavior is part of nature and therefore, it can be understood by using the methods of natural science. Materialists do not necessarily assume that material reality is more important than mental reality. However, they give priority to the material world over the world of the mind when they explain human societies. This doctrine of materialism started and developed from the work of **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.**

Friedrich Engels

Marx and Engels presented an evolutionary model of societies based on the materialist perspective. They argued that societies go through the several stages, from tribalism to feudalism to capitalism to communism. Their work drew little attention from anthropology in the early twentieth-century. However, since the late 1920s, anthropologists have increasingly come to depend on materialist explanations for analyzing societal development and some inherent problems of capitalist societies. Anthropologists who heavily rely on the insights of Marx and Engels include neo-evolutionists, neo-materialists, feminists, and postmodernists.

Cultural materialists identify three levels of social systems that constitute a universal pattern: 1) infrastructure, 2) structure, and 3) superstructure. Infrastructure is the basis for all other levels and includes how basic needs are met and how it interacts with the local environment. Structure refers to a society’s economic, social, and political organization, while superstructure is related to ideology and symbolism. Cultural materialists like **Marvin Harris** contend that the infrastructure is the most critical aspect as it is here where the interaction between culture and environment occurs. All three of the levels are interrelated so that changes in the infrastructure results in changes in the structure and superstructure, although the changes might not be immediate. While this appears to be environmental determinism, cultural materialists do not disclaim that change in the structure and superstructure cannot occur without first change in the infrastructure. They do however claim that if change in those structures is not compatible with the existing infrastructure the change is not likely to become set within the culture.

Features of Cultural Materialism

1. Cultural Materialism is an anthropological paradigm founded upon, but not constrained by, Marxist Materialistic thought. The term Cultural Materialism was first coined by Marvin Harris in his The Rise of Anthropological Theory in 1968. It is derived from two English words:"Culture" and "Materialism". Culture refers to social structure, language, law, religion, politics, art, science, superstition, etc. Materialism states that materiality, rather than intellect or spirituality, is fundamental to reality. Harris developed Cultural Materialism by borrowing from existing anthropological doctrines, especially Marxist Materialism.

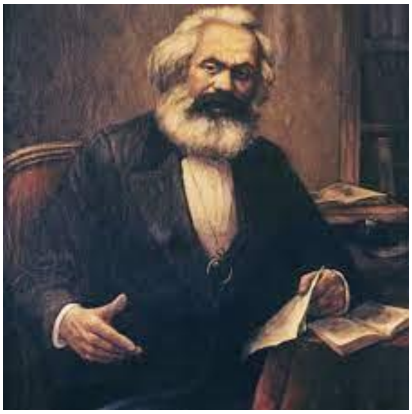
2. Cultural Materialism consists of Infrastructure, Structure and Superstructure.
Cultural Materialism retains and expands upon the Marxist Three Levels of Culture Model i.e Infrastructure, Structure and Superstructure. Infrastructure consists of population, basic biological need, and resources like labor, equipment, technology, etc. Structure is a pattern of organization such as government, education, production regulation, etc..Superstructure refers to social institutions such as law, religion, politics, art, science, superstition, values, emotions, traditions, etc.

3. Marxist Dialectical Materialism and Marxist Historical Materialism differ from Cultural Materialism in a few key aspects. Dialectical

Materialism states that concepts and ideas are the result of material condition. Historical Materialism states that influential members of society hold sway on material condition, while society's social institutions are founded upon material condition. Cultural Materialism holds that Infrastructure has influence on Structure, while Structure exerts little influence upon Infrastructure. Marxist Materialism, on the other hand, maintains that Infrastructure and Structure are influential to each other. Another distinction between Marxist and Cultural Materialism is Class Theory. Marxist Materialism believes social change is beneficial to the ruling Bourgeoisie class only, while Cultural Materialists believe social change is beneficial to the working Proletariat class as well.

4. Cultural Materialism seeks to explain cultural organization, ideology and symbolism within a materialistic framework. This is the Infrastructure, structure, and superstructure framework. Cultural Materialists believe society develops on a trial and error basis. If something is not beneficial to a society's ability to produce or reproduce, or causes production and reproduction to exceed acceptable limits, it will disappear from society altogether. Therefore, law, government, religion, family values, etc. must be beneficial to society or they will cease to exist within society. Cultural Materialists ignore "Emic" or society's opinion in favor of "Etic" or observation of phenomenon via scientific method.

5. There have been some criticisms of Cultural Materialism. Proponents of alternative anthropological doctrines criticize Cultural Materialism for various reasons. Marxists criticize Cultural Materialism for ignoring Structure's influence upon Infrastructure. Postmodernists believe that reliance upon "Etic" in studying culture is not appropriate, as science is merely a function of culture. Idealists criticize Cultural Materialism for ignoring variables such as genetics, and believe "Emic" is more significant than Cultural Materialists allow. Finally, it seems that Materialism is too simplistic. We must consider intellectual and spiritual influences upon society as well. We are intelligent creatures who tend to have spiritual inclinations that cannot be accounted for by material means alone.



Karl Marx

7.10 SUMMARY

Historicism as a general framework for thinking about human existence was connected to the development of the European national state after 1815 not only in Germany, but across Western Europe. It was a critical component in the formation of a public culture in which the emergence of new collective identities was tied to the production of narrative scripts creating the memory of a common past. Increasing recognition of the value of historical research and historiography was entangled in this process, as historians teaching in public universities or writing for an expanding literate public became the recognized spokespersons for the collective memory that created and sustained the common identity of the otherwise fragmented populations of the emerging nation-states.

Both the articulation of national borders as cultural boundaries and the definition of nation-states as primary sites for integrating ethnic and ethical identities were central to nineteenth-century historicism; and the emergence of a professional academic discipline for the production of publicly validated historical knowledge delineating a common past was important in both of these processes. Historicism was defined most of all by the belief that reconstruction of the meaning of the past could sustain the meaning of existence in the present, and that historical understanding was a necessary condition for determining the creative possibilities of human individuals both in the present and in the future.

New Historicism is a school that is influenced by structuralist and post-structuralist theories. It seeks to reconnect a work with the time period in which it was produced and identify it with the cultural and political movements of the time. New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it. Specifically, New Historicism is .a practice that has developed out of contemporary theory. It is the structuralist realization that all human systems are symbolic and subject to the rules of language.

A helpful way of considering New Historical theory is to think about the retelling of history itself. Questions asked by traditional historians and by new historicists are quite different. Traditional historians ask, 'What happened?' and 'What does the event tell us about history?' In contrast, new historicists ask, 'How has the event been interpreted?' and 'What do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?' So New Historicism resists the notion that history is a series of events that have a linear, causal relationship. New Historicists do not believe that we can look at history objectively, but rather that we interpret events as products of our time and culture. We don't have clear access to any but the most basic facts of history. Our understanding of what such facts mean is strictly a matter of interpretation, not fact. Moreover, New Historicism holds that we are subjective interpreters of what we observe.

Cultural materialism emerged as a theoretical movement in the early 1980s along with new historicism. It is a theoretical blending of leftist culturalism and Marxist analysis. Cultural materialists deal with specific historical documents and attempt to analyze and recreate the particular moment in history. Following in the tradition of Herbert Marcuse, Antonio Gramsci and others, cultural materialists extend the class-based analysis of traditional Marxism by means of an additional focus on the marginalized. Cultural materialists seek to draw attention to the processes being employed by contemporary power structures, such as the state or the academy, to disseminate ideology. To do this they explore a text's historical context and its political implications, and then through close textual analysis note the dominant hegemonic position.

7.11 QUESTIONS

1. Analyze the concept of Historicism.
2. Discuss the approach of New Historicism.
3. Examine the notion of Cultural Materialism.

7.12. ADDITIONAL READINGS

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8

ANNALES SCHOOL: IDEAS, METHODS AND CONTRIBUTION

Unit Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the Post-Marxist Concepts and Approaches
- To understand the Annales School ideas and meaning
- To study the main features of Annles School and its significance
- To make student aware about the methods of Annales School
- To analyse the role of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre and others historians towards Annales School Philosophy
- To understand the contribution of Annales methodology to Historiography.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Annales school of thought is one of the most famous methods of researching and recording history. The paradoxical developments in France in the decade of the 1920s posed an encompassing and new question that demanded new perspectives and new methodologies. Moreover, the intellectual development of the period challenged the scope of history that focused itself largely on events, and it also criticized the historical sources as it gave undue importance on archive. Therefore, a French scholar Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre attempted to address these challenges and introduced a broader history. The movement has changed through time and the different incarnations are called 'generations'. The first generation was founded by Lucien Febvre and Mark Bloch in 1929, and the third generation is still active and personified today by the historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the Annales School stood as one of the preeminent movements of historical scholarship not only in France but in many other parts of the world as well. Historian were enthralled by an approach to the past that emphasized interdisciplinary "grand alliance" with the other social sciences; that place a premium on problem- driven history over a history of events and of great men; that was disposed to the use of serial and quantitative methodologies to analyze those problems; but that was also attentive to issues of collective psychology and "mentalities". Historians were intrigued by the idea of "total history", the injunction to explore one's chosen microcosm from as many perspectives and through as many different kinds of sources as possible-even though we knew that the goal of totality could never ultimately be attained.

Annales School established and survived its two founders, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, even though groups from around the founding works of master have rarely survived without the first generation of disciples. And it survived without heresies expulsions. If we compared the still very modest audience that the young blue covered review founded in 1929, enjoyed on the view of World War II to the scope of its current influence, we can even say it has managed to find a prominent place within the world of historians.

The historians of this Annales School French in origin, French inspiration held by distinct philosophy and marked by distinct literary style, communicated with each other assumptions about the subject matter and the goals of history on searching different approaches to the subject by incorporating the skills and tools of an array of ancillary or neighboring disciplines. In doing so, these scholars went beyond the "idols" of political history biography, autobiography and narrative history.

Founding fathers of Annalesl school Marc Bloch (1886-1944), Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and Fernand Braudel (1902-1985). Further, Bruadel himself included the name of Henri Barr (182-1956) among those who contributed to the origin and growth of this Annales School of philosophy. Of course, besides these four philosophers, there was most of the older scholar who had influence the four founding fathers of the Annales School.

The influence of the Annales School on the historical profession is attested by the numerous books, articles and chapters publish over the years on the conceptualization and mythology of the group. Studies and commentaries have appeared in different language they have been published not only by historians but by scholars in many other disciplines as well: from Economics, Anthropology and Sociology to Archeology, Philosophy and literally theory. But annales present volume is of particular interest and importance in that it is written by an "insider" by a historian closely associated with the annals group throughout most of his adult career.

8.2 ORIGIN

During the French Enlightenment Voltaire and Montesquieu had challenged the idea that history was a narrative of the deeds of individual political actors, in favor of a more philosophical account of the past. This eighteenth century 'new history' focused its attention on the manners, customs and beliefs of whole peoples, and the broad patterns of their social and cultural development. A more radical attempt was made about the middle of the twentieth century, again in France, to displace political history from the centre of historical attention.

The origin of new approach to history arose out of new problems of the early 20th century. The blessing and evils of the technological developments brought about production of goods and services on a large scale and political complexities created a need for weapons of mass destruction. World War first seemed to shake of the sanctity of the old values and morals. The war had brought misery and destruction in France in its wake. The French thinkers and philosophers wanted new history for the new age which brought in its trails social political cultural and economic dislocation.

Another reason which prompted the intellectual in France to think about reconstruction was the formation of the League of Nations. The historians felt the need for a second look at the 'idealistic' and 'materialistic' historiography. They were in need of new perspective not only to provide a critical account of the past events but to see life as a whole in time as a continuous structure. This new approach of historiography initiated by Mark launch and later on propagated by French historian Fernand Braudel and they become the founder of Annales School.

The two men who took the first concrete steps in the direction of a fuller and richer history of man's life in society were Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch. Already, Henri Berr (1863-1954) had founded the journal Review of Historical Synthesis (1900) and planned the hundred-volume Evolution of Humanity with the object of bringing together in one great synthesis all the activities of man in society. The great project was to employ the methods and insights of sociology and the other sciences. The meeting of Lucien Febvre with Marc Bloch at the Strasbourg University after the First World War was a germinal event for twentieth century historiography. Febvre had served in the French army during the war before his appointment at Strasbourg. With a fertile mind responsive to ideas, he had heard lectures on geography, sociolinguistics, and iconography; he admired Burckhardt, and from reading Marxists like Jaures, had developed an interest in economic struggle; he owed his life-long interest in social psychology to Henry Wallon and Charles Blondel; and he was deeply influenced by Vidal de la Blache's human geography which led him to study history in terms of interaction between the physical and the social worlds. In his enthusiasm for a new kind of history based on an interdisciplinary approach, Febvre found a kindred spirit in Marc Bloch. From Levy-Bruhl the two developed the notion that beyond individual thinkers and their particular expressions of value and belief lay patterned systems of thought - mentalities - which differed radically from age to age; and following Durkheim, the two historians accepted the primacy of the social and the collective in the lives of historical agents. Leopold Benjamin Marc Bloch was born into a Jewish family at Lyons. Like Febvre he served in the French army during the First World War, received Croix de Guerre for bravery, and was admitted to the Legion of Honour. In 1919 he was appointed to the chair of medieval history at Strasbourg where he was with Febvre till 1936 when he moved to a chair of economic history at the Sorbonne and Febvre to the College de France in Paris. On the outbreak of the Second World War, Bloch was soldier again and personally experienced the French defeat in 1940. In 1943 he joined the French resistance against German occupation, was captured and, after much brutality at the hands of the Gestapo, was executed by a firing squad in 1944. Bloch was patriot, soldier, scholar and historian in whose life the past was not separate from the present. A martyr for liberal humanist virtue, he became a powerful symbol for the immediate post-war generation. Febvre lived on in Rio de Janeiro and inspired later historians like Braudel, who carried on the Annales tradition.

In 1920, Berr started his monumental collection, *Evolution of Humanity*. He then founded in 1925 the '*Centre de synthese',* and little later emerged the famous *Semaines de synthese*. The Semaines was the medium for the maevelous activity. In 1933, the Semainse was dedicated to the notions of science and the laws of the science. As a result of circle set up around Henri Berr between 1900 and 1910, was the born the desire to compose a more combative journal than the *Revue de synthese*, one that would be less philosophical, but the growth was sow then Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre met at the University of Strasbourg, where they were appointed 1919. During that ten long years waiting period, they collaborated regularly with Henri Berr. The announcement of the new review in 1929 made no allusion to the *Revue de synthese.* All the same, the creation of the Annales in 1929 involved a break- namely the break between the father and son, the father scarcely complained. The gap between the Annales and *Revue de synthese* widened. For Heri Berr society included economics and the Annales therefore only caste light upon an aspect of the light of societies which had long remained obscure, and to which the Marxist drew attention.

Check Your Progress:

1) Comment on the origin of Annales School.

8.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ANNALES SCHOOL

The two French intellectuals Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre started a journal in 1929. The title of journal was anaal a 'historie economique at sociale' to propagate their views about a new approach to historical studies. Daviess to emphasize macro history or History of general themes based on interdisciplinary approach. They wanted to provide a forum for free discussion and intellectual exchange between scholars studying societies and economics of the same period or fact of the period from their respective standpoint of their subjects. For example battle of Plassey, 1757 may be studied by sociologist’s economist psychologist anthropologist etc. to suit their requirements.

The aim of the founders of Annales was to present 'Total history and true History'. Their objective was to focus attention on the study of structures which condition the long-term human behavior. It involved the study of all aspects of human life and an atom from the immediate to the remote from individual to the mass and a single event to series of events.

8.4 MAIN FEATURES OF ANNALES SCHOOL

The journal annals de'historie economique at sociale and historian's craft by Bloch and 'On History' a book by Braudel expounded a set principles and ideas which may be summarise as important features of the annual school.

1. The highlighted history at three different levels namely-
   (a) History of human activity of short duration like an outbreak of war or revolutions
   (b) Conjectures about the objective force that regulates all moments of nature and Society and
   (c) The study of long-term structures.
2. The annals adopted a new methodology to get more information on the event under examination. They wanted to carry on service of the sides use the artefacts of the past is get hold of the the geographical maps and compile the the laws of the tribal community. After two centuries of the annals Marc Bloch emphasized the use of sources not regarded as relevant as the historians of that period were busy with the construction of the political histories only.
3. Historical knowledge is an indirect knowledge of the past. It is a dotum that is unchanged facts. Habibpur new methods and new techniques which applied by Annales schools can force the 'dotum' to reveal more information and enable us to interpret the facts more correctly.
4. The annals school was the study of the unconscious history of certain time; relating to the social and cultural elements. There is a

hidden under current in social life which does not come to the surface every now and then. In order to gain knowledge of it models of the sustaining systems of explanation had to be constructed. It is based on indirect and on intentional evidence. Everything has to be recaptured and relocated in general framework of history so that despite of the difference is the fundamental paradoxes, and contradictions we may repeat the unity of history which is unity of life.

5. The Annales did not allow a single aspect of event to dominate the narrative events. They had criticized the 19th century historians for giving this proportionate importance to only political history at the cost of other aspect of social life as whole.

Check Your Progress:

1) Describe the aims and objectives of Annales School

2) What were the main features of Annales School?

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8.5 FOUNDERS OF THE ANNALES SCHOOL

The two names which personality prominently as advocates of new history are Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel, some of the 19th century historians had felt the need of studying historical events in the light of information available on the same events or facts of life in other social sciences or even in the positive sciences. In the post-World War I period the French intellectual were stimulates to express their views on reconstructing a new world with using interdisciplinary approach. The French were the most severely affected people in Europe in many respects in that same time. We are now going to review the achievements of Bloch and Braudel in the venture of laying the foundation of new history that is Annales School of Philosophy.

8.5.1 Lucien Febvre

Lucien Febvre, French historian of the early modern period and organizer of major national and international intellectual projects. In his books and editorial efforts, Febvre embraced a “global” history that rejected all forms of pedantry and determinism.

Febvre's first important work, The Regions of France: Franche-Comte was mainly geographical in content. In 1911 appeared Philip II and Franche-Comte. A work built upon extensive researches, it emphasized the economic and social history of the region at the expense of the political. Febvre's dissatisfaction with menopausal explanation led him to demonstrate what he called "the multiple actions of profound causes." His

The Earth and Social Evolution (1922), a general work written for Henri Berr's multi-volume series, was a study which rejected Ratzel's geographical determinism but recognized the importance in history of geographical factors. One of the many important points which the author made in this book was that rivers, instead of making 'natural frontiers', serve in fact to bring human groups together in common activities. Febvre's interest in what he himself called 'historical psychology' first manifested itself in his Martin luther (1928). The treatment was so innovative as to make the book a trend-setter. Though on appearance a biography, it was really a study of ‘social necessity'-of the links between men and groups. Febvre brought the study of individual and group mentality in bygone ages to a consummation in The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century published just after the Second World War. A classic, the work was a study of the religious milieu of Rabelais relating a particular intellectual event to the structural conditions for its occurrence-in this case its non-occurrence:

He argued that it was anachronistic to attribute atheistic beliefs to Rabelais and his contemporaries since the absence of certain linguistic and conceptual tools from their mental resources imposed limits on their capacity to disbelieve.

8.5.2 Marc Bloch

The very first book of Marc Bloch, The Island of France (Paris and the Five Surrounding Departments) (1913) written when the author was twenty-seven, marked a departure from traditional historiography. In it an account of the soil, the language, the archeological remains and architecture took the place of the usual narration of events. Then came in 1924, The Royal Touch, a seminal work and a classic of the twentieth century. The book had path-breaking qualities. It was an inquiry into the medieval belief in the ability of kings to cure the skin disease scrofula or 'the king's evil' just by touch. Bloch was attracted to the theme by his interest in collective psychology, particularly the manner in which the irrational imposes patterns on human behavior. Bloch showed that this supernatural power attributed to royalty in England and France was an important element in maintaining the strength of monarchy in the two countries. But Bloch's investigations into the nature of feudal society formed his main contribution to historical study. That he was disposed to view that society from the standpoint of the peasants rather than of lords and kings had been shown clearly in a short work, King and Serfs: A Chapter of Capetienne History. Then came in 1921 a far greater work and a most helpful and thorough-going book of the generation, French Rural History: An Essay on its Basic Characteristics. It is a social history of medieval rural France. Henry Loyn writes that Bloch gives a realistic and intelligent picture of the flow of agrarian life in France from its known beginnings to the time of the Revolution. All the new techniques of research were employed to make a successful synthesis of French agrarian life in its varied aspects, whether the shape of the field, the nature of the plough, the harnessing of plough beasts, the evolution of watermill and windmill, field-systems, manuring, and, so on. An admirable piece of historical exposition, French Rural History tells us of the disappearance of slavery and the modifications in serfdom. Continuing the innovative work, Bloch published in 1940, Feudal Society-the book for which he is now most famous. Drawing upon many types of sources and employing many methodologies, the work is an analysis of the structural relationships which linked society, economy, politics, technology and the psychology of the feudal world. The author's main theme is social change in time.

Marc Bloch's Principles of Annales (New History)

Marc Bloch had given new insight to the historiography. He had formulated newly research technique to find out historical facts through interdisciplinary research methodology. His principles of new history are as follows.

1) Although historical knowledge is an indirect knowledge the reliability of that knowledge is insured by highly new develop techniques.

2) Unity of history and all of sciences should be in which age so that the events could be seen from all sides and the reality of the event could be understood better way.

3) Bloch maintains that analysis of events as well as classification should be carried out to detect the underlying connection and natural affinities. We can understand human factor if we understand the facts of the same kind. This enables us to understand the event in its totality.

4) Ultimate aims of history understand the human consciousness. This can be understood by analysis and classification of events. He emphasizes that the task of historian is studying the event and not passing judgments. Single word understanding the event is because of light of historical studies.

5) Causation in history can be explained as antecedent conditions of historian cannot avoid racing the causes that produced the events. One should not rush after fixing his attention on a single cause. There may be many causes and persons who brought about events.

6) Marc Bloch views historical fact as psychological facts. He says human destinies are placed in the physical world and suffer the consequences there of. Even while the intrusion of those external forces seems most brutal, however that action is weakened or intensified by man and his mind.

7) History is the science of men in time rather than the science of facts. In history time is concrete and living reality with forward movement which cannot be reversed.

8) The origin of the present things can be understood better by a close examination of the past. So the past can be understood in the right perspective with the sound knowledge of the present. An attempt to trace the causes only by studying the pass is not fruitful.

Check Your Progress:

1) Discuss the achievement of founders of Annales School.

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2) Describe Marc Bloch's principles of Annales School.

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8.6 FOUNDATION OF THE ANNALES SCHOOL AND ITS IDEAS (PHILOSOPHY)

The lambasting of history left two friends, young historians in a far away corner of the French academia, Strasbourg, very restless. Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre were unhappy with the kind of history they had learnt and were forced to teach; they were sensitive to the insights the younger disciplines could provide. They were dissatisfied that disciplines that were such close kin should be at war with each other and each had erected impermeable boundaries around itself. In January of 1929 they launched a new journal, Annales d'histoire economique et sociale. Initially, the journal focused on issues of contemporary concerns to seek to understand the genesis of the emerging crisis; as time passed, it turned increasingly to medieval and early modern history, the ones practiced by Bloch and Febvre.

In the all too brief Editorial in the journal's inaugural issue, the editors movingly emphasised the necessity and the benefits of what later came to be called interdisciplinary research, even as one remained firmly grounded in one's own discipline. 'Of course, nothing would be better than if each one, absorbed in his own legitimate specialisation, assiduously tilling his own patch of land, made at the same time the effort to understand the work of his neighbour. But the separating walls are often so high that they block our view. And yet, what a host of valuable ideas on method and interpretation of facts, what insights into culture and advances in intuition would germinate through more frequent intellectual interaction amongst all these different groups! On this depends the future of economic history, as also the right knowledge of facts which shall tomorrow constitute 'all history?'

'All history' was what Annales was keen to constitute, in place of partial history; this will also be the 'true history.' True history was not being counter posed here to false history but to any form of partial history. 'All history' and 'true history' would comprise an ever expansive domain for the discipline; no part of the past and no aspect of it were beyond its purview. Space was thus being created for meeting the challenge of other disciplines as well as incorporating their insights.

Consequently, newer themes opened up for the historian's exploration. Marc Bloch himself created a comprehensive and grand structure in his study of feudalism by looking at all its aspects in one book of two volumes, The Feudal Society, 1936. He spent a considerable time living in the French countryside in order to sensitize himself to the remains of that society, whether as abandoned agricultural fields or as cultural attitudes and values. Lucien Febvre on the other hand was more keen to explore the area of emotions and beliefs. His book, The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: the Religion of Rabelais (1942) dwelt upon one central character, François Rabelais, critical of Christianity to the point of unbelief. The character was however a point of entry for Febvre's study of religion in all its myriad aspects in the context of society in the sixteenth century. His celebrated essay, 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past' was a watershed in extending history's concerns into new domains. Indeed it starts with the assertion: "Sensibility and history – a new subject: I know of no book that deals with it. I do not even know whether the many problems which it involves have anywhere been set forth. And yet, please forgive a poor historian for uttering the artist's cry, and yet what a fine subject it is!" In some ways the essay was to set the tone for what was later to be explored on a very large scale by Annales historians, i.e. the history of mentalities, mentalities.

History was thus beginning to become part of the Social Sciences. In 1903 François Simiand had visualised Social Science in the singular and history outside it, though he had also shown the way for it to enter the arena of social science in his essay, 'methode historique et science sociale':

'If the study of human facts wishes to establish itself as a positivist science, it must turn away from the singular facts and address itself to recurring facts, that is set aside the accidental for the regular, eliminate the individual for the social.'

It was an invitation to historians to learn from Economics, Sociology, Anthropology and Geography to focus on what was then conceived of as the 'laws' of social movement and change which are inherent in the general rather than the particular. The essay was reproduced in the Annales in 1960 by Fernand Braudel 'for the benefit of young historians to enable them to gauge the distance travelled in half a century and to comprehend better the dialogue between History and the Social Sciences which remains the objective and the raison d'être of our journal'.

The first responses to the invitation to study the long-term regularities were a merger between Economics and History and the emergence of economic history as an autonomous discipline. Ernest Labrousse's work, La crise de l'économie française à la fin de l'Ancien Régime et au début de la Révolution (The Crisis of the French Economy at the end of the Ancient Regime and the beginning of the Revolution, 1944) and Fernand Braudel's La Méditerranée et la monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II (The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, 1949), both sought out the long term trends in history that would help us understand, and to an extent predict, social and economic change. Unlike in the sphere of industrial economy, where overproduction leads to economic crisis, in agriculture underproduction of food grains lies at the base of a crisis situation which then spreads to other sectors of economy and society, was Labrousse's conclusion. Braudel on the other hand had studied the extremely slow change in the ecology around the Mediterranean and the long term and long distance impact of intercontinental trade. Braudel's interest in these themes remained abiding, though through his later works he constantly kept extending their frontiers. The three volume study under the general title, Civilization and Capitalism and the titles of individual volumes, The Structures of Everyday Life, The Wheels of Commerce and The Perspectives of the World both continues with his earlier concerns and incorporates new ones, such as the history of the diet, into them. One branching out from the long-term history was the history of the climate, which spans several centuries. Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie was among the early historians of the 60s who introduced this new theme into European historiography.

What the Annales proclaimed was a history with scope would extend to embrace all the science of men to the "globality" of all human sciences, which would seize them all, in some fashion or other, to construct its own proper method and true domain. This was the mentalite of what came to be known as the Annales school of French historians, or Annalists. In sense, the term, mentalite became a structure, a controlled habit of thought so deeply embedded in the minds of the believers. The historians of the Annales School respected the organic nature of societies, the vitality of man, but they were also rationalist in their own method. Whatever could be rationally pursued, measured, calculated and qualified was pursued.

The three elements of the Annales School emphasized were: first an attempt to grasp the totality and the vital unity of any historical period or society. Second, the conviction that history is at least partly determined by forces which are external to man and yet not entirely neutral or independent of him, nor for that matter, of each other forces, like geography and climate partly intangible only intellectually perceptible and more volatile determination such as social formations and intellectual traditions. Third, the determination, of never losing sight of the totality of human activity, the independence of motivating and limiting forces to reduce the area of comprehension by rigorous statistical analysis of whatever can be analysed by the measurement of whatever can be measured. In short, to use all refined techniques of the mathematician, the econometrician and the statisticians.

Nevertheless, the explorations that could be encapsulated within what has virtually become an umbrella term, the Annales historiography, have opened to the historian‘s craft vistas that allow the discipline an all-encompassing domain. At the heart of its concerns are human beings with all their life‘s tensions, struggles, their ambiguities, indecisions, conflicting and competing emotions, thoughts, experiences and mentalities; the revise of the structures of life is subordinated here to the revise of human beings rather than as self-contained, impersonal phenomena, as the subject of revise themselves to which human beings relate merely as programmed actors. The expanse of the domain itself, and the complexities of explorations of its ever-rising dimensions, should ensure the relegation of any teleological project deep into the background, whether or not the Annalistes have confronted it with deliberation.

Fernand Braudel had taken seriously the criticism of the historians‘preoccupation with the event‘, the immediate and so with the single, unidimensional conception of Time. His own studies took him an extensive aloofness absent from the immediate. He was so able to conceptualize dissimilar rhythms of historical time in dissimilar problematic contexts. In an influential essay, History and the Social Sciences: the Longue Durée‘, 1958, Braudel earmarked three temporal rhythms: the extensive term, or the structure, which moves ever so slowly as in writing the history of ecology and social and economic systems, such as capitalism; the conjunctures, which give the way for mapping the history of medium term change such as inter decennial change in patterns of extensive aloofness trade; and the event, the immediate.

Check Your Progress:

1) Outline the importance of Annales School philosophy.

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8.7 METHODS OF ANNALES SCHOOL

Bloch did not wholly depend on archival sources and traditional methods of *historical inquiry and shared with his colleague Febvre an interest in geography* and collective psychology. He sought to borrow from sociology an exactness of method and precision of language; he studied archeology, agronomy, cartography, folklore and linguistics, and employed economic theory and statistical methods in historical investigation. Cardinal to his inquiry procedure was the asking of the right kind of questions first, and seeking around for any scrap of evidence of any kind which may provide answers. He was an early believer in both the comparative and the regressive methods.

Comparative study involving comparisons within a single country or between different countries, is of immense value, since in highlighting both similarities and differences it can be a source of new syntheses, new questions and, sometimes, convincing answers. The regressive method involves using evidence drawn from a later age of matters customs, traditions, place names, field patterns-which may well have endured from an earlier age, in order to illuminate that earlier age.

Check Your Progress:

1) Assess the methods of Annales School.

8.8 NEW APPROACH AND TRENDS TO HISTORIOGRAPHY

Lucien Febvre had already embarked upon the territory of mentalities in his essay on 'Sensibility and History'. Marc Bloch himself had explored the theme of royal thaumaturgy in Le rois thaumaturges in 1924, the healing powers of kings, translated into English as The Royal Touch, 1973. The early explorations had ignited enough interest and the study of mentalities began to grow substantially. Michel Vovelle extended the quantitative method to the examination of testamentary wills preserved in church records to map the changing attitudes towards death in medieval and early modern France. Jacques Le Goff looked at how attitudes towards Time were changing in the Middle Ages in his highly celebrated essay, 'Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages.' Church's time was cosmic, immeasurable, extending from the Creation of the Universe to the Day of Judgment; merchant's transactions on the other hand required Time that was precise, measured to the day and was a commodity open to sale through commercial transactions. The conflict between the two was a major social conflict in the Middle Ages in Europe. Le Goff is a towering figure in the Annaliste historiographical tradition, extending its boundaries far into the field of the history of mentalities.

So too was Georges Duby until his death in 1996. Beginning with the history of land and labour in the medieval European context, dieval West Duby went into the revise of marriage, family and women, the Cathedrals and the revise of medieval imagination, especially the values that guided the working of the medieval society. Philippe Ariès loved to call himself an amateur'historian, for even as he was a practicing historian, he was yet outside the profession. He was the initiator of some major new themes in history. He constituted the notion of death and the attitude towards children as veritable subjects of historical investigation. He brought the history of the family centre stage, with the issues of sexuality, the household and interpersonal relationships at the core. His works, Centuries of Childhood, 1962, traced the history of the recognition of childhood and its separate needs, for the child had hitherto been treated merely as a young adult; and The Hour of Our Death, 1981, dwelt upon the perceptions of death. These were major interventions in redefining social history. The renowned Cambridge group on the history of the family led by Peter Laslett and Jack Goody in the 1970s and 80s followed up these breakthroughs and published some astoundingly innovative research works: Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, eds., Household and Family in Past Time, 1972; Peter Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations, 1977; Richard Wall, J.Robin and P.Laslett, eds., Family Shapes in Historic Europe, 1982; Jack Goody, The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe, 1983.

Three sets of recent collaborative endeavors have taken the history of mentalities further: Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, common eds., A History of Private Life, 5 vols., Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, common eds., The History of Women, 4 vols., and Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, common eds., A History of Young People, 2 vols. A big portion of each of these works dwells upon mentalities. G. Vigarello followed up the theme of mentalities in his delightful book, The Concepts of Cleanliness, Cambridge, 1988, while Jean-Claude Schmitt had edited a special issue of the journal History and Anthropology on the theme of gestures in 1984. The groups at society's margins had been a point of attraction for the historian for extensive; what was lacking until the 1960s and 70s was a conception of marginality and its connection with mainstream society. The marginal's were not merely those who were poor, without means; they were the ones livelihood not only at the mainstream society‘s territorial margins at the borders of the village, in hermitages or hideouts in the forests or the hills etc. but whose norms of life were at variance with the mainstream norms whether perforce or by choice: The beggars, the lunatics, hermits, thieves and robbers. It was Michel Foucault, the philosopher, who set the parameters of this problematic especially in his Discipline and Punish and Madness and Culture. The revise of marginality, he argued, was significant because it was the other of the mainstream; the revise is an entry point into mapping the contours of the mainstream itself. Foucault introduced the central concept of the relation of power in the revise of social phenomena. The creation of marginality was an emphatic expression of the relation of power in that the elite values at the mainstream determined the notion of marginality. Whoever does not to conform to those values gets excluded into the margins as prisoners or lunatics or whatever. The birth of Psychiatry for him was the chief expression of the creation of marginality as a relation of social power.

In setting up this perspective, Foucault was questioning a fundamental assumption of the discipline of history, i.e. that the facts recovered from the archives possessed an unassailable objectivity. For Foucault ‘facts’ were culturally constructed: they expressed a relation of power. The objectivity of history was then at one go relatives. This was a serious challenge to Annales as much as to positivist history. Some of the Annalistes incorporated Foucauldian insights into their revise of marginality. The Polish historian Bronisaw Geremek‘s major work, The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris, originally published in Polish in 1971, in French in 1976, and in English in 1987 was written under Foucault‘s power.

Strassbourg provided Bloch and Febvre with what Peter Burke in The French Historical Revolution (1990) describes as "a milieu which favoured intellectual innovation and facilitated the exchange of ideas across disciplinary frontiers."The two historians set their face against the tradition of nineteenth century historiography with its sole emphasis on politics and individual events. Nor did they, and following them the Annalistes (Annales historians), think that history could be satisfactorily recreated from a patchwork of particular facts. They were vehement in their criticism of narrative histories-what Braudel was to dubb 'the history of events'. In fact, the problem-oriented approach of Bloch and Febvre to historiography, and their attempt to answer big questions by thematic examination of structural change would not fit neatly into a narrative form. They thought that the historian could enhance the knowledge of the past if only he showed a readiness to draw freely from sociology, geography, psychology and economics. Yet, this did not mean any disregard of documents or of scholarly concerns, and both historians insisted on the highest standards of impartiality. To uncover the lives of the peasants, even legal and monastic records were opened, as such records were not consciously meant for posterity, and in which the lives of the state and the real people intersected, as during inquisitions and court cases. The history which Bloch and Febvre wrote was "a history which was open to the social sciences, problem-oriented and analytic rather than a mere story of events, and concerned with economic, social and cultural life as well as with politics."

The comparative history framework was implicit in the Annales vision from the inception. Comparative history was not quite an invention of Annales historiography as Marc Bloch had emphasized in his famous essay, ‘A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies’ (1928). For him the comparative method rested on dissimilarities underneath apparent similarities between two phenomena or situations. A comparison between these two would highlight the salient features of each and therefore become a very useful tool for developing each one’s profile. However, the study of phenomena such as feudalism or capitalism as a large, comprehensive theme itself makes it comparative inasmuch as their conceptualization could only result from a comparative study of their vast and varied structures.

Check Your Progress:

1) **Explain the Annales School method as a new trend to Historiography.**

8.9 CRITICISM OF THIS ANNALES APPROACH

The critical turn made by “Annales” consisted primarily in overcoming the model of social history which had for decades been associated with the journal and in freeing the school from the history of mentality, elaborated in the 1970s. This was reflected in the criticism of quantitative methods and in a departure from the concept of longue durée. But although “Annales” rejected the objectivist techniques borrowed from the social sciences, declaring them ineffective, this did not mean that it accepted the “rhetorical history” model promoted by postmodernists, a model based on narrative techniques and asserting that historical cognition was relative. The positive programme of the critical turn, though still rather diffuse, proclaimed the severance of ties with Marxism, functionalism and structuralism. The school planned to turn towards social constructivism and attach more significance to human actions. It declared that social realities should be analyzed as historical constructions of individual and collective actors, not as natural, fixed constructions, drawing attention to links with other social sciences, especially with ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, the theory of action and Clifford Geertz’s anthropology.

But some critics pointed out that the methodological changes brought about in “Annales” by the critical turn resulted from the immediate needs of the milieu rather than from the inner logic of the school’s evolution. Christian Delacroix, who depicted the history of the critical turn as early as 1995, pointed out that at first the turn looked rather like an “ad hoc modification” forced through by the identity crisis of the group linked with the journal. The undermining of the leading role of “Annales” in French historiography coincided with the breakdown of the scientific paradigm used by the school. The “Annales” milieu did not want to admit failure and tried to continue to use its paradigm in a polemic version, which laid stress on loyalty to the group and condemned betrayal. The editors applied the method of an “escape forwards”, declaring that they were the vanguard of changes in French historiography. The attractive name “critical turn” allowed them to close ranks. It was only after some time that, thanks mainly to Bernard Lepetit, Jean-Yves Granier and Jacques Revel, the milieu’s reformed historiographic model began to crystallize, a model based on a matter-of-fact revision of longue durée, structuralism and statistical methods. But “Annales” did not enter into discussion with the most vehement critics of the school, such as François Dosse and Lawrence Stone, and rejected proposals for a return to narrative, event fraught or political history. After a short period of philosophical discussion on complex epistemological questions, the proponents of the critical turn adopted a realistic, pragmatic attitude, concentrating on inscribing history in the latest trends in social sciences as “an empirical, interpretative science.

The critical turn was also sharply criticized by Gérard Noiriel and Antoine Prost for the use of scientific parlance which frequently covered up emptiness and for the construction of learned arguments which could be attractive for some historians but were completely devoid of social significance.

The top achievement of the critical turn was the collection of studies entitled *Les formes del' experience*. *Une autre histoire sociale* published in 1995 under Bernard Lepetit's editorship. In an extensive introduction the editor presented his own vision of the development of French historiography in the 1990s. In his view one of its fundamental ideas was the rejection of unified methods in social sciences, a rejection which was supported by the new interdisciplinary plan promoted for the last few years in "Annales". Another principle was the profound understanding of historical explanations which should be reduced neither to a reconstruction of reality nor to a linguistic construction. The aim was, of course, knowledge of the past, which could be achieved by testing explanatory models. Thus historical explanation would at the same time be a discourse and a research technique, a narration and a use of critical procedures. Historical science should therefore abandon the mechanical use of theoretical schemes and pay more attention to the identity of researched objects and really existing social links. Lepetit called this approach a pragmatic paradigm. The volume included studies which differed from the chronological and methodological points of view but, in the editor's opinion, they formed the nucleus of a new unity of historical research, consisting in the deepening of empirical and theoretical research, in the introduction of questions concerning social ties, norms and individual experiences, and also in the use of the short-term category combined with other chronological structures worked out by historiography. The authors of the studies included in the volume, though they realized that scientific objectivity may distort the picture of the researched reality, did not become relativists and looked for a remedy against relativism in their methodological experience.

Braudel's methodology and approach has been subjected to historical criticism. The critics have admiringly felt that volume I, "material life" that covers demography, diet, costume, lodging and technological resources as well as the monetary patterns of the town- life, luxury goods and monetary operations, remains the most thought-provoking portion of the work, because it pulls together into an economic perspective for galaxy of topics normally left untouched by economic historians and treated disjointedly by social historians or cultural historians.

Despite its enormity, Braudel has been criticized for his notion of capitalism the history of European crisis and other such related issues. He is condemned continuously for having to "to resort to illustration more than to analyse, to exhibition more than to critical interpretation, and in sum, to argument which stand and fall with soundness of others' research. Partly, as a consequence of this, Braude's desire for totality of content, sacrifice precision to inconclusiveness. His book is marvelous for raising problems; of as a galaxy of fascinating specificities, but it jumps from the specific to the general with the vaguest of theoretical allutions."

In an excellent analysis of Braudel's "Structure as Duration", Ulysses Santamaria & Anne M. Baily point out that, "the first lacuna is the lack of research by Annalistes into contemporary history, and equally so, is the lack of impact contemporary history, and equally so, is the lack of impact of the Annales and Braudelian in historiography on the writings of contemporary history." The second and interrelated gap in Annales historiography has perhaps been overtlyl stated, as lack of theory of social change. For Braudel change it's shaped through human actions, intellectual, physical, political and economic and overcoming the limits imposed by structures as a material and mental constraints. Furthermore, what Braudel's plural time perspective does provide is a more sophisticated mythological framework for formulating questions about change a framework which avoids lineal assumptions of evolutionary change. What is absent in Braudel's historiography by virtue of the formal and material "evelopment" of the event and conjuncture, is the enquiry into the effects of action (over a medium for short term) on the creation of structure since there is an equation of the creation of structure with the the longue duree.

William H. McNeill points out that "an obvious and more deliberate deficiency of Bradel's the Mediterranean was the rather perfunctory treatment of political affairs in the final part of the book. Also, Braudel chose 20 collect dimension of his subject that most historians regard as essential. In particular they had nothing to say about religion or other intellectual ideas or currents of opinion." Like Lucien Febvre, Braudel was not explicitly anti-cleric. Perhaps this non-religiousness he inherited from the father, and unbeliever, and his lack of any direct exposure to Catholicism or any other sort of religion. That is the reason why he had best decided to say nothing about any religious controversies no matter how important they were then.

Marxist historians followed the Annales approach with deep misgivings. During the Cold War years, Marxist attacked the Annales for its supposed inclination to record capitalism as a permanent category and for its logical neglect of the dialectic links between infrastructure and superstructure.

Many English historians doubted Braudel's method. G.R Elton said that the only missing link in Braudel's Mediterranean was "policy and action". Felix Gilbert remark that bridal never police accident in showing the relevance of the long-range developments for events in the period of Philip II. Royal John Elliott cryptically commented that 'Braudel's mountains move his men but never is men the mountains.'

On the other hand, many historians have criticised this school for its lack of interest in political history. The Annales editorial board was averse to publishing articles dealing with purely political problems, oligarchies, ruling groups, social hierarchies, as the stuff that the considered good for the classical trend.

Notwithstanding such criticism, Braudel has been held as one of the towering historians of the 20th century, an epitome of the Annales paradigm. He influenced the succeeding generations of historians to evolve and interdisciplinary approach to historical study, and one who saw the past beyond the traditional frontiers of history. Despite some of the misgivings which have been questioned in recent years all the same the annual school has open the historian's mind to an interdisciplinary approach and instead of the linear view of history it has provided an approach that can view history in near "totality."

The historical importance of this school can be gauged by the fact that historians outside the Annales circle have more ambitiously explored the theoretical implications of heuristic insights provide by its founders. Prominent among them are Philip Aries whose contribution of general theory of civilization places great emphasis upon the elaboration of social and psychological structures. For instance "Youth" explains Aries was the discovery of the eighteenth century; adolescence that of the 19th century old age, presumably, will be that of our own.

Check Your Progress:

1) **Elaborate the criticism of the Annales approach.**

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8.10 CONTRIBUTION OF THE ANNALES SCHOOL

Bloch and Febvre aimed to achieve a more ‘total’ and a more ‘humane’ integrated history that represents all aspects of man’s life in a society. They also advocated the use of diverse sources and methodologies. Since such a wide ranging, total history is beyond the grasp of any one individual, many were to be engaged in analyzing particular aspects of society. Therefore, the Annales School encouraged interdisciplinary approaches in history writing. The first editorial committee of the Annales also consisted of scholars of different disciplines. Annales historiography dreamt of capturing ‘total history’, which will be ‘true history’.

Any assumption that Annales historiography has since its inception over seven decades ago has proceeded along a straight line and a single strand, without much variation and without much inner conflict and contradiction, would clearly be quite mistaken. Indeed, the several alterations in the subtitling of the journal during its life are pointers to both its innate tensions and its dynamism. Even as the term Annales gave the journal a permanent identity, its original subtitle, histoire economique et sociale gave way to economies, socities, civilisations and lately to Histoire et sciences socials.

Any assumption that Annales historiography has since its inception in excess of seven decades ago has proceeded beside a straight row and a single strand, without much difference and without much inner disagreement and contradiction, would clearly be quite mistaken. Indeed, the many alterations in the subtitling of the journal throughout its life are pointers to both its innate tensions and its dynamism. Even as the term Annales gave the journal a permanent identity, its original subtitle, histoire economique et sociale gave method to economies, socities, civilisations and lately to Histoire et sciences sociales. Some of the major tensions arose from the Annales own project. In some significant methods Annales historiography was on one hand opposed to the legacy of Positivism as well as Marxism and on the other inherited this legacy. Positivism as well as Marxism envisioned a dichotomy flanked by an objective truth in history and a subjective perception of it by the historians. Positivism predicated the unveiling of the objective truth upon scientific rationality: the objective truth is embedded in historical records; through the employment of cause the historians will be able to uncover it bit by bit and this will bridge the gap flanked by the observer, the historian, and the observed, the objective reality. Marxism reached the similar end through the prism of class thrash about. All history can be explained therefore.

Annales historiography too dreamt of capturing total history, which will be ‘true history‘. But the telling variation flanked by them was that if Positivism rested all historical explanation on scientific cause and Marxism on class thrash about, in Annales historiography there was no such permanent structuring of historical explanation. That is, not all historical phenomena or episodes or movements were ‘in the last instance’ brought down to either economic base or politics or psychology or whatever. It rather preferred to revise moving conjunctures, each phenomenon, episode or movement with its own causal hierarchy. Yet, though muted, the very vision of the skill to compose a total and a true history was not without the underpinnings of Positivist and Marxist assumption of objective reality.

Indeed, the Annalistes, with their professed antipathy towards teleology, have nevertheless shown an astonishing, if implicit, extensive term hierarchisation of historical explanation. The early works in this genre mostly pertain to what might be situated broadly in the region of socio-economic history, barring of course Lucien Febvre's precocious explorations in the history of sensibilities and unbelief etc. Once the ‘base’ had been laid, the ‘superstructure’ of the history of mentalities followed in its wake. Nothing evokes this implicit structuring more forcefully than the assertion of one of the mainly celebrated practitioners of Annales historiography, Georges Duby that he had turned to the revise of marriage, women, the family etc. of medieval Europe, since he had already recognized his grasp in excess of its economy, manufacture procedure, sharing and so forth.

Annales historiography has remained somewhat ambivalent too with regard to a problem it had itself raised, that of history‘s ties with chronology. If it planned to transcend the temporal bounds in its search of a true history, it implied rethinking on the conception of time and chronology: History dealt with time, for sure, but was not, and should not be, led on the leash by chronology. Indeed, if chronology was artificial, time itself was fluid. Fernand Braudel's conceptualization of differing rhythms of historical time and Jacques Le Goff's demonstration of time as culturally constructed and so relative as well dynamic, rather than absolute and fixed, constituted major landmarks in redefining the dual connection of the discipline of history to time and chronology. Inherent in the conception of 'total history' or 'history in its entirety' was a suspicion of the sanctity of strict chronological divides flanked by antiquity, medieval and contemporary, for several of the themes are hard to tie down to these divides. The rhythm of change in mentalities, social values or family structures transgresses virtually any temporal boundaries set approximately it. Implied in the investigation of these themes was the assumption that the historian needs to rise above the terror of proof, especially archival proof and depend upon imagination and anthropological insights, much as Marc Bloch had done. Yet, mainly practitioners of this genre of historiography have adhered rather tightly to the chronological boundaries set by their proof. Nothing expresses this tension more evocatively than the title of Fernand Braudel's major book Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II. On one hand, Braudel seeks to cover a vast canvas of history in the two volumes; on the other, the temporal boundaries are tightly set 'in the Age of Philip II'. The diktat of proof exercises as much terror for them as it did for their precursors in the nineteenth century and keeps them forcefully on chronology's leash, their ambition under considerable restraint.

Nevertheless, the explorations that could be encapsulated within what has virtually become an umbrella term, the Annales historiography, have opened to the historian's craft vistas that allow the discipline an all-encompassing domain. At the heart of its concerns are human beings with all their life's tensions, struggles, their ambiguities, indecisions, conflicting and competing emotions, thoughts, experiences and mentalities; the revise of the structures of life is subordinated here to the revise of human beings rather than as self-contained, impersonal phenomena, as the subject of revise themselves to which human beings relate merely as programmed actors. The expanse of the domain itself, and the complexities of explorations of its ever-rising dimensions, should ensure the relegation of any teleological project deep into the background, whether or not the Annalistes have confronted it with deliberation.

Stuart Clark draws our attention to the tremendous impact the Annales historians have made on the character of historical thought. They have broken forever the timidity and suspicion with which areas of inquiry other than political were regarded; they have advocated that historians must learn from kindred disciplines if they are to deepen and enliven their understanding of the past; they have brought every aspect of human experience within the purview of energetic and innovative scrutiny. The notion of anachronism and the study of past mentalities with which Febvre and Bloch were deeply concerned, and Braudel's structural approach and the notion of the long duree have all come to stay. A most significant aspect of the influence of the Annales is that it has brought some of the fundamental issues of social theory to the attention of the historian who has now to debate the perennial problems of freedom and constraint in human behavior, and tackle the apparent antithesis between the individuality of events and the generality of structures. This may best be done by setting Braudel's advocacy of structural history in the wider context of French structuralist thought.

It is noted that the Annales historiography has remained somewhat unsure with regard to a problem it had itself raised, that is, history's ties with chronology. They were not in favour of teleology, yet they have shown a long term hierarchisation of historical explanation. Most historians of the Annals tradition have employed the chronological boundaries set by their evidence.

Nevertheless, the Annales School established one of the most important historiographic traditions in the 20th century. It has concerned itself with human beings with all their life's tensions, struggles, indecisions, conflicting and competing emotions, thoughts, experiences and mentalities. History was transformed into a study of human beings where they are the subject of study and not merely programmed actors, rather than as self-contained, impersonal phenomena.

The Annales historiography had been undergoing changes over the years as it expands its coverage on economy, society, civilizations and on the social sciences as a whole. Historians such as Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel, Georges Duby, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie etc. redefined the historical practice time and again by constantly innovating in themes and methods. History of economic structures, of long-term developments, of mentalities, micro-history and cultural history have all benefitted significantly from the historians of this School.

Check Your Progress:

1) Enumerates the contribution of Annales School to Historiography.

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8.11 SUMMARY

From, the study of the Annales School of the pioneering figures, obtained knowledge of the contribution of the French historian towards science history in the liberation efforts of the narrowness mind. Before the birth of the Annales school of history, limited to political events and wars, the explanation on the circuit in the event itself, as if there is no background or social roots of the event. Since, Febvre and Bloch developed the science of history that sees history as an integral history or the history of the total. Even the efforts macro and Bloch, writing of history more deeply by means doing analysis study what lies behind the facts shown by the document for later entry in the mentality. It means, to the facts presented in the form of documents and archives further questions, even keep track of all traces of the past that are not written.

Annales historians have broken down the barriers of history, and making it open to contribute other social sciences along to understand the facts and historical development. Science of history has been freed from the mist barrier to look to the long term, so that events can be understood as a symptom of continuous development. Annales total history version, insert the humanitarian symptoms of the most resistant to change in the realm of the imaginary collective mentality.

The *Annales* wanted to integrate insights and methodologies from anthropology, geography, sociology, economics and psychology. It was interested in longer time spans, the social history of everyday life, and "mentalites" (modes of consciousness). In essence, it was an analytical history which looked at economic and social history in a long-term perspective, departing from a traditional event-based historiography. These historians rebelled against traditional historians' obsession with wars and states, the "great" men of history, and looking at development as linear. *Annales* school historians examined phenomena and their underlying causes in depth with a particular attention to inclusive development of all communities.

As we have gone through above mentioned topic that the Annales School established one of the most important historiographic traditions in the twentieth century. Historians such as Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel, Georges Duby, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Robert Mandrou, Jacques Le Goff, and many others redefined the historical practice time and again by constantly innovating in themes and methods. History of economic structures, of long-term developments, of mentalities, micro-history and cultural history have all benefited by significant contribution from the historians of this School.

8.12 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the context which led to the establishment of the Annales School. Who are considered as the founders of this School of historiography?
2. What are the thematic innovations made by the historians of the Annales School over the years? Discuss with example.
3. Assess the aims, objectives and main features of the Annales School.
4. Describe the ideas and methods of Annales School philosophy.
5. Examine the contribution of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre towards the Annales School.
6. Review the contribution of Annales School to historiography and its significance.
7. Enumerates the criticism of the Annales School approach.

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9

POSTMODERNISM AND HISTORY

Unit Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Post Marxist Concepts and Approaches
- To shed light on the concept of Postmodernism and its features.
- To understand the relation between Postmodernism and History.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism is a trend in Western philosophy. It is a late 20th-century movement which is characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism. It is a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power.

Postmodernism is largely a reaction against the intellectual assumptions and values of the modern period in the history of Western philosophy. The modern period can be approximately from the 17th to the 19th century. Brian Duignan states that many of the doctrines characteristically associated with postmodernism can fairly be described as the straightforward denial of general philosophical viewpoints that were taken for granted during the 18th-century Enlightenment.

There is an objective natural reality, a reality whose existence and properties are logically independent of human beings—of their minds, their societies, their social practices, or their investigative techniques. It means that human beings have no control over this reality. Postmodernists dismiss this idea as a kind of immature realism. They say that this type of reality is actually a creation of social scientists. According to postmodernists, such reality is a theoretical construct, an object of scientific practice and language. This point also applies to the investigation of past events by historians and to the description of social institutions, structures, or practices by social scientists.

Check your progress:

1] Define Postmodernism.

2**] Examine the views of Postmodernist thinkers.**

9.2 BACKGROUND

The descriptive and explanatory statements of scientists and historians can be objectively true or false. But the postmodernists reject this approach. The postmodern thinkers deny this viewpoint because they reject an objective natural reality. This is sometimes expressed by saying that there is no such thing as Truth.

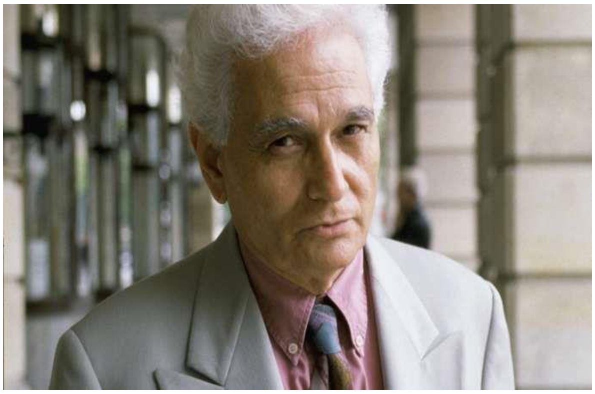
The Enlightenment faith gives great importance to science and technology. Through the use of reason and logic, and with the more specialized tools provided by science and technology, human beings are likely to change themselves and their societies for the better. It is reasonable to expect that future societies will be more humane, more just, more enlightened, and more prosperous than they are now. Postmodernists deny this Enlightenment faith in science and technology as instruments of human progress. Indeed, many postmodernists hold that the misguided and unguided pursuit of scientific and technological knowledge led to the development of technologies for killing on a massive scale in World War II. They even go to the extent to say that science and technology or for that matter even reason and logic are intrinsically destructive and oppressive, because they have been used by evil people, especially during the 20th century, to destroy, oppress and persecute others.

Enlightenment thinkers and modernists believe that reason and logic are universally valid. It means that their laws are the same for all. They apply equally to any thinker and any area of understanding. For postmodernists, reason and logic too are merely theoretical constructs and are therefore valid only within the established intellectual traditions in which they are used. They only make sense to those who create them and need not apply to others.

Enlightenment and modernist thinkers attach importance to human nature. According to them, there is such a thing as human nature; it consists of faculties, aptitudes, or dispositions that are in some sense present in human beings at birth rather than learned or instilled through social forces. But Postmodernists disagree with this approach. Postmodernists insist that all, or nearly all, aspects of human psychology are completely socially determined.

Enlightenment thinkers consider language as a mirror of nature. Language refers to and represents a reality outside itself. According to postmodernists, language is not such a “mirror of nature,” as the American pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty characterized the Enlightenment view. Inspired by the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, postmodernists claim that language is semantically self-contained, or self-referential: the meaning of a word is not a static thing in the world or even an idea in the mind but rather a range of contrasts and differences with the meanings of other words. Because meanings are in this sense functions of other meanings—which themselves are functions of other meanings, and so on—they are never fully “present” to the speaker or hearer but are endlessly “deferred.” Self-reference characterizes not only natural languages but also the more specialized “discourses” of particular communities or traditions; such discourses are embedded in social practices and reflect the conceptual schemes and moral and intellectual values of the community or tradition in which they are used. The postmodern view of language and discourse is due largely to the French philosopher and literary theorist Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), the originator and leading practitioner of deconstruction.

Enlightenment and modern thinkers believe that human beings can acquire knowledge about natural reality, and this knowledge can be justified ultimately on the basis of evidence or principles that are, or can be, known immediately, intuitively, or otherwise with certainty. Postmodernists reject philosophical foundationalism which is the attempt to identify a foundation of certainty on which to build the edifice of empirical (including scientific) knowledge. This approach is seen in the 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes’s saying, “cogito, ergo sum” (“I think, therefore I am”).



Jacques Derrida

courtesy Britannica.

Enlightenment and Modern thinkers attach a lot of importance to theorizing. It is possible, at least in principle, to construct general theories that explain many aspects of the natural or social world within a given domain of knowledge—e.g., a general theory of human history, such as dialectical materialism. Furthermore, it should be a goal of scientific and historical research to construct such theories, even if they are never perfectly attainable in practice. Postmodernists dismiss this notion as a pipe dream and indeed as symptomatic of an unhealthy tendency within Enlightenment discourses to adopt "totalizing" systems of thought as the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas called them or grand "metanarratives" of human biological, historical, and social development as the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard claimed. These theories are false. They effectively impose conformity on other perspectives or discourses, thereby oppressing, marginalizing, or silencing them. Derrida himself equated the theoretical tendency toward totality with totalitarianism.

Check your progress:

1] Describe the approach of Enlightenment thinkers.

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2**] How do the postmodernist thinkers differ from the Enlightenment thinkers?**

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9.3 POSTMODERNISM AND RELATIVISM

As discussed in the background, many of the characteristic doctrines of postmodernism constitute or imply some form of metaphysical, epistemological, or ethical relativism. It should be noted, however, that some postmodernists vehemently reject the relativist label. Postmodernists deny that there are aspects of reality that are objective. They do not agree that there are statements about reality that are objectively true or false. According to them, it is not possible to have knowledge of such statements i.e objective knowledge. Postmodernists say that it is impossible for human beings to know some things with certainty. They believe that there are no objective or absolute, moral values. Reality, knowledge, and value are constructed by discourses; hence they can vary with them. This means that the discourse of modern science is similar to alternative perspectives including astrology and witchcraft. Postmodernists sometimes mockingly characterize the evidential standards of science, including the use of reason and logic, as "Enlightenment rationality."

The broad relativism apparently so characteristic of postmodernism invites a certain line of thinking regarding the nature and function of discourses of different kinds. If postmodernists are correct that reality, knowledge, and value are relative to discourse, then the established discourses of the Enlightenment are no more necessary or justified than alternative discourses. But this raises the question of how they came to be established in the first place. If it is never possible to evaluate a discourse according to whether it leads to objective Truth, how did the established discourses become part of the prevailing worldview of the modern era? Why were these discourses adopted or developed, whereas others were not?

Part of the postmodern answer is that the prevailing discourses in any society reflect the interests and values, broadly speaking, of dominant or elite groups. Postmodernists disagree about the nature of this connection; whereas some apparently endorse the dictum of the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx that "the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class," others are more cautious. Inspired by the historical research of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, some postmodernists defend the comparatively nuanced view that what counts as knowledge in a given era is always influenced, in complex and subtle ways, by considerations of power. There are others, however, who are willing to go even further than Marx. The French philosopher and literary theorist Luce Irigaray, for example, has argued that the science of solid mechanics is better developed than the science of fluid mechanics because the male-dominated institution of physics associates solidity and fluidity with the male and female, respectively. Similarly, the Bulgarian-born French psychoanalyst and writer Julia Kristeva has faulted modern linguistics for privileging aspects of language associated, in her psychoanalytic theory, with the paternal or paternal authority (rule systems and referential meaning) over aspects associated with the maternal and the body (rhythm, tone, and other poetic elements).

Michel Foucault

Courtesy Brittanica

Because the established discourses of the Enlightenment are more or less arbitrary and unjustified, they can be changed; and because they more or less reflect the interests and values of the powerful, they *should* be changed. Thus postmodernists regard their theoretical position as uniquely inclusive and democratic, because it allows them to recognize the unjust hegemony of Enlightenment discourses over the equally valid perspectives of non elite groups. In the 1980s and '90s, academic advocates on behalf of various ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious groups embraced postmodern critiques of contemporary Western society, and postmodernism became the unofficial philosophy of the new movement of "identity politics."

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the relation between Postmodernism and relativism.

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2**] Examine the major scholars who contributed to Postmodernism.**

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9.4 POSTMODERN APPROACH TO HISTORY

Many times college and graduate students have a very valid question. And the question that students often ask their history professors is this: "How do we know what the textbook says happened in the past actually happened?" We understand that this is a loaded question. At first, the obvious answer might be to refer to primary sources. After all, primary sources are created during the time period being studied and provide a firsthand and authentic glimpse into the period under consideration. But what happens when two or more historians examine the same primary source and arrive at dramatically different interpretations? Which one is true? Can they both be "true"?

This brings us to postmodernism. It will be beneficial to explore the postmodern approaches to the discipline of history. This is an intellectually engaging topic which requires us to think deeply. The postmodernist approach to history is one of the least known modes of historical writing among historians and history educators. There is a need to enhance historians' and history educators' understanding of the postmodern challenge to the discipline of history. First of all we need to have an overview of the basic features of history and its historical trajectory as a discipline. Then we can understand postmodernist historiography's conceptual underpinnings, methods, principal concepts, and ideological positions. We can better understand the key debates, criticisms, and arguments that historians of different historical orientations are engaged in.

Dr Kaya Yilmaz states that Historians and history educators need to know the nature of history to effectively plan, implement and assess historical research. The importance of an adequate understanding of the nature of a given discipline in the teaching and learning process has been recognized in science education. A sophisticated understanding of the nature of science is deemed to be a major goal in science education and a central component of scientific literacy. Science education organizations and science educators stress the role that a nuanced understanding of the nature of science plays in fostering higher levels of scientific literacy. The same emphasis on the importance of the nature of subject matter has not been realized in history education yet.

However, drawing on the insights that historical frameworks provide for studying the past is crucial not only to develop a rational way of teaching history but also to adequately address the fundamental issues in history education. Dr Kaya Yilmaz also states that being familiar with the different ways through which the past is made accessible, meaningful, and comprehensible is a must for advancing historical consciousness at schools, colleges and universities. In this way we can deal with confronting the complexity of the past. Unless models in the discipline of history are identified and used in the teaching and learning of history, any framework for exploring students' thoughts about history will be unclear. Being aware of how historians of different historical orientations construct differing interpretations of the past is one of the preconditions for students of history to understand the complexity of the past and to develop an increasingly better understanding of the past events, people, institutions and processes. Unfortunately, historiographies of different sorts or diverse historical approaches to the past are not sufficiently emphasized in history and that's why many students lack adequate training in historiography. Also there is an unclear understanding, on historians' and history educators' part, of how the past is made understandable through postmodernist approach.

Therefore it is important to understand postmodernist historiography to bring about a more sophisticated and meaningful history education. If historians become familiar with and appreciate the multiplicity of historical explanations, along with the assumptions and ideologies that lie behind each orientation, students can not only enjoy more freedom of choice in constructing their own historical understanding, but also come up with a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the past. But first let us have an overview of the basic features of history as a discipline or domain of knowledge and how history came to be recognized as an academic discipline. Then later, we will study the postmodernist movement in historiography, its characteristic features, the basic words and the important debates revolving around the movement.

Dr Kaya Yilmaz states that History is a unique interpretive enterprise among social sciences because of the fact that it is both the subject and the object of its own discipline. In other words, the discipline of history refers not only to what happened in the past but also to the act of writing about the past. The nature and function of historical writing is shaped by the theoretical presuppositions, by means of which the historian reflects on and writes about the past. Frameworks serve as conceptual tools for scholarly historical thinking and writing by enabling the historian to filter the infinite number of possible interpretations to a limited number of probable ones. Downplaying other historical orientations, the historian operating under the banner of a given historical framework singles out particular hypotheses, problems, and questions as significant or legitimate objects of historical study. That is, it is the philosophy of history that provides the building blocks for the study of the past.

Dr Yilmaz shows that Philosophy of history is divided into two basic branches, speculative and analytic, in terms of its substantive (i.e., propositional) and syntactic (i.e., procedural) features. The speculative branch (a) focuses on the actual content of history to find meaning or at least pattern in it, (b) is interested in predicting the future, (c) and aims to shed lights on the following sorts of questions: Does history demonstrate a simple giant unfolding history? Do laws govern history? Has human nature remained the same throughout history? On the other hand, analytical philosophy of history (a) concentrates on the nature and methods of history as discipline, (b) deals with such topics as objectivity, ideology, and historical explanations (i.e., how historians practice their methods and how they think about what they are doing), (c) aims to illuminate the following types of questions: What conditions must be met for a statement about the past to be true? Is there an exclusively historical way of explaining the past as distinct? Is narrative a satisfactory vehicle for historical knowledge? Can the historian reach objective truth? On what grounds can historians reasonably demonstrate that they know what they claim?

Ranke had a tremendous role in the Professionalization of History. His followers and students who made the Rankean School played a very important part in the professionalization of history. The professionalization of historical studies along with the redefinition of their theoretical and methodological foundations was entrenched in the process of modernization and nationalism in Europe. The works of German historians had an enormous international impact on the professionalization of history and the development of rigorous methods of historical research. The belief in the scientific status of history which stressed the non-rhetorical character of historical writing was central to the process of professionalization. Leopold von Ranke, celebrated German historian, was a pioneer in assigning academic status to the study of the past.

Just as Herodotus is deemed to be the father of history, Ranke can be regarded as the father of the new objective school of history. Many modern historians attribute the intellectual foundations of their discipline to this development of the nineteenth century German universities, which influenced historical scholarship throughout Europe and America. What was new in Ranke's approach to history was his attempt to explain the past in terms of "how it actually was," without making a judgment on it.

He established the rules of critical historical methods. “Ranke’s elaborate methodology was based on classical philology with its maxim: check the source for trustworthiness and against its own context”. He combined a critical reading of the surviving documents of the past with a careful reconstruction of the historical circumstances in which it was composed. It is only by these means, Ranke asserted, could unreliable historical sources be identified to be used as evidence and the core meaning of the text be recovered.

If history was to be written in a dispassionate, objective way, Ranke claimed, “historians should not take sides, nor should they seek to make propaganda out of the past; their task was essentially one of reconstruction”. It is the strength of these claims that made history become an academic discipline in its own right. The term “historicism” refers to this rigorous approach to the past. “Historicism with all its variations is the key term that symbolizes the genesis of modern historical scholarship”. The major shortcomings of the historicist Rankean school were (1) its lack of attention to economic and social forces and (2) its excessive emphasis on the political aspect of events with almost exclusive reliance on official documents of state.

The recognition of history as an academic discipline at universities led to the production in the types of historical writing in the nineteenth and twentieth century. As a result, the boundary among different modes of historical writing became blurry. Still, we can detect two sharply distinctive views of history, idealist versus positivist, both of which characterized historians’ visions of what history is and how it should be recovered (e.g., view of history as art or science). For this reason, even rival historical orientations can be put into the same overarching category in terms of whether they belong to the positivist or idealist tradition. For instance, for all the crucial differences between the French Annales and Marxist historiography, both belong to the positivist tradition.

Historians of positivist orientation (or the covering-law model) such as Popper and Hempel (a) sought to present their findings as general statements of invariable relationship via the hypothetic-deductive model of reasoning and the use of the syllogism (e.g., given the same causes, very similar effects almost surely would occur), (b) focused their attention on uniformities and regularities -in the course of human affairs to formulate generalization- rather than unique or individual events (e.g., instead of studying the French Revolution, they would investigate the phenomenon of revolution), (c) put the issue of causal explanation in the center of historical theory, and (d) understood the concept causation in the “efficient” sense as a set of prior conditions.

On the other hand, idealist historians such as Collingwood and Elton (a) jointly argued that the analogy derived from the natural sciences could not hold up under the test and that the subtleties of doing history required quite different conceptual schemes, (b) focused on unique and specific events outside of nature, instead of seeking regularities and uniformities, (c) offered that the proper object of historical study center on the human mind or the activities of human mind, (d) contended that the main task of the historian is to think himself into the actions of his historical agent in order to discern his thought (i.e., all history is the re-enactment of past thought in the historian’s own mind), and (e) understood the term causation in the sense of “final” cause as the will or intention of a historical agent. These are the advances in historiography and the differnce between the positivist and idealist views of history. Now let us understand postmodernist historiography, which has left an imprint in historiography.

Dr Kaya Ilmaz reveals that Postmodernism has called into question the truth claims of not only history but also all humanities and social sciences. The basic hypothesis of postmodernism is that society and culture are in transformation in which old essentialist assumptions concerning objectivity, truth, industrial growth, rising economic expectations, and traditional middle-class norms have been shaken. What characterizes post-modern thought is the attempt to de-center language from the idea of “being” to that of “function,” and the resulting belief that language defines but does not refer to reality and our experience of reality is a function of our language. The rejection of historical realism (i.e., the past was real and objective) constitutes a crucial theme in the philosophy of postmodernism.

Another major theme of postmodern approach to history is the elimination of the boundaries and hierarchical distinctions between elite culture and academic culture by means of dehierarchization, deconstruction, demystification, and dereferentialization. Postmodernism symbolizes the death of centers. It displays doubt toward metanarratives, and is characterized by a social formation in which the maps and status of knowledge are being de-centered, re-drawn, and re-described. Let us examine the premises of postmodernism in relation to history: In the most general sense, postmodernism stands for the proposition that western society in recent decades has undergone a major shift from the modern to a postmodern era. This is said to be characterized by the final rejection of the Enlightenment's legacy of belief in reason and progress. It is marked by an all-encompassing amazement toward all narratives giving a direction and meaning to history, in particular the notion that human history is a process of universal emancipation. In place of grand narratives of this kind, there have come a multiplicity of discourses and language games. There is a kind of questioning of the nature of knowledge together with a dissolution of the idea of truth, and problems of legitimacy in many fields.

Its two principal features may be said to be its conception of language and its rejection of realism. It is a philosophy of linguistic idealism or panlingualism claiming that language constitutes and defines reality for human minds. It says that there is no extralinguistic reality independent of our representations of it in language or discourse. It regards language itself as a system of signs that refer only to one another internally in an endless process of signification that never arrives at stable meaning. Postmodernism thus denies both the ability of language or discourse to refer to an independent world of facts and things and the determinacy or decidability of textual meaning. By the same token, it also dismisses the possibility of objective knowledge and truth as goals of inquiry. The basic precepts of postmodern thought can be summarized as the idea that all old organizing frameworks that took for granted the privileging of various centers, such as Anglo-centric, ethno-centric, gender-centric, and logo-centric, should not be considered as legitimate and natural frameworks.

As a prominent advocate and practitioner of the postmodernist theory of history, Jenkins asserts that traditional academic history or lower case history is just representation of bourgeois ideology. He accuses traditional historians of being satisfied with the status quo because he thinks they study the past for its own sake and thus concludes that they neither want to change the present nor vision a different future. Why history came to the fore and received the strongest attack in the face of postmodernist criticism has to do with the fact that it is a textual subject and full of grand historical narratives or teleological historical writings. Advocates of the postmodernist thought assert that “the great trajectories that historiography has built around nation, class, and religion are grand narratives that confer an illusory sense of direction on people who think they know about the past”.

Rather than historical research methods, postmodernists questioned historians’ assumptions and epistemological foundations of the discipline by constructing their arguments around such concepts as truth and objectivity. On the other hand, historians elucidated their methods to counterattack the postmodern thrust, failing to recognize the nature of postmodern argument. Therefore, neither side did justice to each other. In his critique of the postmodern turn in Western historiography, Windschuttle outlines the postmodern critics’ attack on the practice of conventional historiography. According to the postmodernist critique of the discipline, (1) traditional historiography is an authoritarian practice that reflects the ethnocentrism and cultural hubris of contemporary Western society (i.e., the views and interests of the white, middle class, European males); (2) authors of the left, the right, or in between politically, assert their power over their readers in the name of reality by assuming a third person voice and an omniscient viewpoint; (3) historians (a) can only express the ideology of their times (b) cannot be objective enough to see beyond their own class, gender, ethics, or cultural background.

To eliminate these problems, postmodernists take a demystification approach to set the stage for those who are currently deprived of the opportunity to write their own histories and to “free up historians to tell many equally legitimate stories from various viewpoints and types of synthesis”. Just as postmodernists have criticized the assumptions and historical writings of traditionalists, the practitioners of traditional history have been critical of postmodernist approach to history.

According to Zagorin, (a) postmodernism is an amorphous concept and a synthesis of different yet related theories, theses, and claims, (b) the skepticism and relativism inherent in postmodernist philosophy cuts the ground from any moral or political stand its adherents might take, (c) practitioners of the postmodern theory of history have overtly advocated a political agenda as much an academic one as Jenkins did, (d) postmodernists' skeptical and politicized view of historical inquiry is deeply erroneous, inconsistent with the way historians think about their work, and incapable of providing an understanding of historiography as a form of thought engaged in the attainment of knowledge and understanding of the human past. Likewise, many have criticized postmodernist theorists for being responsible for the dramatic shrinking of historical scholarship manifested by the sharp decrease in the number of graduate students in history and the number of Ph.D.s awarded in history that fell by more than fifty percent from 1970s to 1990s in the US.

The debates over the postmodernist theory and practice of history also found its way to high schools and universities in the design of the history curriculum. Windschuttle explains the effects of postmodern discourse on some curriculum developers. Educationalists who designed the new national history standards for American high schools downplayed the notion that doing history should be in line with the principles of historicism and be identified as being disinterested and above ideology. According to them, such an approach to describing, explaining, and interpreting the past is both intellectually obsolete and politically contaminated. They endorsed the argument that it is impossible for historians to distance themselves and their scholarly work from their academic training, attitudes, ideological dispositions and cultures.

Their contention was that what particular facts, traditions, and heroic personalities are represented in the textbooks symbolize the ideological position of the traditionalists and the political Right who think that their interpretation of history represents the true and objective history that every citizens should become familiar with. Keeping a faith in the claim that being non-political is unattainable, they attempted to replace the traditional account of American history with the one that brings to the fore the concepts of discrimination, exploitation, hostility, and predicaments that women, blacks, and ethnic minorities had undergone but were able to surmount those difficulties to challenge their exploiters, stand up for legal rights, and cross racial boundaries.

But, the Republican dominated U.S. Senate went ahead and prevented this effort from being put into practice in high schools in November 1994. According to Zagorin, most postmodernists stand on the left side of political continuum and thus have tended to be supporters of the movement in the universities for women's and gender studies, Afro-American studies, ethnic studies, and gay studies. They have been among the defenders of multiculturalism and the promoters of cultural and postcolonial studies. Windschuttle makes similar comments on the position of postmodernist historians. He states that postmodernists are identified with their supports for structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, postcolonialism, radical feminism, queer theory, critical theory, and cultural studies.

They have recently begun to associate their philosophical orientations not with postmodernism but with the less provocative term cultural studies which supports the same combination of anti-realist philosophy and anti-

Western politics. We need to examine history's confrontation with the postmodernist challenge by seeking answers to the following questions. To what extent has postmodernism affected the discipline of history? Did historians take on postmodernist ideas and practice postmodern theory of history? Has historiography ever benefited from postmodern thought and criticisms? There are a wide variety of opinions among historians with respect to postmodernism, ranging from substantial agreement to complete rejection and uncompromising hostility.

Dr Yilmaz mentions that a small minority of historians such as R. Evans have embraced at least some postmodernist arguments in order to counteract against attacks. The majority of historians have been opposed to postmodernist doctrines and viewed postmodernism as a misconceived critique and hope that intellectual fashions will change. "Its influence upon the thinking and practice of historians is not only fading but increasingly destined to fade, according to Zagorin. Whereas the extreme relativism inherent in postmodernism is less heard nowadays, "the popular appeal of well-crafted historical interpretations of topics of current concern shows no sign of diminishing". Even though the postmodernist challenge had a significant impact on historical thought and writing, it was not able to devastate the continuities with older conceptions and practices.

In short, according to Zagorin as quoted by Dr Kaya Ilmaz in her document on Post Modernist approach to the discipline of history, postmodernism is now considered to be a distinctly minority phenomenon among professional historians, most of whom are unwilling to recognize its view of history because they find its doctrines so contrary to their understanding and experience of historical inquiry. For all most historians' resistance to postmodernist theories, historiography has benefited from ground shaking arguments of postmodernist thinkers. Postmodernism has revived the scholarly interest in the problems of explanation, interpretation, and epistemology. Some give credits to postmodernists for having exposed the limitations of descriptions so vividly. Evans testifies that postmodernists were instrumental in destroying the economic determinism characterizing the historical writing of the 1970s and 1980s. He further confirms that postmodernists' thought provoking ideas, especially their emphasis on identity, consciousness and mentality, also helped today's historians communicate with a wider range of audiences from different backgrounds.

Zagorin acknowledges that postmodernist philosophy (a) provoked historians to be more self-critical and aware of their presuppositions and procedures, encouraging them to look more closely at documents, and (b) led historians to recognize the importance of open acknowledgment of the historians' own subjectivity that in turn may make the reader engage in a critical assessment of historical work. Another scholar regards postmodernist theory as a means to enable students to recognize the relationship between the historical narratives and the political interests of those who write historical texts.

Dr Yilmaz concludes by saying that the subject matters and methods of historical writing have expanded greatly since the inception of history as an academic discipline. Historiography has become more pluralistic today than it had ever been. Depending on their philosophical orientations (e.g., positivist vs. idealist), world views, belief systems, personal histories, and academic trainings, historians have offered that the material world, culture, societies/civilizations, common people, internal world of human beings or human mind be the proper object of historical writing. The assumptions of authenticity, intentionality, and chronological sequences determined the structure of historical writing from Heredotus to Ranke and into the twentieth century.

Today's history is characterized by particularities and divergences, so it is safe to conclude that history can no longer address the identity and experience of all readers through common stories. The kind of history we have today is the one with the multiplicity of versions competing for attention and emphasizing alternatively elites or non elites, men or women, whites or nonwhites. Historians and history educators need to be cognizant of different modes of historical writing or historical orientations in order to assist students in handling conflicting accounts of the past. Different conceptual frameworks used to explain the past may contradict, compete with, or complement one another, but this means that students should be equipped to deal with such relationships. For this reason, history departments should emphasize training in historiography, by means of which students can stay away from accepting any historical claims at face value.

It is not the familiarity with the basic concepts of history such as continuity and change, cause and effect but an understanding of the processes of knowledge-making. One should understand the construction of a historical narrative and argument and the nature of conflicting historical frameworks. This is the best assurance against dogmatic transmission of a single version of the past, a practice that violates the core tenets of the discipline. When students in history and history education departments are provided with the tools of historiography, they will be in a better position to construct their own interpretations of the past without uncritically believing in any particular version.

Check your progress:

1] Discuss the features of Post modernism.

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2**] Examine the postmodernism challenge to history.**

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3] Discuss the important concepts of postmodernist historiography.

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4**] Discuss the contribution of Michel Foucault to postmodernist historiography.**

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9.5 KEY CONCEPTS OF POSTMODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Firstly, we need to understand what postmodernism is. Postmodernism takes many forms, but generally, it is the philosophical view that objective truth does not exist and that it is largely impossible to understand reality, in any sort of objective sense. The postmodern tagline is basically: "Everyone has their own truth," or perhaps "Truth is what you make it." Postmodernism would especially become popular throughout the second half of the 20th-century. This view is not isolated to the discipline of history: postmodernism is especially reflected in philosophy, literature, the arts, and other disciplines as well.

So let us see what the central views of postmodern historiography are. Historiography is the study of how history is interpreted. The basic view is that it is impossible to know exactly what happened in the past, at least in an objective sense. Postmodern historians typically assert that multiple truths exist, and they tend to emphasize the subjective nature of the discipline.

Take the American Revolution, for example. According to postmodern historians, it may have begun because of republicanism. But it also may have begun because of class conflict, or because of underlying religious zeal, or any number of other reasons. It's pretty much impossible to know for sure because, after all, these are all just subjective interpretations, and the real event cannot be known.

Nate Sullivan states that postmodern historiography is closely related, or often aligned, with another historiographical approach known as structuralism. Structuralism seeks to explain that history unfolds not because of critical, decisive actions on the part of key individuals like Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation for example, but because of broader, over-arching social, economic, and political movements or structures. In other words, the individual human agency is minimized, while 'spirit' of the masses is emphasized. For example, Adolf Hitler rose to power not because he was personally charismatic, but because the social climate among the German people was ripe for such a leader.

Structuralist historians state that the rise of Hitler was attributed mainly the social, economic, and political climate in Germany.

Source; Nate Sulllivan, study.com

Ironically, structuralism asserts a specific approach to the exclusion of another, which in theory contradicts postmodernism. This type of contradiction has been a key criticism by opponents of postmodernism. They say: "How can you assert one interpretation is superior to another if you deny objectivity all together?" Nevertheless, many postmodern historians tend to embrace forms of structuralism.

Let us examine who some well known postmodern historians are. Perhaps the most well known is Michel Foucault (1926-1984). Foucault, a French philosopher and historian published a number of works, including *The History of Madness* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault has become highly esteemed among New Left and postmodern historians, but he remains controversial in general. Commenting on his crafting of history, he once stated: "I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions."

Foucault basically believed that attempts to understand history or reality, for that matter objectively represented attempts to secure power. He asserted that various groups compete for power, and "truth" was merely what anyone group claimed it to be. By adhering to a particular worldview, or approach or perspective, a group was essentially trying to secure power over other groups. For Foucault therefore, asserting a historical approach represented an attempt to put forth an ideology, not so much arrive at a factual truth.

Check your progress:

1] Give a brief summary of postmodernism.

2**] Examine the contrast between modernism and postmodernism.**

9.6 SUMMARY

Postmodernism is a broad movement that developed in the mid-to-late 20th century across history, philosophy, the arts, and architecture, marking a departure from modernism. The term has been more generally applied to describe a historical era said to follow after modernity and the tendencies of this era. Postmodern thinkers frequently describe knowledge claims and value systems as socially-conditioned. They consider them as products of political, historical, or cultural discourses and hierarchies. These thinkers often view personal and spiritual needs as being best fulfilled by improving social conditions and adopting more fluid discourses, in contrast to modernism, which places a higher degree of emphasis on maximizing progress and which generally regards promotion of objective truths as an ideal form of discourse.

Postmodernism is generally defined by an attitude of skepticism, irony, or rejection toward what it describes as the grand narratives and ideologies associated with modernism, often criticizing Enlightenment rationality and focusing on the role of ideology in maintaining political or economic power. Common targets of postmodern criticism include Universalist ideas of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, science, language, and social progress. Accordingly, postmodern thought is broadly characterized by tendencies to self-consciousness, pluralism, and irreverence.

Postmodern critical approaches gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, and have been adopted in a variety of academic and theoretical disciplines, including history, cultural studies, philosophy of science, economics, linguistics, architecture, feminist theory, and literary criticism, as well as art movements in fields such as literature, contemporary art, and music. Postmodernism is often associated with schools of thought such as deconstruction, and post-structuralism. It is associated with philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault.

9.7 QUESTIONS

1. Examine the Post Marxist concepts and approaches studied by you in this module.
2. Discuss the relationship between Postmodernism and History.

9.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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10

ORIENTALISTS, IMPERIALISTS AND CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

Unit Structure

10.1 OBJECTIVES

- To study the Historiography of Orientalist School
- To understand the viewpoint of Orientalist Historians
- To evaluate the Orientalist School
- To understand the viewpoints of Imperialist School
- To know about eminent Imperialist School Historians
- To make readers acquainted with salient features of Imperialist School
- To understand the viewpoint of Cambridge School
- To know about eminent Cambridge School Historians
- To study the criticism of Cambridge School

10.2 INTRODUCTION

History as a discpline cannot be understood without the study of historiography. Historiography can be defined as the science of writing historical account in a systematic way by following proper methodology and use of authentic sources. As far as Indian history is concerned we come across different Schools of Historiograpies. These different Schools and historians belonging to it have follwed their own style of historiography. In this topic we are going to understand the historians and historiography of Orientalist School. This School mainly contributed in the field of Ancient Indian History. Most of the early historians belonging to Orientalist School were British. No doubt, later on Indians and other foreigners like French and German also contributed to the study of Indology.

As far as History of Modern India is concerned we come across various Schools of History writing or Historiography. One of such Schools is Colonial School which is also called as Imperialist School of Indian History. As the name suggests this School came into being during British rule. And of course, the Historians who floated this School were British. One of the features of the Imperialist School is that most of the Historians belonging to this School were critical of Indian culture and heritage. Particularly, we realise that these Historians used to look down upon the ancient ethos of Indians, especially the Hindu world view. It would be informative to study the details of this School further.

When we talk about the Historiography of Modern India one cannot leave behind the Camridge School. The Cambridge School indeed had developed its own Historiography of Modern India. This style of History writing was developed by the scholars and historians from Cambridge University, United Kingdom, hence, it is known as the Cambridge School.

10.3 A- ORIENTALIST SCHOOL

Indology

Before proceeding further, let us try to understand the meaning of Indology. From the word 'Indology' itself we can easily make out that it is the study related to India. In Indology scholars basically study history, culture, languages and literature of India. It also includes the study of Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. Some experts say that Al-Beruni, the 11th century Persian Scholar was first prominent foreigner to study India or Indology. But, one has to accept that in modern times during British rule the discipline of Indology was firmly established and thoroughly studied by the British Scholars. Most of these British Scholars were in the service of East India Company and later on in the service of British Crown serving in India. These Indologists by using the original literary sources in Indian languages, basically Sanskrit wrote the fabulous accounts of ancient Indian history. Later on the science of Archaeology was also developed by the British engineers and archaeological sources too were utilised in a systematic way for reconstructing the history of ancient India. These Indologists are called as Orientalists as well. Infact, if we say that the Indologists formed the Orientalist School of Indian History it would not be an exaggeration.

Significance of Indological or Orientalist School

The Indologists greatly contributed to the writing of ancient Indian history. The British rule was established in Bengal by the closing years of eighteenth century and by the middle of nineteenth century most of the parts of India went under British rule. India was invaded by many foreigners since ancient times. But, most of the foreigners who invaded India before British settled down in India and became the part of Indian culture and subsequently contributed to the development of Indian culture further. But the British proved to be very different kind of foreign rulers from the previous ones. First of all they did not invade India directly but came to India as traders and slowly and steadily brought India under their control. Even, Indians could not understand how and exactly when India was captured by British. In this respect British proved to be very cunning and their acumen in the political scheming was far superior to that of Indians. Hence, it could be observed that Indians had lost the confidence and sulking under humiliation. Not only so they were in a confused set of mind. At such a gloomy state of things. The British Orientalist historians rebuilt the ancient past or history of India with the gleamy picture. They brought to the fore the glorious past of India which not only brought India on the world stage but rekindled the interest of many scholars in ancient history of India. In this respect the study of Indology and the historians of Orientalist School is very significant.

The Sources Used by Orientalist historians

The early historians belonging to Orientalist School mainly used the literary sources for rebuidling the ancient past of India. These historians learnt the Sanskrit language and thoroughly studied the classical texts and religious literature and wrote their accounts. Afterwards even archaeological sources were utilised for writing the history. Here, one has to accept the fact that the Orientalists tried to read the Hindu texts such as Puranas and interpret it appropriately for reconstructing history. Apart from religious meaning of the texts they made efforts successfully to extract the religious data from it.

Select Eminent Orientalist School historians

Let us try to know more about some eminent historians belonging to Orientalist School.

William Jones

William Jones was born on 28 September 1746 in London. His father's name was also William Jones. Sir William Jones lost his father at the age of three. But he went on to attend the Harrow School and completed his education from University of Oxford. He also studied law. He was appointed as the Judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta. Apart from a great scholar he was philologist. Infact, we can say that his knowledge of many languages was an important factor behind his scholarship. William Jones learnt Sanskrit language from the Indian pundits. After learning Sanskrit he simply fall in love with this language. One of the greatest contribution of Sir William Jones was that he put forward the theory with logical conclusions that Sanskrit, Old Persian, Greek, Latin and many other modern European languages Belong to the same stock i.e. their origin is same. In order to prove it he gave the examples of various words in these languages and their etymology. Sir William Jones after getting acquainted with Sanskrit language translated famous and important Sanskrit works in English. Some of the Sanskrit texts translated by Sir William Jones include- Shakuntala, Gita Govind, Manusmruti, etc. These translations displayed to the world the intellectual genius of ancient Indians. One more important work done by Jones was the establishment of Asiatic Society of Bengal. Sir William Jones through his scholarly studies proved that Sandrocottas mentioned in ancient Greek was infact the great ancient Indian emperor Chandragupta and Palibothara mentioned in Greek was indeed the Patliputra. It can be considered as the greatest contribution of Sir William Jones to the history of ancient India which further hepled to resolve many mystries of history.

Henry T. Colebrooke

Henry Colebrooke was born in London in the year 1765. His father, Sir George Colebrooke was the Chairman of the East India Company. Henry T. Colebrooke was mathematician. At the very young age he came to India and mastered the Sanskrit language at Benars also known as Varanasi and Kashi. The city of Benares even today is considered as one of the important centres of Sanskrit and Hindu studies. He was appointed as Professor of Sanskrit at Fort William College. He studied the Vedic literature. One of his prominent works was 'Essays on the Vedas or the Sacred Writings of the Hindus'.

James Prinsep

James Prinsep's contribution to the ancient Indian Historiography was quite great. He was born Essex County on 20 August 1799. In 1819 he was appointed in Calcutta mint and subsequently was appointed as assay master at Benares mint. Prisep deciphered the Brahmi and Kharoshti scripts. It was the fantastic development in the area of study of ancient Indian history. During ancient times these scripts were in use. After deciphering Brahmi script the Ashokan Edicts, Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta and many other inscriptions and writings engraved on ancient coins were successfully read. Indeed, it was tremendous achievement in the study of ancient India.

Alexander Cunningham

Sir Alexander Cunningham was born in 1814 in London. He joined Bengal Engineers, the Military Engineering Regiment of the Indian Army of British East India Company. He was influenced by James Prinsep and they were very good friends. He was an archeaologist. He was associated with the Archeaological Survey of India. The excavations carried out at Sarnath and Sanchi could be considered as the most important contribution of Sir Alexander Cunningham. 'The Bhilsa Topes' was an important publication of his about the findings related to Buddhism. His other notable works were 'The Ancient Geography of India' and 'The Stupa of the Bharhut'. He also collected lots coins belonging to the era of ancient India.

Apart from above mentioned Orientalists there were few more scholars whose contribution to Indology and ancient Indian Historiography was quite great. Names of these Orientalists are- Max Muller, Anquetil Duperron, Eugene Burnouf, etc. Max Muller was German by origin. He had learnt Sanskrit language while in Germany. Later on around 1846 he went to England and around 1848 settled down in Oxford. He was also the Professor of modern European languages in Oxford University. One of his noteworthy contribution was editing of Rigveda. Another important publication of 'History of Sanskrit Literature'.

Anquetil Duperron was a French scholar known for translating the Persian translation of Upanishads. This Persian translation of Upanisads was done by Dara Shukoh, son of Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan. Eugene Burnouf was French Orientalist who is well-known for his French translation of Bhagavata Puran. He also brought forth the history of Buddhism.

Evaluation of Orientalist School

The Orientalist School greatly contributed in reconstructing the history of ancient India. In the beginning the Indian texts in Sanskrit and other languages were studied in depth and the history of ancient India was written. Decipherment of Brahmi and Kharoshti was pathbreaking achievement. Orientalists later on wrote the accounts of ancient Indian history on the basis of archaeological sources. They definitely brought out the fact that India was cradle of much intellectually advanced civilisation during ancient times. But, their emphasis on Aryan race is not universally accepted. Some people argue that it showed that the Aryan race people were superior to indigenous Indians. It ultimately led to the theory that the Aryans after entering India during ancient times built one of the greatest civilisations in the world. Some Imperialist School historians used this theory for defending the Imperialist British rule in India. Nevertheless, one has to accept the immense contribution of Orientalists to the history of ancient India.

Check your progress

Critically evaluate the Orientalist School

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10.3 B- IMPERIALIST SCHOOL

Features of Imperialist School

The exponents of Imperialist School thought that the ancient Indian culture was quite backward. They expressed the need for bringing changes in Indian society. And these historians or supporters of this School believed that spread of Christianity and Western European education will help to bring positive changes in Indian society. In other words they were of the view that the Hindu ideology and India's ancient civilization and culture will of very little use during nineteenth century and coming days. John Shore who was the Governor General of Bengal from 1793 to 1798 was also of more or less same view. It can be said that this School also had the influence of philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, 18th and 19th century philosopher from Britain. This utilitarian philosophy believes that the institutions be it political, religious and social should be judged from their utility point of view. In other words utility or usefulness of the institutions is very important. Hence, according to them it would be advisable to bring changes in the institutions in order to enrich them. In order to achieve this if necessary legal changes also should be effected. James Mill the major exponent of Imperialist School believed that Indian culture has become stagnant hence there is a need to make efforts in order to bring positive changes in it. These views or ideas about India were expressed by James Mill and those who appreciated his writings about India.

There was one more prominent Imperialist historian who was administrator in India. But, his views and opinions about India and Indians were quite different from that of James Mill. The name of this administrator historian was Mountstuart Elphinstone. He was the Governor of Bombay Presidency. In the capacity of Governor of Bombay Presidency he had brought impressive administrative reforms. In his honour only the Elphinstone College in Bombay (now Mumbai) was named after him. Elphinstone wrote his famous historical work on India entitled as 'History of Hindu and Muhammadan India' published in the year 1841. Elphinstone defenitely refuted the views of James Mill. Hence, we can say that the opinions of James Mill and Mountstuart Elphinstone differed from each other even though they are called as Imperialist historians. And, here we find that there were at least two points of views about India within Imperialist School. One was that of James Mill and his followers and second one was that of Elphinstone and his followers.

Nevertheless, the works of James Mill and Mountstuart Elphinstone entitled as 'The History of British India' (running into six volumes) and 'History of Hindu and Muhammadan India' were used as important references in Haileybury College where the candidates who would serve in civil service of East India Company in India were trained.

Prominent Imperialist School Historians

Let us try to get more information about some eminent historians belonging to Imperialist School also known as Colonial School.

James Mill

We have already mentioned about James Mill's views about India and his famous work entitled 'The History of British India' James Mill was Scottish i.e. he was born in Scotland. After taking higher education he decided to devote himself to the profession of serious and scholarly writing. He was quite intelligent person and built his identity as political philosopher, historian, psychologist, educational theorist, economist and also the reformer in the fields of political and legal affairs. He was in the service of the British East India Company. One can see that for writing his 'The History of British India' Mill made use of the official correspondence and papers related to India which were available in the office the East India Company. Of course, these papers would have been mainly related to administrative matters. Another important source of Mill's History was the accounts or writings of the travellers. Experts believe that he should have reffered to the historical works of the historians belonging to Orientalist School. But, one can easily sense that Mill had a dislike for the Orientalist School of historians. The work of James Mill was praised by the likes of John Stuart Mill who was none other than his son and intellectual scholar on his own. But, the historians belonging to Orientalist School such as H.H. Wilson criticised the book of James Mill, although they had recognised the hard work put in writing it and acknowledging as important work on the history of India. Some scholars are of the view that 'The History of British India' of James Mill was responsible for creating a distance between the Indian ruled and British rulers mainly based on the futile concept supremacy of white race.

Elliot

Sir Henry Miera Elliot was influenced by the work of James Mill. Elliot was trained in Haileybury College and served in the service of East India Company for nearly twenty six years. He rose to the post of Chief Secretary in the Foreign Department of British Government of India. He learnt the Persian language, the Court of language of Mughals. He utilised the knowledge of Persian not only for collecting the Persian sources related to Delhi Sultanate Mughal rule. Subsequently, he came up with his work on the history of Mediaeval India, especially the Muslim rule entitled 'The History of India as Told its own Historians'. It was a monumental work running into eight volumes. Elliot was assisted by Professor John Dowson who used to teach Hindustani at University College in London. This work of Elliot and Dowson strengthend the belief of the British imperial rulers of India in the principle of importance of rule of law should be given priority over self-rule for the natives.

Henry Maine

Henry Maine was born on 15th August 1822 in Leighton, England. He studied at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge. He was also tutor at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He served the East India Company's government in India. He advised the British government of India on the issue of need to learn Persian language for civil servants serving in India. He was Law Member in British Government of India. He by some scholars is not considered as historian in strict sense of the term. He had written a famous book entitled 'Ancient Law'. He also had expressed negative opinions about Indians and their culture.

James Fitzjames Stephens

He was born in London and related to Virginia Woolf, the famous British author of 18th and 19th century. He had studied at Trinity College, Cambridge University. He chose the legal career and had served in India as the Law member in Governor General's Council. He wrote many prominent works. He is known for his famous work entitled 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'. He believed in the idea that for betterment of India and more civilised India British rule was necessary. In other words we can say that he ascribed to the views of James Mill on great extent.

Vincent Smith

Vincent Arthur Smith was born on 3 June 1843 in Dublin. At present Dublin is the capital of the Republic of Ireland. After passing the Indian Civil Service examination he was appointed in the then United Provinces today's states of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in north India. He spent his last days in Oxford after retirement from the service of British government of India. His famous historical works on India include 'The Early History of India' and 'The Oxford History of India'. After examining these works of Vincent Smith we definitely come to conclusion that he was Imperialist historian and tried to show how Europeans were superior to that of Indians.

William Harrison Moreland

William Harrison Moreland (W.H. Moreland) was born on 23 July 1868 in the city of Belfast in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is part of United Kingdom and Belfast is capital of Northern Ireland. He was student of Clifton College in Somerset. He was also in Tritinity College, Cambridge University after clearing his Indian Civil Service examination. W. H. Moreland contributed in the field of economic history. His famous works on economic history of India include 'Agriculture of the United Provinces', 'Revenue Administration of the United Provinces', 'Akbar's Land Revenue System', 'India at the death of Akbar', 'From Akbar to Aurangzeb', 'Agrarian System of Moslem India', etc. We find that through his writings Moreland tried to show that economic condition of India under British rule was better than the previous indigenous rules, especially the the Mughals. We can come to this conclusion on the basis of one observation made by Moreland wherein he says that the salt was much costlier during the Mughal rule in comparison to that of British times.

Mountstuart Elphinstone

Without mentioning the name of Mountstuart Elphinstone any writing or discussion about the Imperialist historians cannot be completed. He was born on 6 October 1779 in Dunbartonshire, Scotland. He was Civil Servant in the Service of British East India Company. He had served in different parts of India. He was Governor of Bombay Presidency as well. His contribution in the field of law and education is still remembered.

Elphinstone acknowledged the rich culture and history of Indians. Hence, he tried to correct the criticism of India done by James Mill at least in a sober manner. Elphinstone wrote his famous work entitled 'History of Hindu and Muhammadan India'. As far as Elphinstone's book is concerned it was mainly based on his experiences and interaction with Indians during his service in India and also that of Indian accounts. In his book Elphinstone had tried to fix the date of the Rig Vedic period as well as the dynasties mentioned in Puranas. We can see that his emphasis was more on cultural aspect than that of political one. He writes about the economy, trade, society, religion, administration, arts, etc. of Indians during ancient period. Elphinstone had words of praise for India and Indians. Other historians who followed Elphinstone's style or path include James Grant Duff and William Erskine.

James Grant Duff

James Grant Duff was born 8 July 1789 in Banff (Scotland). He was in British East India Company's army and served in Western India (Today's Maharashtra). Even though he was a soldier he after retiring to Scotland came up with fantastic work on the Maratha history entitled 'A History of the Maharattas'. This book was based on the original papers of the Peshwas and also other primary sources found from temples and other such places. Hence, naturally it becomes one of the authentic records about the Maratha history.

Check your progress

Analyse the Imperialist School

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10.3 C- CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

Viewpoint of Cambridge School

As far as Historiography of India is concerned various schools have put forward their own styles and viewpoints. Here we can give the examples of Orientalist School of Historiography, Marxist School and the Nationalist School. All these Schools have tried to interpret and write the History of India on their own philosophical principles and basis. For instance, the historians belonging to Orientalist or Indological School tried to build the history of India on the basis of religious and secular literature and especially, the archaeological sources like coins, inscriptions, sculpture, monuments. The great historians, most of whom were in the service of East India Company viz. Sir William Jones, James Princep and Alexander Cunningham were some of the notable historians affiliated to Orientalist School. There contribution in rebuilding or reconstructing the history of Ancient India was tremendous and unparalleled. These great men even learnt the Sanskrit language and deciphered the ancient scripts like Brahmi.

As far as Marxist School is concerned they like Karl Marx tried to adopt the materialistic understanding of History. Here one should keep in mind that, even though this Scool was called as the Marxist School, the historians belonging to this School were necessarily not Marxists. One can say that the Marxist School historians reinterpreted the sources by keeping in mind the materialistic approach of Karl Marx. Some of the prominent Marxist School historians are- D. D. Kosambi, R. S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra and Irfan Habib.

The Nationalist School tried to refute the viewpoint of the Imperialist historians such as James Mill, V. A. Smith, etc. who tried to paint India as a backward civilization compared to West in general and England in particular. They no doubt tried to promote the nationalism and pride for Indian civilization. The notable Nationalist historians werw R. C. Dutt, R. C. Majumdar, A. S. Altekar among others.

The Imperialist School maintained more or less views that the Indian culture has stopped moving ahead with times with new ideas and it is quite inferior, especially compared to the West. The exponents of Imperialist School were James Mill and Vincent Smith among others.

Having talked about all the above mentioned Schools of Indian Historiography, let us come to the Cambridge School. As far as Cambridge School of Indian History, particularly the Modern Indian History is concerned it was founded around last quarter of twentieth century. This School was called as Cambridge School because the historians who wrote about Modern Indian History were primarily from the Cambridge University located in United Kingdom.

The Cambridge School historians in principle believed that there was no contradiction between the imperialism and nationalism, of course Indian nationalism which started developing from the last quarter of nineteenth century onwards. The East India Company started the process of establishment of British rule from the Battle of Plassey (1757) onwards. And, by 1857 most of the parts of India were brought by the East India Company under its either direct or indirect control. After the Great Revolt of 1857 the Indians started becoming conscious about their rights and also the economic drain of India at the hands of their English imperial masters. The result of it was the development of sense of nationalism by the Indians. The result of it was not only demand of rights but also awakening of the Indian masses in twentieth century, especially under the leadership of mass leaders like Mahatma Gandhi.

The Cambridge School historians asserted that the political leadership of India of that time wanted their own share in the whole scheme of power especially political power structure developed in India by the British rulers. They also gave emphasis on local interests and factional rivalries of Indian nationalism and Indian leaders. The scholars of this School say that the development of Indian nationalism was an offshoot of the centralisation of government and the element of representation in it. These historians believed that the interference of British government at local level made the Indians with political ambitions to turn their attention at national level. In this way one can say that the Cambridge School states that the Indian nationalism was the product of a sort of impetus given by the policies of British government.

One can say that year 1973 marked the arrival of Cambridge School of Modern Indian Historiography. In this year an important work entitled 'Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870 to 1940' was published. This work with new approach about Modern Indian History was published by the Cambridge University Press. It was edited by John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal. This School invited the criticism of trying to downplay Indian Nationalism and prove it to be a false phenomenon.

Important Exponents of Cambridge School

Following were the important historians of Cambridge School:

John Gallagher

John Andrew Gallagher also known as Jack Gallagher was born in 1919. He joined the famous Trinity College, Cambridge University, England with the intension to study History. But, with the beginning of Second World War (1939-1945) he decided to serve his country by joining the Royal Tank Regiment in British armed forces. He was on the field in countries like Greece, Italy and parts of Northern African continent. After the end of Second World War he resumed his studies at Cambridge University. He is famous for his scholarly works like 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' and 'Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism'. John Gallagher guided number of Ph.D. students at Cambridge University. One of his star students was Anil Seal. 'Emergence of Indian Nationalism' was the title of the thesis of Anil Seal guided or supervised by John Gallagher. It was published in the year 1968.

Gordon Johnson

Gordon Johnson was born in the year 1943. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge University, England. He was fellow at the Trinity College between 1966 to 1974 and held the post of lecturer in Oriental Studies at Cambridge University. Among other important posts held by him were- President of Wlfson College, Cambridge, Director of Cambridge University Centre of South Asian Studies, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University, Chair of the Syndicate governing Cambridge University Press and the President of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. He served as the General Editor of an important work on Indian History in 1979 which was entitled as 'New Cambridge History of India'.

Anil Seal

Anil Seal like John Gallagher and Gordon Johnson was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge University, England. He got his BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees from Cambridge University. He is considered as one of the founders of the Cambridge School. His writings certainly contributed in interpreting the Indian History in new way. Apart from his scholarly writings and historical research Anil Seal has played an important role in establishing many Trusts which have helped lots of students to take education from Cambridge University.

Contribution of Cambridge School

The exponents of Cambridge School as mentioned earlier tried to interpret the Modern Indian History in novel manner. According to this School in closing years of nineteenth century and begging of twentieth century the politics of British India at that point of time was influenced by institutional opportunities created by the factors like English education, representation in political structure and other institutional innovations. The Cambridge School opined that region was an important point of political change during British period. The Cambridge School historians concentrated on educated elite in India and conflict between different castes and communities which were competing with each other for getting their own share and fruits, in a way rewards offered by the English education and political representation. One can say that the Cambridge School was opposed to the Marxist Historiography and its interpretation of Indian History.

In a way in its criticism of Marxist Historiography, the Cambridge School offered the following arguments:

The driving force behind the modern and nationalist politics in India was institutional innovations introduced by the British rulers and not the economic changes as advocated by Marxist School of scholars.

At regional level and not the national stage the course of political change was witnessed, at least in the beginning as a result of institutional changes effected by the British. Also the traditional cultures of respective regions in different parts of India played crucial role in this regard.

It rejected the theory of conflict between classes and propounded the idea that emergence of English educated Indian elites and rivalries between different castes and communities in respective regions for acquiring positions which came to their way due to English education and representation in law making bodies that is legislatures.

Some of the prominent works of Cambridge School are as following:

- Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism- John Gallagher
- Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Anil Seal
- Locality, Province and Nation: John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (Editors)
- Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism: Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1890 to 1905: Gordon Johnson
- The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad 1880-1920: C.A. Bayly
- The Emergence of Provincial Politics: Madras Presidency 1870-1920: D.A. Washbrook
- The Politics of South India 1920-1973: C.J. Baker
- The Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929-1942: B.R. Tomlinson
- Power, Profit and Politics: C.J. Baker, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal

All the above mentioned scholars can be called as Cambridge Historians and their above mentioned writings echoed what is dubbed as the Cambridge Schhol interpretation of Modern Indian History. Some of the above mentioned works, infact were the thesis guided by Cambridge School doyens like Anil Seal.

It can be said that the Cambridge School historians tried to probe the history of modern Indian from the viewpoint of quest for search for power, albeit the political power on the part of individuals and various groups of individuals who were at a time even divided into various factions. Hence, they went down from nation to region to local level for arriving at answers to their historical queries. In other words for them the local developments, especially in the field of politics were very important. Indeed, one has to accept that it was the new dimension and angle given by the Cambridge School to the History of Modern India. Their analysis was focused on the establishment of relationship among the local factions and connections into all India political structure.

The main argument of the Cambridge School was that the government was centralised and in this centralised system the representation was introduced which ultimately lead to local politics in a way converting into or amalgamating with national politics.

We can say that the Cambridge School historians emphasised on the point that in Indian small towns at local level there used to be an association of patrons and who used to cater to the needs of their clients. Here one can cite the example of C.A. Bayly's work entitled 'The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad 1880-1920'. Bayly makes the point that in the town of Allahabad there used to be the commercially successful notable persons who were quite popular and known as power wielding rich and noteworthy persons. These men used to be actively involved in local politics as well. People belonging to different castes and communities had connections or relations with these local rich notables. In other words these local patrons had to satisfy the needs of these people from locality belonging to different castes and communities as the economic activities of these people were mostly woven around these local influential people.

One of the important observations made about the Indian politicians by the Cambridge School was that they were actively involved in dealing with the variety of interests of Indian society at different levels and hence, were in a way in touch with different castes, classes and religions and therby building connections with them. We have mentioned about C.A. Bayly in this context and it would be important to mention here that another prominent Cambridge School stalwart viz. Gordon Johnson agreed with C.A. Bayly, infact he echoed the views similar to that of Bayly. We have already mentioned earlier that noteworthy work of Girdon Johnson was- 'Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism: Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1890 to 1905'.

We have mentioned about C. A. Bayly, hence, it would be appropriate to know about him little bit more. The specialisation of Bayly was British Inperial History, Indian History and Global History. He hailed from Tunbridge Wells, a town in Kent County located in located in southeastern part of Engalnd. He completed his B.A. and Post-graduation from Oxford University. He was Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History at the Cambridge University. He was co-editor of 'The New Cambridge History of India'.

The Cambridge School vehemently put forward the point that politics was basically a local matter in India. The local infulencial people were mainly involved in the political affairs at that level. Poltics was considered as the source of power, resources and mainly status by these local strongmen. And in order to achieve their motive they used to influence and lure various castes and communities from the respective localities. Such types of different groups used to be there which could be called as the factions.

These factions were sort of organisations or more specifically associations consisting the leaders i.e. patrons and their faithful followers.

One of the important features of these local political groupings was that different communities and on some occasions castes used to come together for achieving their goals. On the contrary same castes and communities very rarely joined hands as far as leadership is concerned. One should remember that by locality we mean the districts, municipalities and villages. Most of the times the resources at these local levels, especially the towns and villages the local level powerful individuals had control over local resources. Not only so, but they even had so much influence that they used to distribute the resources in their respective localities. It was in a way possible for these local patrons to control the resources at local level because of quite a less amount of non interference of imperial or British goveenment at local level. But, things statred changing when the British government started effecting changes in bureaucratic structure and the constitutional reforms. Due to it these local politically strongmen started concentrating on power at the central level. The motive behind or various factors which prompted the British government to bring in these changes included to improve the government funtioning, to amass more wealth and also to do more good things as well. Hence, we can say that these mixed ideas were responsible for the constitutional and bureaucratic reforms. These kind of changes were introduced by British around closing years of nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century. Slowly different localities started coming together or joining hands and get connected with the politics of higher or great level.

Most of the historians belonging to Cambridge School as mentioned earlier say that the Indians were active in local politics in the beginning and slowly started moving towards the Centre. For instance, Anil Seal also expressed the same kind of views. According to him with the emergence of centralised and more representative government it was not enough for the Indians to get involved in local level politics only but now they felt the need to move upward as far as ladder of politics was concerned. In order to negotiate for the power with the government the led to the provincial and afterwards national level of politics. The experts of Cambridge School said that all India political organisations like Indian National Congress different set of political sttrategies at provincial and central level respectively. The Indians had to do the distribution of the political power and other related things to it within the framework provided by the British government. This School also believed that the Indians till now active at local level politics found it necessary and tried to build the political associations which would help them to make their mark at Central level.

The Cambridge School historians in a way called the early political leadership of India as privileged elites. It can be argued that they wanted to say that these Indians were already the notable figures in their respective localities. They were well to do persons and commanded respect in society. These patrons wanted to get recognition and be important stakeholders in the new power structure introduced by the British. According to the Cambridge School these early Indians had this limited ambition. And these historians were sceptical to believe that with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi the political movement in India attracted the masses and became truly all India level mass movement overnight, rather they give this credit to the political reforms effeceted by the British government from time-to-time. In this respect they say that these reforms gave new lease of life or impetus to the political developments in India and of course the national politics. And ultimately resulted into the conversion of small elite club politics into mass movement. We can say that by saying so these historians were definitely downplaying the role of different leaders and especially, Mahatma Gandhi in revitalising the political scenario in India and ensuring the participation of Indian masses into the national movement. The Cambridge School writes that the reforms introduced or suggested under the recommendations of Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, Simon Commission and even Cripps Proposals played their own role in strengthening the national movement in India.

The reforms introduced by the British resulted in changing the power structure at local level and hence, the Indians found it necessary to become active at national level. Some of the stalwarts of Cambridge School argued that some people would go to any extent for acquiring the power. And these people want to wield political power just for the sake of power and they do not have pious intensions like bringing positive changes in social or economic affairs. In order to gain power the political leadership was at a times was ready to forget the caste, class, community and other differences and bring the people from these cross sections together. One of the important observations of this School was that in a way there was no contradiction imperial British rulers and Indian ruled. It seems that this School also tries to point out that Indian National movement did not have the common goal or aim and there was rivalry among the Indian leaders. This argument leads one to believe that the Indian political leaders were mainly guided by selfish motives. This School, it can be said that gave too much emphasis on political aspect and by doing so neglected other angles like economic and societal. Hence, we can conviniently say that the Cambridge School lacks the balanced approach. Having said so, one has to accept the fact that the Cambridge School has given the new interpretation and angle to look at the modern Indian History.

We talked about C. J. Baker an eminent historian from Cambridge School. He completed his MA and Ph.D. Degree from Cambridge University. He was historian of the politics of late colonial South India at Cambridge University. His Doctoral Research resulted into the publication of 'South India: Political Institutions and Political Change, 1880-1940. His another important work was 'The Politics of South India, 1920-37'. While the former was published in 1975 and latter was published in 1976.

D. A. Washbrook was another eminent historian belonging to Cambridge School. He was born in London. He studied in Trinity College, Cambridge University and completed his Ph.D. He worked in Cambridge University as well as Oxford University. His two famous works on India were 'Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency, 1870-1920' and 'South India: Political Institutions and Political Change 1880-1940', the former was based on his Ph.D. thesis and the latter was written along-with Christopher Baker. D. A. Washbrook's contribution in Modern South Indian History was immense.

Check your progress

Analyse the Cambridge School.

10.4 SUMMARY

The Orientalist School is one of the important Schools which contributed to the historiography of ancient India. Some scholars are of the opinion that by the beginning of the British rule in India during modern times Indians had the vague memories of their rich cultural past. Even, the Indian society was suffering from lots of handicaps like Sati system, precarious condition of women, etc. But, the discoveries made by the Orientalists about the cultural heritage of India totally changed picture. Not only entire world came to know about the fabulous Indian past but in a way also helped the Indians to regain the confidence and self-esteem. It was to the Orientalists otherwise the great rulers like Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka Maurya, Samudragupta, etc. and many more facts and mystries of ancient India would have remained unsolved.

After studying the Imperialist School of historians, we can come to the conclusion that broadly speaking James Mill and Mountstuart Elphinstone followed their own styles of writing history. As far as James Mill was concerned he criticised Indians and their legacy. On the contary Mountstuart Elphinstone was in love with India and Indians. Mill and Elphinstone had their own followers. One has to accept the contribution of these two traditions of Imperialist School in historiography. Both these traditions influenced the future historians directly or indirectly.

The Cambridge School came up with new interpretation of Modern Indian History. This interpretation gave emphasis on political angle, especially the political angle. It observed that the powerful and rich Indians tried to create their poltical influence at local level and gradually shifted their attention at national level. Indirectly, this School tried to give credit to British political reforms for this change. It, one can say tried to undermine the objectives of National Movement of India by suggesting that poltical goals of Indian leaders were more important for them than National Movement. For such type of interpretation and Historiography of Cambridge School it came under criticism. Nevertheless, it also got some appreciation as well for looking towards the History of Modern India from this new aspect.

10.5 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the Imperialist School of Historiography.

2. Write a note on various historians belonging to Orientalistt School.

3. Make an estimate of the Orientalist School.

1. Analyse the Imperialist School of Historiography.

2. Write a note on various historians belonging to Imperialist School.

3. Evaluate the Imperialist School.

1. Write a note note on Cambridge School.

2. Give analytical view about Cambridge School.

3. Briefly write about different Historians of Cambridge School.

10.6 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Sreedharan E., A Textbook of Historiography 500 BC to 2000, Orient Blackswan Private Limited, Hyderabad

2. Singh G. P., Perspectives on Indian History, Historiography and Philosophy of History, D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi

3. Jain Laxmi, Historical Method and Historiography, Vayu Education of India, New Delhi

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11

NATIONALIST AND MARXIST SCHOOL

Unit Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the Historiography of Natiinalist School
- To understand the viewpoint of Nationalist Historians
- To evaluate the Nationalist School
- To study the Historiography of Marxist School
- To understand the viewpoint of Marxist Historians
- To evaluate the Marxist School

11.1 INTRODUCTION

For writing history sources are very important. On the basis of sources either written or archeaological the history is written. While writing history of a particular era or an event, historian tries to interpret the sources in his or her own way. Even though the sources are same but the interpretation of a particular event might be interpreted differently by two historians. Hence, we can say that the interpretation of sources subjectively by a historian or group of historians have led to different Schools of history writing or Historiography. One of the important Schools of history related to Indian history is known as the Nationalist School. Let us try to understand various aspect of Nationalist School.

Marxist School is one of the important School of Historiography of India. One should not be under impression that the historians belonging to this School were Marxists. These historians rather adopted the method of Karl Marx for interpreting and subsequently writing history. Marxist Historians in a way believed that political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces and are interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions and the main reason behind the conflict is material needs. The Marxist School historians gave emphasis on reading the historical sources from new angle i.e. Marxist angle or dialectical materialism by posing new questions and seeking their answers.

11.2 VIEWPOINT OF NATIONALIST SCHOOL

We can say that from the later half of nineteenth century the fertile ground for the rise of Nationalist School was prepared. The rise of Nationalist School can be considered as the fitting reply to the Imperialist School. The historians belonging to Imperialist School were mainly British. Imperialist School of historians though did the good job by writing history of India and bringing fore many unknown facets and facts of Indian history, they criticised the Indian culture and traditions. Imperialist historians tried to show that it was to the British rule that India is witnessing good changes in different walks of life, otherwise Indian society had become stagnant and it was quite backward in the past.

The Nationalist historians revisited the sources of Indian history and reinterpreted it. In order to refute the criticism done by Imperialist historians.The Nationalist historians realised the need for enthusing Indians about their history, culture and traditions by the closing years of nineteenth century. That was the time when British rule was firmly established in India. Not only so the British were exploiting India economically. British rulers were systematically making use of the theories and views floated by the Imperialist historians in order to pointout India poorly and demoralise the Indians. This strategy was adopted by the British so that it would become easier for them to rule India. By doing so the British wanted to prove the point that British rule was badly needed in order to develop India which had become a stagnant nation as far as the development of civilisation was concerned. Unfortunately many Indians has also started accepted this diffident state of mind. Educated Indians were quite happy and satisfied in emulating the British and Western way of life. The Nationalist historians came to conclusion that in order to re-establish the confidence of the Indians in Indianness and to make them feel proud again it was the need of the hour to reinterpret the sources of Indian history and present the glorifying and positive picture of Indian past. They thought and thought it correctly that the answers to the present problem of India could be found in the past of India. They looked towards history not only just as the recorded events of past but the positive weapon in order to recreate the confidence and proud feeling about one's own nation. From this point of view or by keeping this goal the Nationalist historians started writing the history of India.

Scholars like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee stated that in order to promote the sense of unity and national pride it is very much necessary to study the history is f the nation carefully. The work does not stop here but one after studying history should try to write the history of the country in proper manner and to build the confidence of the people. Some of the Nationalist historians defended whatever was Indian. Especially, they praised the

Hinduism which was the target of Imperialist historians, Christian Missionaries and the British rulers. Nationalist School refuted the charge of the British that India was historically not the united country by emphasising that since ancient times there was religious, spiritual and cultural unity among the Indians, especially the Hindus. The Hindus from each and every corner of India historically beleived in same set of religious principles and ethos. As we have mentioned earlier, the nationalist Historiography was developed by the nationalist historians in order to defend the Indian culture including Hinduism.

The Nationalist School reexamined the sources of history and tried to explain how rich the Indian culture and civilization during ancient times. Historians like K. P. Jayaswal after examining the sources of history thoroughly came to the conclusion that the political system in ancient India was highly developed with the democratic features of modern parliamentary form.

11.3 EMINENT NATIONALIST SCHOOL SCHOLARS/HISTORIANS

As we have said above, the Nationalist School Historiography started taking shape from the closing years of nineteenth century and by the first half of twentieth century it had blossomed in an awesome way.

Lokmanya Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, popularly called as Lokmanya Tilak is known to Indians as great Extremist leader of Indian National Congress. He inspired generations of freedom fighters including revolutionaries from different parts of India. He was born on 23 July 1856 in Chikhli village of Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra in Chitpavan Brahmin family. He was the intellectual giant by all means. Since his childhood he was genius in the subject of Mathematics. He also had a great command on Sanskrit language, the language of the Hindu religious scriptures. His scholarly works include 'The Arctic Home in the Vedas', 'The Orion' and 'Gitarahasya' among others. In the 'Artic Home in the Vedas' Lokmanya Tilak argued in a scholarly way that the original home of the Aryans was the Arctic in the extreme north of the earth and from there the Aryans migrated southwards. In 'The Orion' Tilak tried to fix the period during which Vedas, the oldest Hindu scriptures were composed. 'Gitarahasya', as title indicates was the commentary on Bhagvadgita. These and other writings of Lokmanya Tilak definitely inspired the Nationalist School.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee would be remembered forever as the great inspirer for the educated Hindus in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and subsequently as the pillar of guidance to the Nationalist School historians, of course through his writings. He was born in 1838 in Naihati in Bengal. He was the Civil Servant. He wrote mainly novels which inspired many young Hindu nationalists. 'Anandmath' can be considered as his most inspirational work for the Nationalists. The song

'Vande Mataram' from this book made many Indians to sacrifice for the sake of their nation. At present 'Vande Mataram' has been recognised as the national song of India. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee believed that in order to inspire the people and create the feelings of unity, pride and love for freedom it is important to study history. He also emphasised on the point that history writing is very important. In his opinion India was ruled by foreign power like British at that point time because Indians did not write their own history.

V. D. Savarkar

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, poupularly known as Swatantryaveer Savarkar was a great nationalist. He was born on 23 May 1883 in Nashik, Maharashtra. He was a Chitpavan Brahmin. He firmly believed in Hindu philosophy. Savarkar was actively involved in revolutionary nationalism and inspired many young revolutionaries who were ready to sacrifice their life for the nation by taking on the British rulers. He was known for his writings about nationalism and Hinduism. The Indian War of Independence, 1857 and Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? are two famous works authored by him among others. As far as the ‘The First War of Independence' was concerned he argued in this book that the Revolt of 1857 was not just the Sepoy Mutiny but it was infact, the first great war declared by Indians on British in order to get independence from exploitative British rule.

Romesh Chander Dutt

Romesh Chander Dutt was another prominent Nationalist historian. He was born on 13 August 1848 and studied in Presidency College, Calcutta. He was Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer. He served in many parts of Bengal Presidency as government servant. He was associated with Indian National Congress as well becoming the President of Indian National Congress in 1899. His approach was very scholarly as far as History writing was concerned. His voluminous work on ancient Indian history entitled as ‘Civilisation in Ancient India' is hailed as one of the classics and scholarly work of History. It is said that this book talks about the ancient India and its institution in a very balanced manner and gives beautiful picture of historical facts. R. C. Dutt realised that literature can be used as vital source material for writing history. ‘Literature of Bengal’ was another important work of R. C. Dutt. ‘Economic History of India’ is yet another scholarly presentation of R. C. Dutt as the title of the book indicates this work talks about the economic scenario in British India. It is very studious book based on the authentic sources such as parliamentary papers and statistical data.

K. P. Jayaswal

Kashi Prasad Jayaswal (K. P. Jayaswal) was born on 27 November 1881 in Mirzapur. He studied from the University of Allhabad. He studied at Oxford University as well and was also Barrister. His expertise was in the history of ancient India. His important works include ‘Hindu Polity’ and ‘History of India 150AD to 350AD’. Jayaswal’s writings definitely presented the case of India in a very positive way.

G. S. Sardesai

Govind Sakharam Sardesai was in the employment of Baroda state ruled by the Maratha rulers Gaikwads. He was born on 17 May 1865 in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. He studied at Ratnagiri and Poona. He was Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda. He is also known as Riyaasatkar. His works mainly dealt with the Maratha history. His most of the works were in Marathi language but 'New History of the Marathas' was written in English. He had friendly relations with yet another great Indian historian viz. Jadunath Sarkar.

Some other prominent Indian historians included Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Radha Kumud Mukherji, H. C. Raychaudhari, Jadunath Sarkar.

11.4 EVALUATION OF NATIONALIST SCHOOL

The historians belonging to Nationalist School indeed played an important role by reinterpreting the historical sources. It resulted into writing of Indian history from different point of view, mainly the nationalist view. This type of history writing played its own role in encouraging and giving an impetuous to the national struggle of India agay British rule. Not only so, but it also promoted the sense of national pride among Indians. After reading the great historical works of Nationalist School historians Indians started believing that they have the great historical and cultural privilege and their ancestors had built very advanced and powerful civilisations and empires. Having said it, one needs to examine the other side of the coin as well.

Some scholars point out that one of the defects of Nationalist School Historiography is certain amount of compromise about the principle of objectivity while writing history. It could be easily made out that the nationalist historians definitely wanted to motivate the Indian mind and provide an impetus to the national freedom struggle. While doing so they at least in some amount compromised with the methodical aspect of history writing by following the principle of interpreting sources as per their convinience in a selective manner. It is said that they also some times contradicted the views.

Whatever may be said or criticism is done one has to accept the fact that Nationalist School was successful in creating the sense of pride among Indians. Another contribution of this School was that it motivated the Indians to take up the job or responsibility of writing the history of their own civilisation, culture and nation.

Check your progress

Critically evaluate the Nationalist School

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Additional Readings

1. Sreedharan E., A Textbook of Historiography 500 BC to 2000, Orient Blackswan Private Limited, Hyderabad
2. Singh G. P., Perspectives on Indian History, Historiography and Philosophy of History, D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi
3. Jain Laxmi, Historical Method and Historiography, Vayu Education of India, New Delhi

11.5 MARXIST SCHOOL

Prominent Marxist School historians

Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi

Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi (D.D. Kosambi) is considered as the main torchbearer of Marxist School of Indian Historiography. He was born on 31 July 1907 in Goa. D. D. Kosambi's father was also academician. D. D. Kosambi was a great intellectual who was scholar in various subjects such as Mathematics, Statistics, German language, etc. He had worked as Professor of Mathematics in Fergusson College, Pune and other premier institutes like Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. He was educated abroad as well in the institutes like Harvard, United States.

Later on Kosambi turned towards study of History. He started his historical studies with numismatics. He is aptly called as the doyen of Marxist School Indian Historiography. His famous works on history include: An Introduction to the Study of History, The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline, Exaperating Essays: Exercises in Dialectical Method, Myth and Reality: Studies in the Foundation of Indian Culture, etc.

Kosambi was of the view that the traditional European style or method of history writing would not be useful in case of India, especially ancint period. This is the case because there was lack authentic sources which is the mainstay of Western style of history writing. According to him the study of tools developed by human being at various stages of life in order to earn livelihood and advance the lifestyle can be varifiable and would be reliable source for history writing, particularly the period of pre-history. It can be seen that Karl Marx more or less had made same type of observations. According to this School there is a close connection between the means of production and social organisation of human kind.

Kosambi extensively made use of archaeological remains found in India for reconstructing or writing the ancient history of India. Archaeological remains such as graves, houses, instruments of production, caves, etc. are excavated from various sites in India. These remains were exploited by him for arriving at conclusions. He made use of comparative and interdisciplinary method for his interpretations. He had the knowledge of Sanskrit knowledge as well which helped him in interpreting the Sanskrit texts and draw conclusions. He also fixed the dates of punch marked coins of ancient India with the help of his expertise on the subject of Mathematics. He has explained the travel of tribal life to caste formations. And the economic or agricultural tool like plough might have played an important role in it. He has opined that during ancient times the non Brahmanical elements might have got assimilated into Brahmanical culture and would have resulted into the process of Sanskritisation. Kosambi has put forward various interpretations about the Indus Valley Civilization, Aryan and Non-Aryan relations as well as rise of religions like Buddhism and Jainism. According to him changes in technology, detribalization and rise of urban centers offer the economic backround or explanation of birth of Buddhism and Jainism during ancient India.

After reading the works of D. D. Kosambi one has to accept the fact that he was the great intellectual and employed the knowledge of subjects like Mathematics and Sankrit in history writing beautifully. Of course, as time passes some of his theories and interpretations might be challenged in the light of new evidences and sources but his works will definitely help and inspire the future historians.

Romila Thapar

Romila Thapar is another important historian belonging to Marxist School of Historiography. She was educated from Punjab University and School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. She is also the recipient of prestigious American Kluge Prize in recognition of her contribution in the subject of history.

The important works of Romila Thapar, especially on the history of Ancient India include: Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas, Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations, Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History (Ed.), History of India Volume One and Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300.

In her celebrated work Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas Thapar has given the indepth analysis of the reign of Mauryan Emperor Asoka. She in this work has made a point that in order to keep intact the vast and diverse empire if the Mauryas there was a need of strong concept of state and nationalistic feelings.

One can say that Romila Thapar does the scholarly interpretation of the historical facts and sources. In 'History of India Volume One' she has made a point that the political events and economic and social events are related to each other. Economic changes or changes in economic structure infulence the social relationships as well as political developments. Not only so Romila Thapar while describing the political history has beautifuly explained the interrelationships between religion, economic, social, artistic and literary aspects. 'Ancient Indian Social History' is another excellent work of Romila Thapar in which she has talked about various aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism. In this book she has also talked about the origin of caste system and says that the caste system might have originated in Harrapan culture only. In 'Interpreting Early India' she has questioned the stereotypes about the theory of Aryan race and absolute use of political power by the rulers. She has systematically proved that there was rise of urban centers and flourishing trade during ancient times.

R. S. Sharma

Ram Sharan Sharma was the historian of international repute known for his Marxist method. He was born in Barauni. He used to teach in Patna and Delhi University and also was Visiting Faculty at University of Toronto. He was also the Senior Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). The prominent works of R. S. Sharma include: 'Sudras in Ancient India', 'Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India', 'India's Ancient Past', 'Early Medieval Indian Society: A Study in Feudalisation', 'Urban Decay in India c. 100 to c. 1000', 'Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Ancient India' among others.

In 'Sudras in Ancient Past' R. S. Sharma has explained that the skills of Sudras and the profits created by the Viasyas played important role in the development during ancient times. He has also argued that in the earlier phase i.e. during Early Vedic times the Indian society was tribal and pastoral and later on it got converted into class based society. In this book he has thrown light on the different transformations which took place in the life and status of Sudras at different times in ancient period.

In 'Indian Feudalism' he has pointed out that the political nature of Indian feudalism can be understood by studying the land revenue systems and other aspects related to land. In 'Urban Decay in India' R. S. Sharma argues that during the period of 200 BC to 300 AD the urbanisation was at its peak. Later on the process of decline in the towns started and according to him the main cause responsible for it was the decline in the trade with far off empires. This first cycle of decline in urbanisation was set in after sixth century of Common Era. 'Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India' is another classic work of R. S. Sharma and the Marxist method is greatly applied in the analysis and arriving at conclusions in it. In this book he has explained the reason behind the creation of varna system. Apart from it he gives many other economic examples which influenced the society and overall social organisation in ancient India. The title 'Light on Early Indian Society and Economy' itself is an indicator to the Marxist method of writing.

Bipan Chandra

Bipan Chandra was born in 1928 in Kangra. He was specialist in Modern Independence Movement of India and also Mahatma Gandhi. He was educated at Stanford University among others. The prominent works of Bipan Chandra include: 'The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism', 'Nationalism and Colonialism in India', 'India's Struggle for Independence' and 'Communalism in Modern India' among others. Bipan Chandra has commented on the Indian Capitalism and Indian Capitalist class and its nature in his 'Nationalism and Colonialism'. Bipan Chandra agrees with the Marxist view that Communalism in India is the one of the results of the Colonialism. In his book titled 'The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism', Chandra has analysed the economic nationalism of Indian National Movement.

Irfan Habib

Irfan Habib was born in 1931 in Vadodara in educated and affluent family. He was educated from Aligarh Muslim University and also Oxford University. He is perhaps the most famous Marxist School historian specialising in the history of Medieval India. His father Mohammad Habib was also historian.

Some of the important works of Irfan Habib include: 'Interpreting Indian History', 'Caste and Money in Indian History', 'Problems of Marxist Historiography', 'The Agrarian System of Mughal India', 'An Atlas of the Mughal Empire' and 'The Cambridge Economic History of India' (Co-editor- Tapan Chaudhuri).

In his 'Interpreting Indian History' Habib says that the historian should give emphasis on interpreting the historical facts, instead of just narrating it. In this book he has also explained the newly formed social organisation after the Ghurid and Turkish invasions. In order to analyse it he has made use of various aspects such as slavery, serfdom, wage labour, surplus value in the form of rent and profit and the system of distribution of surplus.

It can be said that the most important point made by Irfan Habib in 'The Agrarian System of Mughal India' was his analysis of the contradiction in social formation in Mediaeval India. In this context he says that it lies between the central political power i.e. state and the class of peasants. The same contradiction could be witnessed vis-a-vis state and the class of zamindars. The demand for increased revenue was the most important reason behind the conflict between the state, zamindars and peasantry. 'An Atlas of the Mughal Empire' is the classic work of historical cartography. Irfan Habib has not only produced the historical maps in this great work but also has given the analysis in the form of notes. It can ne considered as one of the rare books on historical maps written by Indian Historian. 'Caste and Money in Indian History' is the work trying to interpret the caste. In this book it has been brought out that this division of labour based on caste mainly benefitted the nobility and zamindars during mediaeval period. As the title indicates Irfan Habib has tried to analyse the Marxist Historiography in critical manner in 'Problems of Marxist Historiography'. 'The Cambridge Economic History of India', (Volume 1, 1200-1750) is of course, the interpretation of agrarian economy of medieval period by keeping in mind the common people and mainly peasantry.

Check your progress

Critically evaluate the Marxist School

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11.6 SUMMARY

The Nationalist School is one of the important Schools which contributed to the historiography of ancient India, medieval and modern India. It is important that the people of every country should know the proper truth about their history. In this regard the Nationalist School was successful in making Indians to take interest in their history and also to take the responsibility of writing it. History is very important social science and plays vital role in inspiring the people in present or contemporary times. One has to present the historical facts in such a manner that it that creates confidence, love and proud feeling among the people of the country about their past. In this regard the Nationalist School definitely became successful.

One can arrive at the conclusion that the Marxist School definitely is one of the important Schools of Indian historiographies. It has given a new vision of writing history. D. D. Kosambi can be called as the Father of this School and this School produced many other prominent historians from India viz. R.S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra, Irfan Habib, etc. The Marxist School preffered to give emphasis on writing history from economic and social aspects. The Marxist School also gives importance to make use of facts and knowledge from other disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology and also Statistical data wherever possible. It also laid emphasis on trying to explain and analyse the origin of various human institutions developed in the course of human history. Yet another feature of Marxist School is that it made use of archaeological as well as primary sources for writing history. The Marxist Historians of India have rejected and also tried to prove wrong the western sterotype opinions about India and growth of Indian society historically, especially in context with the economic activity and the process of urbanisation and the so-called concept Asian mode of production. Judged by any measure one has to conclude that rhe contribution of Marxist School is immense to the Indian historiography.

11.7 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the Nationalist School of Historiography.
2. Write a note on various historians belonging to NationalistSchool.
3. Make an estimate of the Nationalist School.
4. Explain the Marxist School of Historiography.
5. Write a note on various historians belonging to Marxist School.
6. Make an estimate of the Marxist School.

11.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Sreedharan E., A Textbook of Historiography 500 BC to 2000, Orient Blackswan Private Limited, Hyderabad
2. Singh G. P., Perspectives on Indian History, Historiography and Philosophy of History, D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi
3. Jain Laxmi, Historical Method and Historiography, Vayu Education of India, New Delhi

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UNCONVENTIONAL SOURCES AND RECENT METHODS OF HISTORY

Unit Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study various Unconventional Sources and Recent Methods of History
- To understand the significance of Unconventional Sources and Recent Methods of History
- To make aware students about different Unconventional Sources of History and Recent Methods of History

12.1 INTRODUCTION

History is an important Social Science. While writing history one has to take care of authenticity and reliability of the sources. Hence, in history the sources play very vital role. Rather one can say that without sources history cannot be written. The historian while reconstructing the past makes use of primary, secondary and archaeological sources mainly. A special method of research has to be employed in history writing. Historians also make use of knowledge and facts from other subjects like Sociology and Anthropology appropriately and wherever needed for writing the history of a particular period, event or individual.

Nowadays, the historians are employing many unconventional sources for writing history. Some of these unconventional sources are: Oral sources, Digital sources, Internet archives, WordCat, Google Books, Ancient India – The British Museum, Exploring Ancient World Cultures: India , Daily Life in Ancient India , Audio visual sources and Films. Let us try to understand and analyse these Unconventional Sources of History.

Oral Sources

Oral histories can be called as the collections of past accounts, and interpretations in their own words. Oral records simply mean the human feelings or opinions and n which they were involved or were the part of it. These Oral Records are nowadays employed by the historians for writing history. These Oral Records are significant because that information can be retrieved by using it which is otherwise not available in the archives or written form. In this respect the Oral Sources definitely become unconventional as the common principle of history writing is to mainly make use of written records. In order to get the information through oral sources one has to prepare a questionnaire preferably and conduct interviews. Afterwards, such or these interviews are stored in the form of videos as well as audios. Even, the transcripts can be prepared or films can be made containing these interviews. Some experts are of the opinion that oral sources can be classified as primary sources. It can be so as information is obtained first hand by interviewing somebody or a person who was linked to or associated with the said event or a person. In case of absence of written records oral sources play vital role. One can say that Oral sources have definitely enriched the method of history writing. If the questions are asked on the spot then the interviewee gives answer which are not pre-planned as many a times happens in case of written records. Written records are created most of the times after proper thinking and deliberately, hence, sometimes they can be bias or lopsided and may not capture the exact thoughts of the person concerned. When interview is recorded, it throws light on the personality of a person, wherein his or her speaking style, usage of certain words or phrases, etc. oftenly while talking is revealed. Like any other source the question of reliability arises here in this case too as the person answering questions may not be free from bias, hence, it would be always better and advisable to cross check the information obtained through oral sources with other sources as well.

Digital sources

Today we are living in digital world. The twenty first century can be called as the century of Digitisation as most of the sources have been digitised and are available in digitised form to the researcher. Due to Digitisation the rich sources available in many libraries, archives, museums, etc. are available to the researcher on a single click. Nowadays, researcher can access the database as well as the collections of the libraries, archives, etc. by sitting at remote end thanks to the Digitisations. In extraordinary times like pandemics and lockdowns the researchers can do their research work without going to the concerned library or archives physically. Really, Digital sources can be called as the blessings in disguise.

Internet Archives

Internet Archives is a massive project undertaken in order to give access to millions of books, movies, software, websites, etc. It is an independent non-profit project.

Internet Archives is an independent non-profit library which is formed in order to give free access to free books, softwares, websites, etc. The Internet Archives is run and managed with the help of donations. It develops its own systems and it gives access to its material free of charge, do not sell the information of users and also don’t run advertisements. As mentioned earlier Internet Archives provides free access to its material to researchers and historians.

It started saving or archiving the internet from the year 1996. At present it has in its archives the web history of more than twenty five years. It has saved millions of books and texts, web pages, television news programmes, images, audio recordings and software programmes

Web Archives for Historical Research is one more digital platform available for the historians, especially the social and cultural historians. By accessing the information and data available on this platform one can give an impetus to one's historical research. Its feature is that it contains crores of webpages which includes the personal home pages as well as professional and academic websites. The information accessed from this source definitely would help the historians in reconstructing the history of a particular thing or area. The objectives of this unique project are to create awareness about web as the historical resource, to engage historians with this new media and to create awareness about digital memory and records. It also aims at to help historians to access the digital primary sources of recent past. Not only so it also strives to interpret and curate these sources.

WorldCat

Ohio College Library Centre (OCLC) was founded around 1967 and afterwards it came to be called as Online Computer Library Center and subsequently its name was changed to OCLC Inc. OCLC and other libraries associated with has developed the WorldCat. WorldCat is considered as the largest Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). The collection of WorldCat is immensely useful for the researchers. It has lots of articles in its repository. One can obtain the information related to bibliographies as well as abstracts. It also provides the full-text information to the readers. WorldCat gives access to the materials of thousands of libraries worldwide and the material includes DVDs and CDs as well.

Google Books

Google Books was earlier called as Google Book Search and Google Print and its codename Project Ocean. It is a service made available to readers and researchers by Google Inc. The feature of Google Books is that it gives access to full-text books and magazines. Those books and magazines are available which are scanned copies converted to text by Google Inc. For conversion into text the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is used. The books available on Google Books are obtained from the authors or publishers under the programme called Google Books Partner Program. The books are also obtained from the library partners of Google and for this purpose the Google's Library Project is of immense use. Aa mentioned earlier even magazines are made available on Google Books. The database, e-resources and overall information available on Google. Books definitely is useful to the researchers and historians. It can be aptly described as the new age tool or source for collecting or gathering information and promoting historical research.

The British Museum

British Museum is the public institution which is devoted to human history, art and culture. It is located in Bloomsbury area of London, the capital of United Kingdom. British Museum has great collection related to the ancient civilisations in the world such as Egyptian civilisation. The website of Ancient Civilisations gives the information about the ancient civilisations in the world. Its new offerings are also in the form of animations, 3D models, etc. related to ancient India. Researchers and historians can get enriched by the information available on the website and other tools of British Museum. It would definitely help the historians to rebuild and interpret the history in the light of these sources.

Daily Life in Ancient India

One can gather lots of information about the daily life in ancient India through various websites. But, while using websites or e-resources one has to be very cautious about the authenticity and reliability. One can get information about Indus Valley Civilisation, Vedic Civilisation, Epics Period and the Age of Empires related to ancient India through websites wherein many scholars and experts have contributed in developing the content.

Audio visual sources

The historians, nowadays can make use of audio-visual sources for writing as well as reconstructing history. Audio-visual records include material such as talks or speeches delivered by great persons, photographs, videos, cartoons, films, drawings, prints, sculpture, architecture, etc. By interpreting these sources historians can reach to the conclusions.

Films

Films entertain us but at the same time they do also give us some message. Apart from entertainment media and platform for giving message, the films are proving to be a source for historical research. One can conveniently say that the films are at least aiding the historical research. When we say that films can be a good source of historical material, one has to see to it that the maker has done thorough research before writing the script and the story is based on historical event. Some film directors and writers do the deep research and refer to the authentic and reliable sources for writing the films, such films not only narrate the true historical facts, but also provide references to the viewers which were referred for scripting the film. There are quite a few films made in India in various languages including Hindi which are based on and throw light on historical social and economic exploitation of certain people from the society.

Check your progress

Critically evaluate the Nationalist School

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12.2 SUMMARY

In conclusion we can say that any kind of material which depicts the historical processes and helps in knowing and also studying the growth and development of human society in past can be considered as the sources of history. Only thing is that the material in concern has to be authentic and reliable. In this way we can say that Historical sources are nothing but the cultural and material remains in the form of objects and also the written records created by the human beings in the past. These sources help us to reconstruct the information about the language, manners, customs and in all the way of life of human beings in past. As far as Written sources are concerned they are found in various forms such as writings on the rocks, birch bark, paper, etc. And the written sources also inculed the printed material in the form of books, magazines, articles, news papers, etc. The Written sources form the largest source material of history. The Written sources are immense and they are found in government archives, patrimoinal estates, factories, family collections, collections of institutions, etc. The Written documents or sources give various types of information such as economic, statistical, judicial, administrative, legislative, diplomatic, military, etc. In contemporary times the digital and internet based sources are available abundantly and conveniently which has made the historical research comparatively easier.

12.3 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the Nationalist School of Historiography.
2. Write a note on various historians belonging to Nationalist School.
3. Make an estimate of the Nationalist School.

12.4 ADDITIONAL READINGS

Barber S. & Peniston-Bird, History Beyond the Text: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources, New York

Aniruddh Deshpande, Films as Historical Sources or Alternate History, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 39, No. 40 (Oct. 2-8, 2004), Published by Economic and Political Weekly

Garraghan G. S., A Guide to Historical Method, New York

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