

same subject matter, men living in society. Hence, G.E. Howard says, "History is past sociology and sociology is present history."

History and Economics

History is a study of past events. Economic events influence history. There are economic causes behind wars. We can learn from history how several economic problems were solved. History helps us to solve the present economic problems in the light of the past experience. Much of economic theory and policy are tested and verified by reference to historical events. History repeats itself. Therefore, we can forecast the future economic events by a critical study of history. Economic history is an essential subject for every economist. Therefore, economics and history influence each other.

History and Geography

German philosopher Kant says, "Geography is the basis of history" and Herber says, "History is geography set in nation." It is a fact that many geographical factors, such as climate, soil, rivers, mountains, sea, coastline and many natural resources aided the development of cultures as in early Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.

History occupies the next place to politics and economics. History owes much to sociology and psychology. Cultural Anthropology is very close to history. It is no exaggeration to state that all the Social Sciences, in one way or the other depend on history as history is a totality of actions, aspirations and way of living of human beings, recorded in a systematic chronological order in space and time.

III. Sources of Indian History

The material used for writing history are known as sources of history. For writing Indian History abundant sources are available, The sources of India's history can be broadly classified under two main categories—literary and archaeological.

1. Literary Sources

The literary sources of Indian History may be divided as indigenous (national) and foreign literature.

(i) Indigenous Literary (National) Source

The indigenous literary source of Indian History may be divided into sacred and secular.

Sacred Sources

The sacred sources consist of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist literature. The Hindu Sacred Literature is divided into four sources—Vedic, Epic, Smriti and Puranas.

(a) The Vedic Literature

The *Vedas* are the chief sources of information about the Aryans. They were composed around 1,500 B.C. They are four in number—*Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva Vedas*. All the *Vedas* are full of historical information of *Siksha* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (rituals), *Vyakarana* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chhanda* (metre) and *Jyotisha* (astronomy).

The *Vedas*, the earliest literary records of India are valuable sources of information for historians.

(b) The Great Epics

The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are two great Indian epics. The *Mahabharata* indicates the struggle of supremacy among Aryan tribes, whereas the *Ramayana* shows Aryan colonisation of the south.

(c) The Smriti Literature

The Codes of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Narada and Parasara are useful to know about the contemporary social life.

(d) The Puranas

The *Puranas*, eighteen in number, are mainly historical accounts. Five branches of historical studies are considered to form the subject matter of the *Puranas*. These are : *Sarga* (evolution of universe), *Pratisarga* (involution of universe) *manvantar* (recurring of time), *Vamsa* (genealogical list of kings and sages), and *Vamsanu Charita* (life stories of some selected characters). Later on, description of the *tirthas* (Sacred places of pilgrimage) and their *mahatmya* (religious importance) is also included in it.

The important among the *Puranas* are *Vayu*, *Matsya*, *Vishnu*, *Brahmananda* and *Bhagavata*.

Jain Literature

The sacred texts of the Jains are the twelve *Angas*. They deal mainly with Jain-philosophy and there are references to the contemporary kingdoms. The *Kalpasutras* of Bhadrabahu

are useful as source of information about the political conditions. The *Avasyaka sutras* make a reference to the Saka raids into Indian territory.

Buddhist Literature

Much of Buddhist literature is in the language of *Pali* or *Prakriti*. The sacred books of the Buddhism are :

(a) **Pitikas.**—They are *Vinaya pitika*, *Sutta pitika* and *Abhidhamma pitika*. They are useful sources of history of the times of Buddha.

(b) **Jatakas.**—The next important Buddhist sources are stories of the previous birth of Gautama Buddha. The civilisation of India during the 3rd century is known from the *Jatakas*.

(c) **Milindapanha.**—This Buddhist literature gives information about the post Ashoka period.

(d) **Bhuddhagosa.**—These commentaries contain references to historical events of the times of Buddha.

(ii) Secular Sources of Literature

The secular literature consists of Kavyas, lyrics (balads) and works on science. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, the *Ashtadhyay* of Panini and the *Maha Bhashya* of Patanjali, make valuable references to the contemporary historical events. The dramas of Kalidasa, Bhasa, Sudraka, Harsha and Visakhadatta provide plenty of information about the conditions of the Gupta and post-Gupta times.

The eminent Prakrit Kavyas, *Kathasaptasati* of Hala, *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya and *Lilavati* of Kutuheha furnish good information about the conditions of the Deccan in the early centuries.

The ancient Indian historians recorded the achievements of kings in their historical works. They are : *Rajatarangani* of Kalhana, *Harsha Charitra* of Bana, *Vikramadeva Charitra* of Bilhana, and *Nava Sahasanka Charitra* of Padma Gupta.

The *Manimekhalai* and *Silapadi Karam* of Tamil literature and the *Sangam* literature *Patinenkikanakku* and *Pathupattu*; the *Palnati Vira Charitra* and *Katamraju Kathalu* of Telugu literature are the ballads in praise of their kings. The *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar speaks of the moral and cultural values of those days. The writings of Alwars and Nayanars refer to the religious development in South India.

(iii) Foreign Literary Sources

Writings of foreign travellers and pilgrims have been of

great significance for reconstructing the history of ancient and medieval India. The information supplied by them supplement the accounts of native literature.

Greeco-Roman Writings

Scylax was the first Greek writer to write about India. Herodotus, Megasthenes, Strabo, Justin, Arrian and Diodorus gave useful information about India. Megasthenes, the author of *Indica* was the ambassador of Selucus Nikatar in the Court of Chandragupta Maurya. The '*Periplus of Erythrean Sea*' (Diary of Red Sea) of an anonymous sailor, which belongs to 1st century A.D. gives information of Indian geographical features of the kings of various places. His information is useful in determining the chronology of the Sakas and the Satavahanas.

Chinese Writings

Chinese pilgrims, Fahien who visited India in the 5th century A.D. during the period of Guptas; Hiuen Tsang and Itsing who visited India in the 7th century A.D. visited places of Buddhist importance and provided valuable information about administration and social and cultural conditions of those days in India.

Arab Writings (Muslim Accounts)

Al-beruni, who came to India along with Mahamud Ghazni wrote about political disunity of those days. Minhajuddin's *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* that was written in the middle of 13th century deals with the military exploits of Muhammad Ghor. Amir Khusru wrote about the conquests of Allauddin Khilji. Barauni, contemporary of Firoz Shah Tughlak traced the growth of the Sultanate since the period of Balban. Ferishta and Syed Ali contributed immensely to the history of the Bahamani Empire.

European (Italian and Portuguese Travellers' Writings)

Marcopolo, the Italian traveller visited South India in 1295 A.D. and wrote about the prosperity of the kingdom of Rudrama Devi and Pandyan. The glory of Vijayanagara Empire was graphically described by Niccolo de Conti, an Italian traveller, Abdul Razak a Persian traveller and Paes and Numiz, Portuguese travellers. A Russian traveller, named Athansius Nikitin visited Bahamani Empire in 1417 and described the life of people in India.

(iv) Archaeological Sources

Archaeology deals with the study of material relating to

early man. The archaeological sources are : excavations, numismatics and epigraphy.

Excavations

Excavations conducted at Mohenjodaro and Harappa (now in Pakistan), Lothal (Gujarat) and Kalingabangan (Rajasthan) have revealed the culture of a people who preceded the Aryans. The excavations at Taxila helped us to know about the history of the Parthians and the Kushans.

Excavations in South India revealed the existence of Megalithic culture. Roman coins and pottery were discovered at Arikamedu and Kaveripattanam. Several places of Buddhist significance were excavated at Sanchi, Saranath, Nalanda, Amaravati and Nagarjuna Konda. A number of valuable inscriptions and sculptures have been brought to light through excavations.

Numismatics (Coins)

The study of coins is called numismatics. Ancient coins were made of metal copper, silver, gold or lead. Coins were issued in India from about 6th or 5th century B.C. Although a good number of coins have been found on the surface, many of them have been unearthed by digging. Earliest coins, called 'punch-marked' are in silver and copper and rarely in gold. Burnt clay (tablets) coins were also found.

Coins are useful for the reconstruction of history. The earliest punch-marked Indian coins bear only symbols on them. They do not bear any inscription or legend on them. They have been found throughout India.

The coins of Indo-Greeks are useful for identifying the names of the kings, fixing the extent of their kingdom and showing their religion. The figures of Greek, Indian, Hindu and Buddhist deities appear on their coins, which fact reveals their religious toleration. Their weight system of coins tallies with the Roman gold coins and this indicates their commercial contact with the Roman empire. The issue of gold currency on large scale indicates the flourishing prosperity of the period.

The coins of the Roman emperors of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. are found in different parts of South India.

By the Satavahana coins we know many details regarding the socio-economic conditions. The Satavahana issued slip marked coins. These coins indicate their maritime activities. The coins of Gupta kings are of various types—the tiger type, the lion type and the elephant type.

Samudra-gupta's lyric coin indicates his skill in music. The peacock type coins shows worship of Kartikeya.

The Muslim coins are also useful to identify the Sultans of Delhi. The dates of Hijra era were also mentioned on the coins.

Epigraphic Sources

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions. Inscriptions are generally engraved on stone, copper, brass, silver, earthen ware etc. They are generally engraved either on rocks, pillars, stone tablets or on caves and metals. They supply most valuable evidence as to the political, social and economic conditions of the period and the county to which they belong.

The earliest indigenous inscriptions go back to the Indus valley civilisation. They were written on the seals. The script on the seals is not yet deciphered.

The edicts of Ashoka are a reliable source of his reign. The edicts are in Prakrit. The script is Brahmi. The North Western Edicts are in Kharoshti script. Asoka's edicts can be divided as rock edicts, and pillar edicts. The rock edicts are spread out in all parts of the Empire. The pillar edicts are found at Meerut, Allahabad, Tapra, Sanchi etc. The edicts of Ashoka explain principles of government and the Buddha dharma. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta was composed by his general Harisena. It is a valuable document of the political and cultural history of his times.

The Ajanta, Ellora cave paintings depict the whole life of the times and helps the historians in reconstructing the contemporary history.

The Aihole Inscription of Pulkakesin II, the Chalukya King of Badami describes his military exploits. The Chola inscriptions are mostly *prasastis* of Kings. One interesting inscription of the Chola period is the Tiruvendipuram inscription.

Copper plate inscriptions of many of the dynasties like the early Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Eastern Chalukyas and Vijaynagar rulers, invariably gave a long succession of rulers of their respective families. The temples of South India contain a large number of inscriptions. These inscriptions recorded construction of temples and offerings and donations given by Kings.

Some foreign inscriptions such as inscriptions of South East Asia throw a light on the political and cultural relations between India and the Far-East.