Indian Histriography-Vedic and Puranic Perceptions

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Abstract: Etymology attested to by Panini indicates, “Itihasa” to mean “Thus indeed in this tradition”. Chankya’s Artshastra defines “Itihasa” as Purana (the chronicles of ancients); Itivarta (history), Akhyayika (tales), Udhaaharana (Illustrative stories), Dharma Shastra (the canon of righteous conduct) are known by history, (comprise corpus of Itihasa). According to Mahabharata which itself considered to be Itihasa, a knowledge of Itihasa and Purana is essential to the proper understanding the veda. Thus Mahabarta and Manu-Samhita states “One should compliment one’s understanding of the Vedas with the of Itihasa and Puranas likewise Puran as are called by that name because they are complete.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is an endeavour in writing the history especially writing of such history based on the critical examination of sources, by selection of particular details from the authentic materials in these sources and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands in the test of critical examination. The term hisroriography also refers to the theory and history of history writing. Webster’s Encyclopedic unbridged Dictionary of the English Language defines “Historiography” as the body of literature dealing with historical matters; histories collectively, the body of techniques, Theories and principles of historical scholarship; the narrative presentation of history based on a critical examination, evaluation and selection of material from primary, secondary sources and subject to scholarly criteria. Thus in short the Historiography refers to the studies, sources, critical methods and interpretations used by scholars to develop a History of India.

Historiography is important for a wide range of reasons. First it helps us to understand, why historical events have been interpreted so differently over time, just as critically. Historiography let us study history with critical eye. It helps us to understand what biases may have shaped the historical record.

Modern historians aim to reconstruct record of human activities and to achieve a more profound understanding of them. The conception of their task is quite recent dating from development in the late 18th and 19th centuries of scientific history as an academic profession. It springs from an outlook which is now in human experience, the assumption that study of history is natural, inevitable human activity. Before 18th century was never an important part of regular education and it never claimed to provide an interpretation of human life as a whole. This larger ambition was more appropriate to religion, philosophy and other imaginative literature.

An human cultures till stories about the past, deeds of ancestors, heroes, Gods or animals sacred to particular peoples were chanted and memorized long before their way any writing with which to record them. Their truth was authenticated by the very fact of their continued repetition History which may be defined as an account that purports to be true of events and ways of thinking and feeling in some parts of human past, stems from this archetyped human narrative activity. While sharing a common ancestry with myth, legend, epic, poetry, and noval history, has of course diverged from these forms. Historians can say nothing about these persons or events that cannot be supported or at least suggested by some kind of documentary evidence. Such evidence customarily takes form of something written such as letter, a law, an administrative record or the account of some previous historian. In addition, historians some time create their own evidence by interviewing people. In the 20th century the scope of historical evidence was greatly expanded to include among many other things aerial photographs, the rings of trees oil coins, clothes, motion pictures and houses.

Hinduism called as vaidika, sanathana or Arsha Dharma is having its origin in the sacred Vedas, and Prasthanatraya, vedantas/Upanishads, Dharma sutras and Bhagwadgita, Mahabharta, Ramayana, Puranas and alike. Next come the Itihasa-Puranas which play more important role of common man, who were deprived of celestial and golden treasure of divine language the Sanskrit. It is told “Itihasa – puranabhyam, vedamsamupabrihmayet”. From the Itihasa
Puranas we can imbibe vedic wisdom. Hence the sacred trio Ramayana, Bharth and Bhagvatha are also sacred and important as the Vedas or Prasthanatraya.  

To trace the history of global appreciation, the culture, language, religions, rituals, are the basic elements of the society in investigation and research. The Random House Dictionary defines culture as “the quality in a person or society that arises an interest and an acquaintance with what is generally, the scholarly pursuits etc.” The culture of the community is the soul of the community’s dialect as the language in the most important means to help the culture to service and grow. Prof. W.D whitney nicely records his observation to this regard “We regard any language then an institution, one of those which in each community makes up its culture.” The culture and civilization having a great tradition of that community enriches its language also. Anthropologist speak of relation between language and culture, more in accordance with reality to consider language as part of culture, language is transmitted culturally, that it is learnt.

“Sanskriti Sanskrit mashrita” meaning there by that our culture relating to Sanatana is based originally on Sanskrit language, which is the ancient language of the globe relating to our culture as well as sentient means. Our all ancient literature i.e the Vedas, brahmana, Aranyak, Puranas, UPnishadas, Dashana, Ramayana (Balmiki), Mahabharta, as well as other our cultural related materials of ancient period including Bhagwat Gita as well as the VedViyas’s authored Puranas are also in Sanskrit scripted. In the recent centuries more particularly after Mughal period, the perceptible five main schools of historiography in study of Indian history have come to fore i.e Oxford, Cambridge, Nationalists, Marxists and subaltern. The inherited anciently the common orientalist approach with its image of sensuous, inscrutable and wholly spiritual India has died out by unseerious scholarship.

The Cambridge school led by Anil seal, Gordon Johnson, Richard Gordon and David A wash brook down plays the ancient Indian ideology being western bias or Eurocentrism. Same is the situation for the literature brought up in Oxford.

The ancient vedic culture of Indian had remained under attacked from the Mughals from the region of Gazi sultan Mahmood Gaznivi (998-1030) considered to be a hero of Islam by the medieval Muslim historians because of his stout defence against central central Asian Turkish tribal invaders, resulting Gazi spirit further increased during his region. Along Mahmood Gaznivi, one Islamic historian namely ALberuni had also accompanied him and took away a considerable historical material to rewrite Indian history on Islamic culture by stating Indians had no their own history nor they have the skill to pen down the same. To establish this context, such Islamic scholars of the time had been all praise for Mohammad Barkhtyarkhilzi for reducing to ashes the Nalanda and Vikramshila Universities with their entire records and treasure of literature, demolishion of number of temples of Kala Pahad etc. reducing the ancient treasure of Ujjain Mahakal temple by Alland, buring the historical documents and manuscripts by Arunzegb and others besides also transporting the same to the capital of khalefa. Demolition of Takshila the bigeest University of the world was the greatest irreparable loss to the Indian historical scientific, cultural and medical field.

After Mughals, the English came in India in seventeenth century and there after expanded its ruling base across the country. In early 19th century the christen missionaries from Europe started their religions preaching by composing a Book of Preaching titled “A Proposal for Establishing a protestant mission in Bengal and Bihar” Earlier also in 1792 A.D a religions book of 116 pages was composed by the Britishers, there by pressing for conversion of Hindus to the Christianity being imperative to keep Indian Hindus in their commercial fold. The Indian religious life and culture was vociferously attacked by asking for the provision of Christianity in the charter Act of 1793\textsuperscript{12}, besides in the charter Act of British Parliament 1813 AD, the member of its Parliament Wilchor Force had termed the Indian religion to be wild and in human\textsuperscript{13}. In charter Act of 1813, the British officers under section 23 were authorized to preach Christianity. To pendown the Indian history, Asiatic society was founded in London, and under the president ship of strong field it was pressed for that the origin of Aryans was middle Asia, where form their onset migrated to Europe and by defeating the tribal of Europe established their right over the European lands. The second sect went over to Iran, Iraq and other middle east and established their rule. The third sect by crossing over the chat Pommarmountaneous range arrived in Punja region of India, the starting point of Ariyaism in India. According to European historian, this all had happened about 3500 years back. According to this history, all whether Ariyans or the christens or the Mohammad all were
foreign to India. According to this theory, before 3500 years there was nothing of sort of religion, culture or language on this land of India. To give this ideology a firm shape the Britishers gave birth to a political outfit named as Indian National Congress the brain behind was the English Allan Octavian Hume. The first session of congress was held in Bombay in 1885. The very object of establishing this political outfit was to divert the Indian faith form the origin of its religions literature i.e Vedas, Puranas, Upnishadsasm towards, the western culture on the ideology of Hindu, Mulsim and Christians as the three sister communities, by establishing new nation which was being called “Nation in the process of formation”. The consequence there of was though the slogan of building new nation could not be translated to truth rather India was subjected to two nation theory on 15th August 1947 purely on religion base under the Indian independence Act 1947. The distortions of English about Indians were that India never remained an sovereign nation except sub continent , therefore there are different creeds and nations, because of warm temperature, the Indians are complacent and lazy, being unskilled to write literature, they have no history or literature of Vedas, Puranas, Shruties, Upnayasesetc are absed on mythes by terming Hindus to be communal being root cause of Universal disurbances.

The course of study that so ever being taught in the present educational institutions based on the williorn Jones creations. The validity of the history is being takenfrom the Alexander’s conquess in 327 BC. After Independence Pt. Nehru adopted the Marxist theory of socialism. The guide lines for writing text books for course of study under NCERT has remained an focal points (1) India has composite culture (2) Role of Shivaji must be ignored (3) Aurangzeb’s role must be displayed as reconstruction of Hindu temples, despite far away from truth, (4) RanaPartap, Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji were misled persons (5) Akbar stood for unity of India to which Ram Partap opposed (6) Sikh Gurus were not patriots and the protcters of Hindu religion (7) Aryan were non-vegiterians (8) Aryans were foreigners and had entered India on war mission.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORIOGRAPHY UNDER INDIAN CONTEMPLATIONS

The author of vedavyasjji has described history or Ithas as fifth veda “Ithas Puranam Panchamo Veda”. It is also said that Every historical personality should be based on veda’s conception. The scholardship of ancient India was based on the literary knowledge. In sirmad Bhagwat Purana at the end it is also spelled out by Sri Sukhdevji to Maharaja Prakhshot that he has narrated the history of the universe since the time of Savaianmbhu involving a period of 195 crore years. A tall personalities and great scholars had taken birth on this holy land who have left behind their memories about their noble qualities, i.e intellect, fame and glow.

It was very essential for every ruler to be well conversent with the historical facts of the past, religious rituals i.e. cultural social and religions. A ruler must have very learned persons, scholors and religions preachers to guide and pendown the true history for future generations based on the experiences gained.

The archaeological study, the legendary and ballads not to speak of even the Mahabharat the encyclopedia of all ancient historical incidents since creature of the universe, Vedas, Manusmrities, Brahman, Arnayak, Puranuprishad, Darshan, Ramayan, apart from our inherited literature mostly penned down in Sanskrit, a language being vadic, cultural and scientific one. Mahabharat suggests that Himalya is the most sacred chain of peaks of the universe , which contains Sumeru Mountian having circumference of five yajana and half yojana width where from the man first of all appeared with the creature of the universe. Manusmriti further suggests that the area which is surrounded by oceans an east and western direction and is situated in the centre of the mountains and is located between saraswati and Drishdhvati (Iravati) that area is called Arya varrat. The creation of this universe according to vedic literature is said is said to have taken place on the “SukalPartipada” of Chaithra month by Lord Brahma at dawn hours of Sunday where from astrolgically, the day like Sunday, Monday, etc. month chaithra, Baisakha etc. with creature year 197 crores 29 Lakh, 49 thousands and 115 had taken place with the birth man of this universe. That is why the 1stNavratra (vasanticeNavatra) when the first day of Sanatna is considered under Santana or vedic Dharma faith.

Our knowledge of Aryan culture in India, well before 2000 B.C is based on Vedas especially on Rig Veda thus this period is called Rig veda. The Rig vedic religion is naturalistic. Aryan worshipped natural powers is not because of fear but for gaining their benefits for human being by protecting the nature, environment. The Aryan religion was also being known as Vaidic, Vedism, or new Hinduism. The essential features of Vedic religion is the worship of nature called the
Devas and conceived as immoral. The vedic Gods have the character of glorifies human being, being mighty and bestowers of prosperity by conquering the demons of darkness. They are the friends of the sacrificers but angry with niggard. The Aryans worshipped all the vedic deities because of their natural powers, personal profits and for the protection of the environment. (1) Prithivi, the Goddess of earth, because the creatures were depending on her for food etc. (2) Agni being God of fire, God of light was well as the month of all gods and regarded to his highest esteem because no sacrifice or yagna could be performed without his grace (3) Some being god of plants and its juice called Amrita having medicinal values (4) Rivers being also called Jal Devta. Aryans considered Sindhu as extra ordinary river been called as Lord and leader of flood, because having been worshipped by Ganga, Yamuna and Prushani(5) Indira being God of Rains (6) Vayu being God of wind (7) Varuna being upholder natural order (8) Surya being source of energy considering him God of Energy and God of Light besides Destroyer of all sins and darkness (9) Pusana the Lord of jungles (10) Dyas the father of heaven (11) Usha the Goddess of dawn (12) Aditi the mother of surya (sun) and Goddess of Rigveda (13) Ratri a spirit of might besides Arghyami as the Goddess of forest.

III. CONCLUSION

It hight time to realize the universal truth that the true concept of Manusmriti having been composed at the creation of the universe “Let all other people of the earth Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, Dasyas and Malechhas, learn arts and sciences suitable to them from the learned people born in this country called to be India be unfolded before the public at large by wiping out the distortions and the people of disgruntled mind set playing mischiefs for their self ends. The perusal of the Mahabharta proves that Aryans were the sovereign rulers of the earth till coronation of Emperor Yudhishtra and the great war of Mabharta for we read there from that Bhagadatta of china, Babruvahan of America Vidalalaka of Europe, the ruler of Greece, King shalya of Persia and various rulers came as ordered to take part in the coronation of EuperorYudhishtra.

In fact and edeavour in true spirit to push forward the historiography is the need of hour to study in depth our all vedic and Puranic literature so available with due coincidence with archaeological substances so derived and legendary and ballads so inherited from ancestors for unknown durations, as well as the cultural rituals as whole, to rewrite the true history based on true facts so arrived at with due caution and care that the misconception and distortions so crept that the misconception and distortions so crept are expunged to create a literature, being future tourch bearer of incoming generations while setting the wrong records rights.

About 1500 years ago, shankaracharya, a Brahmin of Dravid (South India) had studied Grammer and all other shastras, boks on logic, philosophy, Metaphysics Theology etc during student life and while observing the religions degradation in this country began to soliloquise thus what a pity. The true theistic vedic religion has disappeared, whilst other new religion crept has prevailed to the great detriment of the people. This must be put down, Shankra-charaya had not read the shastras but also the jainscreptures. He was powerful debater. Then he began to think as to what was the best method of overcoming the grown religions problem. At last he came to the conclusion that preaching and holding discussion constructively with the Preachers of new religions were the best method.18

Shankra’s disciples then began to teach his commentary on the vedantshastra called Shankar Bhashya and other books that been written by him. In other words they began to preach what had been professed by Shankar with a view to refute the misconceptions so created very successfully, viz Brahma (God) was the true reality, the universe was an illusion and the human soul and God are one. There started monasteries, Shringeri in the South, Bhugovardhan in the east and just in the north and Sarda at Dwarka in the west began.

From the deep and intimate study of history of our nation both from the experience and acadmical sources, it makes us to endure that the real strength of Bharat laying in its spirituality culture and Dharma, which can overcome all the vicissitudes of history by relying on these factors. Both spirituality culture and Dharma are responsible for making history of Bharat as well as for shaping her socio-economic evolution. It was the Shradha of Bharat inmates which made her capable for reaching the mounting achievements and success across the world. It is further perceptible conclusion that our Indian nation had produced an unbroken succession of saints and sages well known in our tradition as “Rishis” Rishis were the people, wholly devoted to the acquisition and dissemination of Knoweldge besides the
propagation in the society, thus being revered as the custodians of the norms, values and virtues of our social and collective life. They coveted neither power nor wealth but scrupulously distanced from both. This is why the Kings as well the rulers used to pay respect to them and taking instructions and guidance from them, not only in spiritual matters but also in mundane matters. Being absolutely unselfish, the Rishis could be trusted for rightful guidance at the relevant time of prime importance. Whenever there had been an internal decay of Dharma within the society, these Rishis always came forward to re-interpret Sanatana Dharma and propagated suitable value systems and patterns of behavior keeping the living touch with the roots of our culture intact. Whenever the society was faced with foreign aggression or over powered by the unhealthy alien cultural influences, it was again the Rishis, who had made necessary adjustments possible while sticking firmly to the spirituality and Dharma, being backbone of our society, which has to be maintained future also.

Regarding conversion, the perceptible belief lies that “ We Hindus believe that each individual can worship the form of choice in his own way. All can attain him, if the effort be sincere and honest, this is why the Hinduism is not proselytizing religion. The very idea of conversion starts with the assumption when mindset. Surface from a section of the religious society that mine is the only sure and correct way of worship and others must be converted to it”. Hinduism not only tolerate the other religious faith and way of worship by extending respect for them.

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The historical Vedic religion (also known as Vedism or (anachronistically) ancient Hinduism), and subsequent Brahmanism (also called Brahminism), constituted the religious ideas and practices among some of the Indo-Aryan peoples of northwest India and the western Ganges plain of ancient India during the Vedic period (1500–500 BC). These ideas and practices are found in the Vedic texts. The historiography of India refers to the studies, sources, critical methods and interpretations used by scholars to develop a history of India. In recent decades there have been four main schools of historiography in how historians study India: Cambridge, Nationalist, Marxist, and subaltern. The once common "Orientalist" approach, with its image of a sensuous, inscrutable, and wholly spiritual India, has died out in serious scholarship. This is a comprehensive study of Hindu mythology. Due to the huge number of gods and goddesses, and their changing role through centuries of Indian spiritual life, this is a complex subject. This book covers Hindu mythology during the Vedic and Puranic periods. Wilkins starts with the very earliest pantheon of the Vedas, such as Surya, the storm-god Maruts, Agni, Soma, Yama, and the dawn Goddess Ushas. From there he moves into the later, and very intricate, Puranic mythology. This includes detailed treatment of the central triad of Brahmâ, Vishnu and Shiva, along with dozens of other Gods and Hindu mythology, Vedic and Purânic.