

NATIONALIST HISTORIOGRAPHY (PART-1)

PG HISTORY, SEMESTER -1 PAPER CC:1



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Introduction



- ▶ When we discuss historical approach of a historian, his or her sincerity and honesty is seldom in question. Though it is true that a historian's work may reflect the thinking of a class, caste or social or political group, he basically writes through intellectual conviction or under the impact of ideas and ideologies. This is why often a historian may transcend the class, caste, race, community or nation in which he is born.
- ▶ Nationalist approach to Indian history may be described as one which tends to contribute to the growth of nationalist feeling and to unify people in the face of religious, caste, or linguistic differences of class differentiation. This may sometimes be irrespective of the intentions of the author.

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- ▶ Initially in the 19th Centui, Indian historians followed the colonial Historiography, considering history as scientific based on fact finding , with emphasis on political hitory especially of ruling dynasties. Colonial writers created all India History, just as they were creating an all India empire. They put stress on division of Indians on the basis of region and religion throughout much of Indian history.
 - ▶ Nationalist historians too wrote history as either Of India as a whole or of rulers, who ruled different parts of India, with emphasis on their religion, caste or linguistic affiliation.
 - ▶ Colonial view of Indian history

(1) Colonial historical narrative took a negative view if India's political and social development.



(2) It was in the very nature of India, like other countries of the East, to be ruled by despots or at least by autocratic rulers (Theory of Oriental Despotism)

(3) Indians, in contrast to Europeans, always lacked a feeling of nationality and therefore of national unity - Indians had always been divided. Indians had also lacked a democratic tradition.

(4) Indians lacked the quality of innovation and creativity. Consequently most good things - institutions, customs, arts and crafts etc - had come from outside.

All these colonial notions hurt the pride of Indian historians and other intellectuals but also implied that the growing demand of the Indian intellectuals for self government, democracy, legislative reforms etc. was unrealistic precisely because of India's past history. After all, democracy was alien to their historical character and therefore not suitable to them.

(To be continued)