JADUNATH SARKAR(PART-2)

M.A. (HISTORY) SEM-3 PAPER CC:10

DR. MD.NEYAZ HUSSAIN
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR & HOD
PG DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
MAHARAJA COLLEGE, VKSU,
ARA (BIHAR)

LIFE AND WORKS

It was in 1901 that he published his first work of research, **_"India of Aurangzeb"_** which established him as a first –rate researcher and historian. He was shifted to History Department in Patna College. It was from here that he went to Banaras and Cuttack in 1918 and was promoted to Indian Education Service. In October 1923 , he was again transferred to Patna from where he retired in 1926. He became the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University in 1926 but declined a second term and devoted himself to historical research. In 1923 he was nominated the honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society of

LIFE AND WORKS

Great Britain and Ireland, an honour bestowed on not more than 30 scholars of the world. The American Historical Society of Washington also honoured him. In 1929 he was conferred a knighthood.

For long sixty years of his active life he produced many works of merit which entitle him the Father figure of Indian history writing.
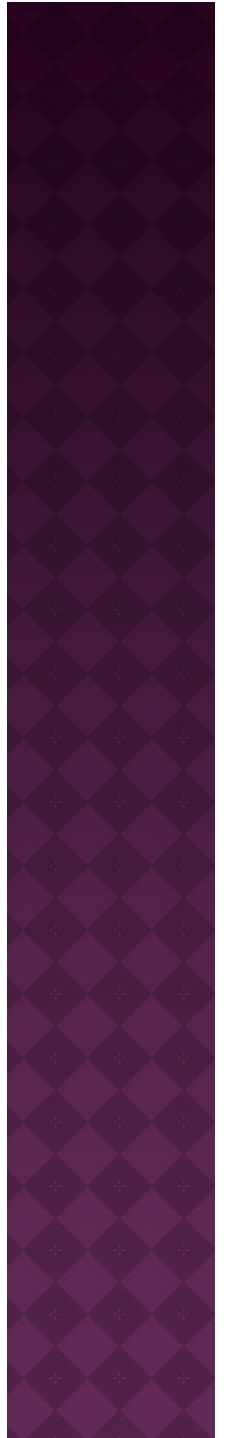
LIFE AND WORKS

His Works:

The historical works of Jadunath can be divided into *two broad types.* In the first category were his major works, such as *History of Aurangzeb (5 Vols, 1912-1958), Shivaji and His Times (1919), Mughal Administration (1920), Later Mughals (ed., 1922, 2 Vols.), Fall of the Mughal Empire (4 Vols, 1932-38), Military History of India (1960) etc.* The other category included all his *translations into English and Bangla of the Persian and Marathi documents as well as innumerable articles in English and Bengali, reviews, forewords etc.* His published Bengali articles numbered 148, much less than his English articles 365.

LIFE AND WORKS

He had only four Bengali books while the number of his English books, including those edited by him, was thirty-one. It is difficult to formulate Jadunath's concept of history since he had rarely written on the subject. It is also difficult to determine why Jadunath veered to the medieval history of India after studying English literature.

In nineteenth century Bengal, two historical concepts were confronting each other. One derived from the writings of English historians from the end of the eighteenth century. The second came from Bengali nationalistic writings, which often created heroes in Bengal and against which Jadunath had written often.

LIFE AND WORKS

Such writings, particularly against the historicity of the 'freedom fighter' Pratapaditya strengthened the view that Jadunath was pro-English.

Elliot and Dowson influenced Jadunath, but he did not belong to their school. His first book showed that the Muslim historians had not written only on political history, contrary to the claim of Elliot, but on socio-economic aspects of the Mughal Empire as well. In a broader sense, Jadunath had taken the cue from Mill. *Jadunath regarded the pre-Mughal Sultanate period as one of darkness. He believed that Akbar had brought a new civilising light in the arts, in administration, in law and order.*

LIFE AND WORKS

Interestingly neither Mill nor Elphinstone had termed the Sultanate period as a dark age because they always made a comparison on racial and communal lines.

Although Jadunath had praised Akbar, he chose Aurangzeb for his first major work, thus coming closer to that of Elphinstone. There Jadunath differed from him. The objective of Elphinstone was to show the break-up of the Mughal Empire as a reaction to Aurangzeb's policy, and the rescue of Indian civilisation by the progressively civilised English. *Jadunath tried to show in his study of Aurangzeb as in*

LIFE AND WORKS

his Fall of the Mughal Empire, that the Mughal Empire fell due to its own internal weaknesses. However he remained silent on the role of the English. It was only after the description of the battle of Plassey that he heralded the English victory as a harbinger of a 'new renaissance... the like of which the world had never seen...'.

Jadunath was equally reticent about the periodisation of Indian history by James Mill. He did not specifically protest against the racial and communal basis of such periodisation, but foresaw difficulties in periods overlapping each other. One of the methodologies of Jadunath was his insistence on the 'evidence', although

LIFE AND WORKS

he was not so profuse or detailed in the notes supporting the evidence. He took great pains to get documents in different languages to establish the 'facts'. Given the situation of the times, Jadunath, like most of his predecessors, established 'facts' of mostly a political and military nature. But the *results of his search unearthed several important documents, including Akhbarat from Jaipur, Baharistan-i Ghayebi, Haft Anjuman and other documents,* some of which had remained for so long either in personal collections or in the European archives.

As a matter of fact, Jadunath spent his whole life in collecting such documents, which he often presented in

LIFE AND WORKS

the annual conferences of the Indian Historical Records Commission.

He gave almost equal importance to contemporary English and the French documents, and translated portions of the diary of the seventeenth century French merchant Francois Martin. His translation was however heavily criticised by Surendranath Sen. On the other hand, Jadunath had begun to question the value of Sanskrit poems, Maratha documents and Bakhar literature. To Jadunath, the contemporary English correspondences, for example the Poona Residency Correspondences, were more important since they revealed the details lacking in Indian documents.

LIFE AND WORKS

These European documents helped Jadunath to establish his 'facts'. In his work on the battles, he would take great pains to describe troop movements and identify the exact spots, for which he would take the trouble of visiting the spots again and again. As a result, the descriptions of the battles become far livelier, in which he had used the knowledge of geography unlike other contemporary historians. Often he corrected his earlier identifications. Jadunath was therefore searching for the truth in the 'facts', almost impersonally, but only in those 'facts' which appeared to him from his documents. (To be continued)