

# SIR JADUNATH SARKAR(Part-2)

## सर जदुनाथ सरकार (भाग-2)

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

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

# Life and works (जीवन और कार्य)

Besides the above works, almost all of which have gone into more than one edition, Jadunath Sarkar contributed four chapters to the **Cambridge History of India, vol. IV**. As many as sixty original papers to the *Modern Review* a number to the *Bengal Past and Present*, and numerous papers to the *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*. He wrote some thirty-five papers on historical topics for the weekly edition of the *Historical Standard of Calcutta*, and many other articles for various other journals and magazines.

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He contributed forewords to not less than eleven works of other scholars. Sir Jadunath was an equally good and prolific writer in Bengali and wrote numerous articles in that language, which are too many to be enumerated. ***India of Aurangzeb (1901)*** is not a history properly so called. It is primarily an account of the physical aspect of India in the second half of the 17th century.

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Though based on a critical study of many contemporary authorities in Persian, the most important work on which Jadunath relied in writing that book was **Rai Chhatraman's *Chahar-i-Gulshan***, written in 1759. This unpublished Persian work gives an extremely useful account of topography and other details of the Mughal provinces, and the history of religious sects in the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries in India.

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After writing *India of Aurangzeb* Jadunath naturally turned to the history proper of Aurangzeb, the first volume of which he devoted to a very critical account of the reign of Shahjahan, and the early career of Aurangzeb as prince and governor, one after another, of several provinces. The second volume give a graphic and critical account of the war of succession and the causes of Aurangzeb's success. The third deals with the early measure of the reign and gives a critical analysis of the principles and policies of Aurangzeb's administration and the Islamic Church state in India.

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The fourth volume describes the Deccan affairs and the subjugation of the states of Bijapur and Golkunda and of the fall and tragic death of Shambhaji. The last volume carries the story of Aurangzeb's unsuccessful Maratha policy to his death and the disorder and confusion in Northern India during that emperor's twenty-five-year long absence. The Book ends with the historian's summing up of Aurangzeb's character and the impact of his long reign on India's fortunes. While engaged in writing his history of Aurangzeb, Jadunath was brought face with Shivaji, the former's most

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formidable adversary, and this made him study Maratha history as deeply as that of the Mughals. His ***Shivaji and His Times***, published in 1919, created a stir in Maharashtra as his third volume of Aurangzeb had done in Muslim circles in the country. It showed that the Maratha hero, despite his spectacular success, had failed to build a nation, and that most of his institutions were not quite original. These assertions were damaging to the reputation of the nationalist historians' theories as well as to the hero himself and caused resentment in Poona.

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The historian remained undisturbed and continued working on the last volume of Aurangzeb and **editing William Irvine's *Later Mughals*, vols. I and II**, and adding three chapters on Nadir Shah's invasion to the vol. II of this work. Years before he had translated Hamid-ud-din's ***Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*** under the title of ***Anecdotes of Aurangzeb*** which gives an insight into that ruler's character as no other contemporary work does, and completed his *Essays*, which consisted of then charming essays, important among which were those on the daily life of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

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Before undertaking his second great project, namely, the downfall of the Mughal empire, he completed three small but very valuable works, namely, the ***Mughal Administration*** (a pioneer work on the subject), ***India Through the Ages*** (a very successful erudite account describing the distinctive contributions of the Aryans, the Buddhists, the Mughals and the British to the making of Indian civilization) and ***Studies in Mughal India*** which consisted of twenty-two brilliantly written essays, ten of which had already appeared in the ***Historical Essays***.

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The first volume of the *Fall of the Mughal Empire* commences with India after Nadir Shah's departure in 1739 and the problems before Muhammad Shah, and comes down to the end of Emperor Ahmad Shah's reign in June 1754. The second volume begins with the accession of Alamgir II (June 2, 1754) and ends with Shah Alam II's return to Delhi from his exile under the tutelage of the English East India Company, on January 6, 1771. The third volume starts with the tasks before Delhi government in 1772 and comes down to the atrocities committed by Ghulam Qadir Rohilla on Shah Alam and the Rohilla's murder on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1789.

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The last volume ends with the conquest of Delhi and Agra by the British in 1803. The last chapter of the volume gives the author's reflections on the passing of the old order and the ushering in of the new age. While occupied with these monumental volumes, Jadunath yet managed time for writing yet another work on Maratha history, namely, the **House of Shivaji** which, being a scientific study of the personalities and documents of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Maratha history, is invaluable for a search scholars.

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During the same period he published his studies in Aurangzeb's reign consisting of eighteen historical essays, and his **English translation of the Masir-i-Alamgiri**. The **Military History of India published on 1960** after the historian's death (May 1958) is a study of the development of the art of war in India as illustrated in some of the notable battles fought on her soil. The work begins with a significant chapter on how geography dictates strategy consists of twenty other chapters and two appendices.

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## METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH (अनुसंधान पद्धति)

It is worthwhile to say a word about Jadunath Sarkar's methodology of research. Hardly did any scholar of Medieval Indian history at that time think of collecting available contemporary sources in various languages on his subject, and none knew that there was anything beyond the court chronicles. Historical letters, diaries, court bulletins, and news-letters were unknown. Jadunath was the first scholar to insist on getting all original contemporary source-material in various languages ready to hand. He did not contain himself with chronicles written by court

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historians and other writers. He made an exhaustive search of memoirs, court bulletins and historical letters written by participators in the events of their times and sometimes by contemporary gifted observers. He collected hundreds of news-letters particularly those in Persian, known as the **Akbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mulk**, and letters in Marathi written by Maratha agents not only in the Deccan but in all parts of Northern India. For all this it was necessary to acquire a very good knowledge of Persian, Marathi and Rajasthani which Sir Jadunath Sarkar did at the cost of a good deal of his time and money. He did not neglect French and Portuguese and acquired historical material in the contemporary writings in those languages. A thorough search and acquisition

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of all contemporary material in all the languages concerned with the period of his research was, in his eyes, the first indispensable preliminary for the researcher. Jadunath Sarkar did not take the writers of chronicles and other works of court historians or other writers and even of historical letters at their face value. He subjected the text of each contemporary work to a scientific scrutiny for ascertaining their authenticity or otherwise by making use of the modern method of textual criticism. Thus he tried to separate the wheat from the chaff. From the long experience of handling historical

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manuscripts, he could at once discover whether a Persian manuscript was fake one, and which part of a particular work was based on plagiarism. Such a scrutiny for establishing the text of each manuscript beyond controversy constituted the next indispensable necessity in the eyes of Jadunath Sarkar. After this he would translate all the material into English, study it with care, and then write his conclusions.

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It was Sir Jadunath Sarkar's habit **not to depend entirely on written records. He would visit the historical sites** connected with the subject of his study, in order to acquaint himself with their topography and terrain, and other details and see the life of the common people in all parts of India with his own eyes and have an insight into their character. With these objects in view Jadunath paid numerous visits to Maharashtra, spent months in the company of the people, inspected every fort, valley and scene of battle of the Mughal age. He visited all parts of India including the places of religious importance, not as a devotee but

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as a scholar, keen to have insight into the religious and communal life of the people. We find in his writing a vivid description of the topography of important places connected with his studies, the scenes of battles, military manoeuvres and of guerrilla tactics of the Marathas. Sir Jadunath not only displayed meticulous care and thoroughness in the collection and study of the source material, but he showed even greater care in the testing of evidence and in trying to discover the truth in a maze of contradictory records. There was no room for hesitation or vacillation in Jadunath Sarkar's mental make-up, and there remained no doubt or confusion at the

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touch of his merciless logic. He did not suffer from the common human failing of consideration for country, race, religion, family and the like. His works are characterised by unity of conception, of theme and presentation, by direct and easy flowing language and a charming style so that his reader's interest hardly ever flags. He bestowed a good deal of attention and care on his style which is free from cant, verbosity, indirectness and affectation.

(To be Continued)