

5th Semester

COURSE CODE: HISMAJ3034
PAPER TITLE: HISTORY OF INDIA (1206 TO 1526) AD

UNIT I- Contemporary sources of medieval Indian History

Topic a. Literary Sources

- i. Persian Sources (contemporary writings and travel Accounts)
- ii. Vernacular sources

Topic b. Archaeological sources

A. LITERARY SOURCES

INTRODUCTION:

There are plenty of sources for the study of medieval Indian history having nature varied nature. While many of the chronicles were written by authors who were patronised by the kings and Sultans, many authors and their texts did not have the biases of the court chronicler. Thus, we are safely placed to construct a rational history of medieval India through the multiplicity of contemporary sources.

The major sources for the study of history of contemporary period are mainly Persian sources and Vernacular Sources.

LITERARY SOURCES:

The literary sources are further divided into **religious** and **non religious sources or secular sources**. Religious sources were authors comprising the various existing religions of the contemporary times. In medieval India, this essentially meant Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity. Further the same also consists of the very important Sufi and Bhakti poetries available throughout the length and breadth of the subcontinent.

Other sources include accounts of foreign travelers, royal orders and letters.

RELIGIOUS SOURCES:

TEACHINGS OF SUFI SAINTS:

The books of Sufi saints throw ample light on the Islamic thoughts, life and teachings of the many Sufi saints of the medieval period. Mostly written in poetic form they are regarded as the vital historical records which throw light on the cultural synthesis of medieval India. They intended to instruct theology and even some Sufi saints protested the fanaticism of rulers.

The major religious texts are Fawad ul Fawayad by Amir Hasan Sijzi, Khair- ul - Mazlis by Hamid Kalandar, Akhbar - ul - Akhiyar by Abdul Haq Dehalvi and Gulzaar - i - Awarar by Mohd Ghausi etc.

NON RELIGIOUS or SECULAR LITERARY SOURCES:

The major secular history are biographical accounts, accounts of foreign travelers, royal orders and letters. They help in the construction of political, social and economic history of the periods. Socially they help us to know the daily life, customs, social hierarchy, and cultural practices of the society. Economically they throw light on trade, agriculture, and crafts help historians understand the economic structure and commercial activities. Politically they throw light on the statecraft, governance and policies of existence as a state etc.

Amir Khusro's writings span the period between 1289C and 1325C. His writing relates to the military campaigns of Jalaluddin Khilji, Malik Chajju revolt and attack on Ranthambhore. His accounts tell the wars, campaigns and other administrative accounts of Sultan Allauddin Khilji, and Nuh are important treatises written by Khusro.

Text	Author	Information
Chachnama or Fatehnama	Ali Kufi	Arab invasion of Sindh
Kitab-ul Hind	Al-Biruni	Hindu religions and philosophy, festivals, customs and tradition the social and economic as well as political life of the people
Rajtarangini	Kalhana	account of the history of Kashmir
Tarikh- i Rashidi	MirzaHaidar Dughlat	tells historical accounts of Sindh
Tarikh- us- Sindh	Mir Mohd Masum	history of the Mughals and Turks of Central Asia during Humayans reign.
Tabkaat -I- Nasiri	Minhaz - us - Shiraz	throws light on the newly built Turkish empire.
Taz- ul- Masir	Hasan Nizami	history of Qutubuddin Aibak
Tarikh- i- Firozshahi	Ziyouddin Barni	History of Khilji and Tughlaq dynasties
Padmavat	Malik Mohd Jayasi	deals with the contacts of Aladdin Khilji and Rana of Chittor, the Rajput kingdom of Rajasthan.
Kamilut- Tasarikh	Sheikh Abul Hasan	Mohd Ghoris India conquests
Humayunama	Gulbadan Begam	Problems of Humayun, campaigns and other princes
Tuzuk - i- Babari	Babur	autobiography of Babur
Akbarnama and Ain - i- Akbari	Abul Fazal	historical accounts of Emperor Akbar
Padshahnama	Abdul Hamid Lahori	history of the reign of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan
Tabkat -i - Akbari	Khwaja Nizamuddin Ahmad	deals with Akbar's era
Muntakhab-ut- Tawarikh	Badayuni	History of Akbar the great
Tuzuk -i - Jahangiri	autobiographical	account of Jahangir.
Tarikh - i - Shershahi	Abbas Khan Sherwani	reign of Sher Shah
Shahjahanama	Inayat Khan	Shahjahan,s era
Muntakhab- ul - Bubav	Khafi Khan	throws light on the history of Mughals
Kiran - us - Saden	Amir Khusro	describes the meeting Bughra Khan, Mifata - ul-Futuh
Khazain - ul - Futuh, Sipihar, Tughluqnama		

REGIONAL ACCOUNTS:

Regional histories offer a fascinating counterpoint to the grand imperial narratives. These localized accounts, ranging from court chronicles to bardic tales and administrative records, illuminate the diverse experiences of regions during the medieval period. By examining history through a regional lens, we gain insight into the complex power dynamics, cultural exchanges, and social structures that shaped India's past beyond the imperial centers.

Regional accounts like Tarik - i - Bahadur Shahi (Bin Ahmad Sirhindi) and Tarikh - i - Tahiri shed light on history Sindh, Riyaz - us- Salatin on Bengal, Tarikh - i - Rashidi and Tarikh - i - Kashmir are historical texts

on the history of Kashmir. Many other accounts of Gujrat, Gulbarga, Bidar, Ahmadnagar and Bijapur helps us in reconstructing history.

B. VERNACULAR SOURCES:

The vernacular writings are important source for the construction of the medieval Indian history. Regional languages like Assamese, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada etc centers around own culture and heritage. They reveal social norms, local customs, and economic conditions at the local level. They focus regional Identity and Politics.

The writings of poet Mukundra tells about history of Bengal and Chandidas wrote love poems on Radha and Krishna. Lalleswari (1320–1392) of Kashmir was a mystic poet and represented Hindu philosophy, Guru Nanak was mystic poet spiritual leader and founder of Sikh religion. The writings of Kabir of Uttar Pradesh, Vidyapati Thakur of Bihar and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal writes about bhakti, mysticism and spirituality.

Prithviraj Raso by Chandbardai was considered to be an authentic for history Prithviraj Chauhan. Jain texts such as Puratan Prabandh Sangrah and Kavya Sangrah are important for medieval history. Kirtan Ghosa by Sankardeva, Namghosha by Madhabdev of Assam are important source of mysticism as well as history of Ahoms.

ACCOUNTS FOREIGN TRAVELLERS:

These are first hand and vital historical records by travelers, diplomats and merchants whose writings were based on observation, study and analyses. They describe everyday life, food, clothes, and religious festivals missed by royal court chroniclers. They also give detail active trade routes, local currency, ports, and market goods. Al Burni in his kitab-ul -Hind describes Indian Science, social Structure, religion geography etc. Marco Polo who came to India in 13th century from Italy documented trade, culture, and coastal kingdoms in South India and China. Marco Polo, a Venetian traveler visited India in the 13th century. He recorded the history of south India in detail. Moroccan traveler Ibn -i - Batuta (1333C) came to India during the reign of Mohd Bin Tughlaq. He wrote a book called Kitab - ul - Rihala, which is fine treatise for the medieval period of India. Nocolo Conti a venetian traveler gave good details of the Vijaynagar empire. Persian diplomat Abdul Rajak (1440) wrote a narrative of what he saw in Calicut which is valuable as information on Calicut's society and culture. Domingo Paes, a Portuguese traveler (1520) during the reign of the Emperor Krishnadevaraya. His work Chronica dos reis de Bisnaga detailed account is one of the few known descriptions of that empire and of its capital, Vijayanagara.

CONCLUSION: To conclude the presentation, I would say that evidences for history writing of medieval India is numerous and varied. Lot of biases are also evident but a careful historian weeds the mass of historical evidences to find the actual happenings.

TOPIC B : ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES:

The archaeological sources relies on the scientific evidences based on technological innovations and interventions. Coins, inscriptions, edicts and architectural evidences form the corpus of such sources. We shall discuss in detail some of these evidences. Unless the literary sources are corroborated with the archaeological sources mere evidence of literature cannot ascertain the historicity of dynasty.

Monuments:

Monuments are the most prominent archaeological source. They include temples, mosques, forts, and palaces provide insights into architectural styles, construction techniques, and the socio-political landscape of the time. Lodhi Garden, Tughlagabad fort, Qutub Minar .The Khajuraho temples showcase intricate carvings and religious themes.

Inscriptions:

Inscriptions are another important archaeological source. Inscriptions on stone, copper plates, and other materials offer valuable information about rulers, their achievements, administrative policies, and social conditions.

Palam Baoli Inscription:

A 13th-century Sanskrit inscription from Delhi, authored by Pandita Yogisvara, details the genealogy of Thakkura Udadhara and his construction of dharamshalas and wells.

Fārūqī Sultans Inscriptions:

The bilingual inscriptions of the Fārūqī Sultans, particularly those in Sanskrit and Arabic, provide a unique perspective on the interplay between languages and cultural identity in the Sultanate period.

Veraval Inscription:

Another important inscription, the Veraval inscription, offers insights into the interactions between different communities and languages during the Sultanate era.

Coins:

Conis are valuable archaeological source. Coins issued by different rulers and dynasties provide details about their reign, date of reign, economic conditions of the empire, and artistic styles, religion and God and goddesses, foreign relation.

Artifacts:

Various artifacts like weapons, pottery, and jewelry found at archaeological sites offer insights into daily life, trade, and craftsmanship.

Significance of Archaeological Sources:

Archaeological source are the tangible evidence of the past, complementing and sometimes verifying information found in literary sources.

They offer insights into the artistic, cultural, and economic development of the period.

Archaeological help historians reconstruct the political landscape, social structures, and religious practices of medieval India.

They also shed light on the interaction between different communities and cultures.
