

Assumptions, Emotions, Stereotypes as Bias in Historiography and Reading its Intervention in Historical Context.

¹Ayush Kumar Singh, ²Sakshi,

¹ Research Scholar (Department of History) University of Hyderabad
Email: ayushsinghuoh@gmail.com

² Research Scholar (Department of Education and education technology)
University of Hyderabad

1. INTRODUCTION :

“Dualism Principle” attribute significance of ‘Negative’ for the grandeur existence of ‘Positive’ said “Ziauddin Barani”. ‘Colonial historians attributed an epithet “Dark Age” to ‘Medieval India’ to present themselves in positive light and nationalist historian considered Medieval and Modern phase as characteristic of invasion on culture, religion and prosperity of classical phase of India. These notion of complete positive image of ancient India becomes assumption without any evidence and emotions attached led the ‘Stereotype’ of Ancient India as “Heavenly Phase devoid of any evil practice” and post -stage as something in negative light. However, this stereotype growing further cast its significance in writings i.e., ‘Bias’ but further works on this notion discarded this idea and there is need to follow objectivity while dealing these notions in Historical context.

Assumptions in conventional terms is understood as a “fundamental belief or tenet that is taken for granted and requires no reconfirmation when it forms a basic premise”. In historiography, assumptions, emotions and stereotypes are interlinked to create wider framework “Generalization” leading to “Bias”. For writing history “Human Beings” forms an important entity however “Other Agencies” part of human beings also becomes subject to study, writings of present historians are determined based on these entities. What constitutes the characteristics of these entities is two sets of factors i.e., Emotions and Stereotypes which defines the identity of the subject.

‘Bias’ is product of assumptions, stereotypes, emotions and generalization. The Assumptions are set of constructed facts, and it is inherent in any civilization and society. Under this discussion, the constructed facts become “Hard Facts” in span of time, and it becomes operational tool in further period leading itself to “stereotype” wherein the Hard Facts cannot be questioned.

This notion is exemplified in domain of “Aurangzeb” wherein the assumption of him being bigot, cruel and crucified Hindu rulers and masses, and it created hard facts which become stereotype in span of time wherein his imagination comes with negative connotation. However, the research and his study of contemporary sources is far from what is prevailing i.e., comes in “Bias” segment.

Emotion is subjective domain which hinders any objectivity and emotion is never static and permanent, it tends to reform at various stages of human development. Human Beings are complex set of people whose participation constitute important aspect of history. Bias becomes internalized in every society with this notion of stereotype and assumptions, and it becomes inherent in human attitude and his idea of thought. In history, similar kind of Bias existed wherein it was assumed that North Indian always attacked Southern part of India as they were laborious and hard working, and in span of time it becomes operational as Hard facts and later constituted the “Stereotype”.

However, with further development and questioning this notion was discarded as “there are reference of “Rashtrakutas” “Pushyabhuti” and “Cholas” invading in norther region and “Aihole Inscription” mentioned about “Harshvardhana” being checked by “Pulakeshin II” at Vindhya Regions. Hence in historiography , it is primary duty of historian to question everything whether it constitute part or not of historical actions , as suggested by “E.H. Carr” .

Under this context, the question regarding addressal of these notions ‘Assumption’, ‘Emotions’, ‘Stereotype’ and ‘Bias’ while writing history needs to be exercised with caution. ‘Ziauddin Barani’ and ‘Abul Fazl’, whose works constitute majority of ‘Delhi Sultanate’ and Mughal’s primary sources of information, and they suggested the “Facts and Information about any events needs to be crosschecked and the Messenger and medium of information to be checked ”. This is evident in information and knowledge about ‘Akbar’ wherein the work of “Badayuni” describe Akbar in different ways in comparison to “Abul Fazl work”. Digging deep into contexts, Badayuni had some enmity with Akbar leading his bias visible into the literary works, unlike “Abul Fazl” and “Nizamuddin Ahmed ‘s work Tobaqat-i-Akbari”.

At some instance there is evidence of “Bias” and “Language” are being used against ‘Identities’, and this notion creates different perspectives towards any individual based on Gender and other contexts. ‘Razia Sultana’ though capable of ruling and nominated by Iltutmish to succeed based on her mettle and skill, however the contemporary writers and counterparts considered “female” as weak and unworthy to rule the “Delhi Sultanate” and “Isami” categorically criticized the reign of “Razia” as failure based on her gender and patriarchy.

Facts do not have multiple dimensions until the historian provides legs to those facts to ride in multiple directions, and in similar fashion ‘E.H. Carr’ mentioned “Facts does not speak for themselves , it is the historian who speaks on its behalf”. While dealing with facts , it is the historian who decides what kind of facts does he require for seconding his idea of thought .

While writing history wherein the information is filled with emotions, assumptions, and stereotypes one needs to rely on primary sources so that the raw information is devoid of any further interpretation. And in addition to one source, the other contemporary sources need to be addressed to avoid any kind of bias. In addition , at some stages the aid of “Auxiliary Science” needs to be consulted to reach to conclusion because at various events though scientific principle has not been theorized however the practice was prevalent .

It is to be noted “Malik Mohammad Jayashi” wrote literature about relationship of ‘Alauddin’ and ‘Padmini’ wherein latter committed “Jauhar” i.e., ritual to dive into burning fire to end one’s life to avoid evil of invaders” however the contemporary sources “Amir Khushrau” is silent on this issue and there is no evidence of any “Jauhar” committed during the mentioned period.

It is to be noted that the narrative of “Malik Jayashi” is considered assumption and it in further time it evolved into ‘Stereotype’ wherein ‘Alauddin’ is considered as bigot and womanizer. However, the primary sources about him suggest him to be able ruler who reformed ‘agriculture’ , ‘army’ wherein he introduced Dagh and Chehra, and further it is achievement of Alauddin who consolidated the Delhi Sultanate up to ‘Deccan’ and ‘Bengal’ covering vast tracts of region.

Apart from deciding the nature of ‘Facts’ to be considered for historiography, the personal membership of any group, social organization, and religious identity needs to be kept aside while interpreting the historical events. Since personal membership sometime leaves its imprints in works and it is considered injustice treated to tenet of “Historiography”. EH Carr mentioned “Read the historian first before reading the history” and it is true at major instances.

‘R.C. Majumdar’ , a nationalist historian in mid- twentieth century celebrated the Vedic and Pre -Vedic Era of Indian History and went long to provide historical stance to some mythical event of ‘Ramayana’ and ‘Mahabharata’ whose Archaeological and literary evidence is difficult to find till date. However, his personal grudge and bias against Colonial Historian led him to exalt everything in positive light while attributing negative perspective to Medieval and post - Medieval regime. It is result of “Emotion” of nationalism which led to romanticization in his work, and it is to be noted “Emotion” and “Membership” does not allow any historian to be objective and reduces the chances of countering one’s bias and prejudices while dealing with facts and figures.

2. Conclusion :

Since historian’s personal attitude and his dedication to tenet of historiography decided the kind of facts and its interpretation , ‘EH Carr’ mentioned “Facts are like fish in ocean a historian idea of thought decides the kind of fish he



want to search for and serve according to one's own taste and convenience". Here, the interpretation carries key positions which need to be addressed without any prejudices and bias, further the objectivity needs to be practiced while dealing with facts with questioning of everything related to the respective event. Then, the assumption, bias, and stereotype would be countered with scientific approach while chalking out historiography events and practices.

REFERENCES:

1. Mehta J. L., Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, 2nd edition, Vol. 1 (1000-1526), Sterling Publishers, Noida, 1986.
2. Mehta J. L., Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, 2nd edition, Vol. 2 (1526-1707), Sterling Publishers, Noida, 1984.
3. Mehta J. L., Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, 2nd edition, Vol. 3 (Medieval Indian Society and Culture), Sterling Publishers, Noida, 1987.
4. Chandra Satish, Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals, Delhi Sultanat (1206-1526) part 1, Har-Anand Publication, New Delhi, 2019.
5. Chandra Satish, Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals, Mughal Empire (1526-1748) part 2, Har-Anand Publication, New Delhi, 2019.
6. Mahajan V. D., History of Medieval India, S. Chand & Co. Ltd., New Delhi, 2009.
7. Rizvi S A A., The Wonder that was India, 1200-1700, Vol. 2, Picador, London, 2005.
8. Chitnis K. N., Socio-Economic History of Medieval India, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 2009.
9. Singh Upinder Ed., Rethinking Early Medieval India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011.
10. Jackson Peter, The Delhi Sultanate, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003.
11. Sastri Nilakanta, A History of South India, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, London, 1958. (Gubergrits et al., 2023; Ichsan, 2020; Simonsohn, 2011; Zeoli et al., 2023)
12. Gubergrits, N. B., Linevska, K. Yu., Gomozova, E. A., & Zhdanyuk, Yu. I. (2023). Ultrasound histography in assessing the degree of pancreatic fibrosis in chronic pancreatitis. *Herald of Pancreatic Club*, 59(2). <https://doi.org/10.33149/vkp.2023.02.04>
13. Gubergrits, N. B., Linevska, K. Yu., Gomozova, E. A., & Zhdanyuk, Yu. I. (2023). Ultrasound histography in assessing the degree of pancreatic fibrosis in chronic pancreatitis. *Herald of Pancreatic Club*, 59(2). <https://doi.org/10.33149/vkp.2023.02.04>
14. Ichsan, Y. (2020). Kontribusi Peradaban Andalusia terhadap Barat dan Kontekstualisasi Bagi Pendidikan Islam Masa Kini. *At-Taqqaddum*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.21580/at.v12i2.6257>
15. Simonsohn, U. (2011). The biblical narrative in the Annales of Sa'id ibn Bat'riq and the question of medieval Byzantine-Orthodox identity. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2011.543593>
16. Zeoli, A. M., Kwiatkowski, C. C., Wallin, M. A., & Brown, K. (2023). Criminal Histories of Intimate Partner Homicide Offenders. *Homicide Studies*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10887679211046866>