CHAPTER VII

IMPACT AND ASSESSMENT

In a study of modern historiography on Medieval India, English historical writing on the period forms the focal point. The servants of the East India Company looked upon the Muslims as their predecessors in supremacy of India and their policies and administration appeared to offer 'clues to the present political and administrative problems'. Muslim historiography in India has been aptly described primarily a 'history of historians', 'the study of historians by historians' or 'a chronicle of chronicles', a chronicle of emperors.¹ Its methods were like those of

Hadith study, it was derived from authority and the historian was thus 'a scribe rather than a researcher'. Notwithstanding their pledged search for truth as revealed in Quran, most Muslim historians in India were courtiers or officials writing on the orders of their rulers with an eye to gain favour.

British historians, in spite of Buckle and Lecky and the continental efforts of Riehl, Freytag and Kurchardt, did not attempt to change either the methodology or the form of native Muslim Historiography. In general they rather subscribed to it. The framework of political narrative was retained and no need was felt to show the process of how evidence was turned into history. For history was written from the testimony of 'authorities' and 'sources'. The medieval Indian history sections of James Mill, History of British India (1817) of G.R.Glieg, History of the British Empire (1830) and of Mountstuart Elphinstone, History of India (1841) were largely based on Firishta as translated by Dow and Briggs.

\[2\] P. Hardy, "Some Studies in Pre-Mughal Muslim Historiography", Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, p. 125.

\[3\] P. Hardy, Historians of Medieval India, pp. 16-17.
The trend continued afterwards as publication of Bibliotheca Indica Series brought out, edited texts of principal medieval Indo-Persian histories. Another major work that left a deep, and almost exclusive impact well into the twentieth century, was Elliot and Dowson, History of India as Told by Its Own Historians – eight volumes of translations into English from the Persio-Arabic historians of medieval India. For Lane-Poole, 'to realize Medieval India' there was "no better way than to drive into the eight volumes of the priceless History of India as Told by Its Own Historians". The same tendency was evident in Ishwari Prasad, History of Medieval India, 1925 who 'relied upon' 'original authorities' and based his opinions on actual facts - what Peter Hardy calls 'culling ready made facts' or 'mining ready made facts' from historical data. Thus, the earlier native methodology on Medieval Indian history was continued by British scholars as well as by some native historians writing in English with western training. Having been aware of

4 Stanley Lane-Poole, Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule, 1903, reprint, 2nd ed., Universal Publishers, Delhi, 1971, Preface, vi.

5 P. Hardy, Historians of Medieval India, pp. 12-13.
the works of Alexander Cunningham, John Marshall and J. Burgess in the sphere of archaeology, of Moreland in Economic history, their confining themselves to political history, appears to have been due to factors other than sheer exigency. Hence, from the late 18th century, the Company was a very zealous patron of such historical studies. More than anything else self-interest led firstly to the rise of Persian scholarship and secondly prompted historical writing on Muslim India based largely on Persian literary sources, with a keen eye on its current political and administrative exigency. Hence, from the late 18th century, the Company

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6 Jagdish Narayan Sarkar in "History and Historians of Medieval India", The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, Vol. XIII, Nos. 1 & 2, 1963-64, pp.54-55, sums it up firstly 'due to the natural human motive of economising labour — having found ready made 'evidence' in Indo-Muslim Chronicles "superior to our own (English) medieval chronicles... written for the most part not by monks but by men of affairs, often by contemporaries who had seen and taken part in the events they recount" (Dowswall, India, Vol. I, pp. 22-23). Secondly, due to the influence of contemporary British historiography which was essentially political and constitutional, thirdly, due to British Imperial pride and complacency about the blessings of British rule and fourthly, many of British pioneers in field were primarily officials and not academicians, they approached "the problems of Indian history from the administrative point of view".
implications for the British interest. 7

Another undercurrent of such historical studies, was the impact of the contemporary British schools of historical thought which easily divides most of the British historians as representatives of the Enlightenment, Evangelicalism, Utilitarianism and Romanticism. 8 Moreover, the impact of some outstanding British historians, notably Edward Gibbon and William Jones, on medieval Indian history, though very much indirect, was nonetheless vital. Despite Gibbon's and Jones' affiliations to the schools of Enlightenment and Romanticism, respectively, their impact in certain respects is easily discernible on most of the British historians irrespective of the Schools they belonged to, as regards some general assumptions about Hindus and Muslims.

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7 J.S. Grewal, Muslim Rule in India: The Assessments of British Historians, pp. 23–24. In 1769, Robert Orme was appointed historiographer to the East India Company at £ 400 a year, succeeded after his death in 1801 by John Bruce. The East India Company Directors had subscribed for 150 copies of John Richardson's Dictionary of Persian Arabic and English (1777), an encouragement extended to the Institutes of Timur. They also resolved to subscribe for forty copies of every work on India and often subscribed for more than forty. Sir William Jones made observations on 'magic wand of self-interest' when in 1771 he published his Persian Grammar to meet the demands of those who wished to learn the language in order to improve qualifications for service in East India Company.

For Gibbon, Muslims as members of a distinct society and its inherent values were people different from everyone but Muslims. Their civilization had stumbled under the blows of despotism, both civil and spiritual.\(^9\) Paradoxical it was, but both rise and fall of Islamic civilization owed it to its religion.\(^10\) In summing up Gibbon had been struck not so much by its success as by its failure and the failure he attributed to their 'betrayal of Reason'.\(^11\) The Islamic civilization at its best was superior to medieval European civilization but it was no match for its counterpart in modern Europe.\(^12\) William Jones' assessment of Hindu society and civilization too had significant implications for Muslim Indian History. Hindus were for him 'the Greeks of Asia' and he attributed the decline of the Hindu civilization to the Muslim conquest of the country. For all his love for, and

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reputation as a great admirer of Asians, Europe remained for him 'the fair prince of the world' and Asia her 'handmaid'.

Another and perhaps the most striking aspect was that from Alexander Dow (1768-72) to Wolsely Haig (1928) the British historical writing on medieval India clearly lends itself to an inherent unity of idea, irrespective of the different influences of current British intellectual life on it. Some of these historians sought to inform, while others even criticised the British policies towards India, but none failed to justify British rule over India. There was difference in attitudes towards medieval India, in manner and shades of subtly in conveying it, but they all assumed 'the intellectual and moral superiority of contemporary Great Britain over medieval Muslim India.' Besides, till the end of late 19th century British Imperialism (1870-1905) - the ascendancy


15. Ibid., Introduction, p. 5.
of the small island people of England to the extent of the 'Sun never Setting' in their empire could only be explained in terms of superiority of the British national character.\textsuperscript{16}

The impact of political and administrative exigencies on the writings on medieval India led to a motivated interpretation. Of its implications for historiography of the period, even the then British historians were quite aware of it and presently they are even more precise about it. That it led not only to motivated interpretation, it also postponed the percolation and adoption of wider concepts of historiography prevalent in the West.\textsuperscript{17}

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\textsuperscript{16}E.T. Stokes, "The Administrators and Historical Writing on India", Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, p. 384.
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\textsuperscript{17}Edward Thompson and G.T. Garratt in a bibliographical note to their work, \textit{Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India}, S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1934, p. 597, noted 'Of late years increasingly, and no doubt all Indian questions have tended to be approached from the standpoint of administration, 'Will this make the easier and quieter Government'? This knowledge of being in \textit{Partibus infidelium} exercises a silent censorship, which has made British Indian history the worst patch in current scholarship'. Peter Hardy in \textit{Historians of Medieval India}, p. 9, writes, 'There is little doubt, too that the fact that so many British writers on medieval period were not academic historians but officials accustomed to approach Indian problems as problems of government and administration, delayed the reception among historians of India, of wider concepts of the scope of historical study in England... Sir Wolseley Haig, Sir William Hunter, Sir Alfred Lyall, William Irvine, Henry Beveridge and Sir Richard Burn had all had official experience to influence their later academic activities'.
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It was in the midst of such a state of British historiography on medieval India that Jadunath Sarkar appeared on the scene. His emergence brought about a revolutionary change for which he has been justly hailed as the creator of modern scientific historiography in India. It is the 'largeness' of his canvas, the meticulous care with which he collected his material, sifted his evidence, and the objectively of his judgement that marks him out as 'the historian par-excellence'. Himself largely a product of western and British historiography, he overcame the British legacy to medieval Indian history and rose far above it. Some of the conclusions of Jadunath Sarkar about Muslim rule in India and about achievements of Marathas, in particular about the creation of an enduring nation by Shivaji, are closer to British interpretation than to some earlier opinions and later attempts at revision. These however, were the outcome of a vastly different methodology and objective. If for Jadunath Sarkar the task

18 R.C. Majumdar, "Indian Historiography: Some Recent Trends", S.P. Sen, editor, Historians and Historiography in Modern India, Calcutta, xxi.

19 Ibid., S.P. Sen, Preface, x.

20 Details are already discussed in Chapter II.
before 'composing a single page' sometimes meant unsparing scrutiny of evidence in as many as eight languages, the soul of history lay for him in search for truth and objective interpretation of history. To the British historians, the medieval chronicles revealed in no small measure their own superiority as a nation; and provided the moral claim as well as foreshadowed their 'high destiny as Rulers of India'. The conviction that British rule had accomplished for the natives in five decades what the Muslim rule could not do in as many centuries was carried to its logical conclusion, expressed differently.

If for the British historians in general, the remedy for the ills of Muslim rule in India lay in rushing to the benevolent fold of Pax-Britannica, for Jadunath Sarkar, "there (could) not be a great or lasting empire without a great people... with equal rights and opportunities for all... if India (was) ever to be the home of a nation able to keep peace within


and guard the frontiers, develop the economic resources of the country and promote art and science then both Hinduism and Islam must die and be born again. Each of these creeds... must be purified and rejuvenated under the sway of reason and science”.  

His works uphold his ideal of "I would not care whether truth is pleasant or unpleasant and in consonance with or opposed to current views... I shall seek truth, understand truth and accept truth".  

The credit for development of scientific historiography in India in the 20th century is to a very large measure to him. His dedication to Clio assumed varied forms that stands out presently as a rare legacy, from a single historian for the present and future.


24 J.N. Sarkar’s speech in Bengali, as Chairman of a Historical Conference in Bengal in 1915, translated and quoted by R.C. Majumdar, in *Historiography in Modern India*, pp. 55-56.

25 R.C. Majumdar, "Development of Indian Historiography", *Historiography in Modern India*, p. 28.
historical studies, in one form or another. It is evident apart from his own monumental corpus of published works, also by the bequeathal of his library, to the nation, now known as 'Sir Jadunath Sarkar Collection' at the National Library, Calcutta, consisting of over 2,500 items including printed books, journals, pamphlets and off prints from journals, manuscripts and maps, and some unpublished writings of Jadunath Sarkar. The historian is alive in copious marginal notes and commentaries. The collection is an invaluable treasure of source material, guidance and inspiration for the present and future generations of students and researchers in medieval and early British periods of Indian history. His enduring contributions to the Indian Historical Records Commission are conspicuous in the cause of collection, preservation, and access to the records. He was not only one of its founder members, but also remained most actively associated with it for over twenty years. The present Regional Records Survey Committees and the liberal policy of centre and state

governments in permitting the scholars access to records
owe it perhaps more than anything else, to the persistent
efforts, even 'battles' on his part. 27

The 'New Orientation' Jadunath Sarkar gave to
historical studies, has exerted great influence on
contemporary Indian historiography through his pupils,
critics, research scholars and historians. Infact, he
does not belong to only two generations of his pupils
and research scholars, the great Guru continues to guide
and inspire the unknown generations through his legacy.
His pupils like K.R.Qanungo, A.L.Srivastava, Hari Ram Gupta,
Raghubir Sinh, Jagdish Narayan Sarkar have imbibed the
Master's craft to varying extent as regards volume and
variety in historical studies. That the historian's
insistence on not slacking efforts in historical research
after obtaining the doctorate degree, had its deep impact,
is amply proved by outstanding and voluminous contributions
of his pupils. In their works is also apparent the

27 See Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records
Commission, 1930, 1933, 1937 and 1946; Also M.L.
Ahuwalia's 'Jadunath's Contributions to the Indian
Historical Records Commission', Life and Letters,
pp. 94-100.
continuity of the Master's work in respect of socio-cultural and regional studies on Sikhs, Rajputs, Marathas, Jats. In Raghubir Sinh the historian picked up a 'Dara Shukoh' from among the common run of Murads of the decadent ruling houses of the country and inspired him to build a splendid research library for Indo-Muslim history. The letters from the historian to Raghubir Sinh, published as *Making of a Princely Historian* (Bombay, 1975) have a value all their own. These are indeed quintessence of a Guru's initiation of a princely youth to a life long dedication to Clio. Sarkar's encouragement to Maharaj Kumar in building a research library that has outgrown even the Guru's collection is unique. His 'building' of G.S. Sardesai from a 'compiler' to a 'first-rate researcher'  

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28. Now known as Shri Matanagar Shodh Samsthan, for further information Shri Matanagar Shodh Samsthan - An Introductory Glimpse, published by Raghubir Sinh, Director Sitsmau Malwa, 1978. In 1935, J.N. Sarkar wrote to Raghubir Sinh, 'I can visualise the day when you will find that your library has grown so large... you will print a classified catalogue of it and build some rooms... where research students from far and near may put up when utilizing your literary treasure (Proverb). 'The king is adorned in his country but the learned are respected everywhere', J.N. Sarkar to Raghubir Sinh from Darjeeling, 9th August, 1935, *Making of a Princely Historian*, p. 12.
and 'the greatest living historian of Maharashtra' was a rare example of intellectual friendship that lasted over fifty five years and is alive not only in 'Sarkar-Sardesai Correspondence' but also in their memorable co-operative contributions to Maratha history. Scholars and historians like R.C.Majumdar, S.P.Sen, Nilakantha Shastri and Sri Ram Sharma also drew inspiration from the historian in methodology and interpretation of history, as reflected in their works. Even those who found fault with him as a historian, could not lightly disregard his conclusions and observations. They also cherished the historian's

29 See S.R.Tikekar, On Historiography, pp.47-48. Vasant D. Rao, 'Govind Sakhraram Sardesai', Historians And Historiography in Modern India, ed. S.P.Sen, pp.231-232. Earlier the Poona School was reluctant to call the books of Sardesai as history while they had created a special caste of 'compiler' for him. It was Jadunath Sarkar's efforts and encouragement that led to the 'bloom of Sardesai's talents as a researcher in history which Sardesai never hesitated to acknowledge or express gratitude openly. Later Sardesai's services to the cause of history won recognition from people as well as governments, British and Indian. After completion of 45 volumes of Selections from the Peshwa Baftar, the British Government conferred on him the title of 'Rao Bahadur'. In 1938, he was presented Sardesai Commemoration Volume, in 1951, he was accorded General Presidentship of the Indian History Congress held at Jaipur. In 1957, Indian Government awarded him the title of Padma-bhushan.
compliments to themselves, sharing these with listeners on occasions of importance in historical circles. Thus, the scientific orientation he gave to historical studies through his meticulous, painstaking and prodigious research gave birth to the so-called Sir Jadunath School of Historiography.

The attempted revision and reinterpretation of some of the major conclusions of Jadunath Sarkar has been so far by and large indicative of one common factor—of

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30 See A.L. Srivastava, "Sir Jadunath Sarkar", Historians and Historiography in Modern India, pp.142-143, related how Dr. Tarachand, an upholder of 'Civic duty' over 'academic rectitude' recalled with pleasure at the annual session of the I.H.R.C. at Chandigarh in 1961, J.N. Sarkar's remark when he learnt about Tarachand having been entrusted with the project of writing history of the Freedom Movement in India. The historian was reported to have said, "It (the project) has been entrusted to competent hands". Ishwari Prasad told A.L. Srivastava, 'times without number' that when he called on the historian in 1943-44, he said, "come in Dr. Ishwari Prasad, you are a genuine scholar'. Many 'apologists' and 'National' historians finding fault with the historians critical estimate of Aurangzeb, would quote with approval, the historian's appreciative part of Muslim rule.
the critics belonging to other schools. Ideologically inspired historians have often sought not so much to unfold history as to its employment to explain change in course of history. The 'Patriotic School' of Maharashtra could hence feel provoked for the historian not having been patriotic enough to invent and imagine. The so called 'Allahabad School or National School' that gave priority to 'Civic duty' over 'academic rectitude' questions Jadunath Sarkar for not omitting offensive details of Aurangzib's persecution of Hindus, for it may derive a wedge between the two communities. The Islamic apologia sometimes closely knitted with Marxist interpretations, believes that Muslim rulers were justified in their policies if not on religious grounds, they sure were, on

The historian's view on the subject is significant. He was not afraid of his revision and had observed, "unless continual supersession is welcomed, progress in human knowledge would be impossible... my sole interest is the discovery of truth. I am not so vain as to feel hurt if any statement in a book of mine is contradicted by later discovered or published sources", Sarkar to Sardesai, 25th August, 1943, "Sarkar-Sardesai Correspondence", Life and Letters, p. 239.

political and economic grounds. A ruler like Aurangzeb is brought forth by historians like Ahzar Ansari and Faruki, not only the one driven to levy Jizirah either because of 'forwardness' of Hinduism or due to economic exigencies, but also the one who became a martyr in the cause of nationalism - by his efforts to bring about political unity when he fought for ¼ of a century to conquer the whole of Deccan. The 'Marxist School' is irked at Jadunath's overlooking 'the usable past', overlooking what some of them too concede - the importance of 'heroes' in crucial moments of 'Historical Divides'.

The 'Cultural historian' may find at the most only the beginnings of 'culture' in his works, many scoff at his 'scientific objectivity' that often antagonized partisans of both sides.


34 Marx certainly did a great service to the understanding of history by emphasizing the part played by economic factors... but the Marxist mistake lies in over doing this. The place of the individual in history-of a Napolean, a Buddha or an Ashoka cannot be underestimated. ... Culture is not only agriculture and architectural... The Marxist approach is basically inadequate", B.P. Sinha, "The Redundancies and the Lacunae in Indian Historiography", D.Devahuti, ed., *Problems of Indian Historiography*, pp. 98-99.
Some of Jadunath Sarkar's conclusions on Maratha achievements and failures, among the orthodox and 'Patriotic' circles of Hindus, appeared as if the historian's pen had dealt no lighter blow than Aurangzeb's sword. Criticism from Maharashtra resulted not only from his intrusion into Maratha preserve, but also for his incisive criticism of the 'Patriotic School'. His thesis that coming as he did as a ray of hope for Hindu India, Shivaji failed to create an enduring nation, remained a grudge with many Hindi 'Patriots'. Irrefutable facts and authentic history of Shivaji was eventually accepted, and it was from the land of Shivaji that Jadunath Sarkar came to be hailed as 'the most authoritative' and 'best biographer of Shivaji in the last half century'.

Again, some historians who could not resist the forces of 'nationalism' specially in the context of the country's freedom struggle against the British and tried to work for an India of their imagination. For them no Hindu-Muslim discord existed which could be incompatible in formation of a nation or a state. The assertion of a noted

national freedom fighter "that the Hindus and Muslims have coalesced into an Indian people very much in the same way as the Angles, Saxons, Jules, Danes and Normans formed the English people of today", and the view 'that the Muslim rule in India was not a foreign rule' is reflected in the works of Mohammed Habib and Tara Chand. Others like K.M. Ashraf sought to show that the Hindus and Muslims had no cultural conflict. Significantly some of the works in the 1940's hinted at a separate destiny for Muslims, although for I.H. Qureshi, 'The Hindu population was better off under the Muslims than under Hindu tributaries or independent rulers'. In the revised edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam one of the 'national' writers while re-writing the article on Aurangzeb, originally written by William Irvine, made destruction of Hindu temples by Aurangzeb a 'disputed point'. After a study of Jadunath Sarkar's History of Aurangzeb indeed "One would be tempted to ask if the temple

36 Lala Lajpat Rai in Young India, pp. 73-75, quoted by R.C. Majumdar in Historiography in Modern India, 1970, p. 49.

37 Peter Hardy, "Modern Muslim Historical Writing on Medieval Muslim India", C.H. Philips, ed., Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, pp. 302-303, I.H. Qureshi quoted on pp. 307-308.
breaking policy of Aurangzib is a disputed point, is there a single fact in the whole recorded history which may be taken as indisputed?\(^\text{38}\) Even in the present times the approach is reflective of 'national policy' which does not accept facts incompatible with a fixed idea of national integration and solidarity.\(^\text{39}\) Secularism is taken to be so fragile a glass as to be shattered to pieces by knowing some bitter but real problems brought out by the facts of history. Thus, we are told of "the wholly impossible and erroneous conclusions that the Musalmans as such were a governing class while the Hindus, as such were the governed",\(^\text{40}\) that history must not remind us of 'ghastly aberrations of human nature, of distantly crimes, of divisions and conflicts, of degeneration and decay, but of higher values of life, even facts of history have to be judged by the criterion of progress towards liberty and morality'. After all, "History has a mission

\(^{\text{38}}\)R.C.Mujumdar, ed., The Mughal Empire, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1974, Preface, xii.

\(^{\text{39}}\)R.C.Majumdar, "Shortcomings in Indian Historiography", Historiography in Modern India, p. 54.

\(^{\text{40}}\)K.A.Nizami, Presidential Address (Medieval Indian History Section), Proceedings of Indian History Congress, Allahabad Session, 1965, p. 140.
and obligation to lead humanity to a higher ideal and nobler future. The historian cannot shirk this responsibility by hiding his head into the false dogma of objectivity, that his job is merely to chronicle the past.  

It is not that a history based on facts and objectivity could not be national. As Jadunath Sarkar put it, "National history, like every other history worthy of the name and deserving to, endure, must be true as regards the facts... It will be national not in the sense that it will try to suppress or whitewash everything in our country's past that is disgraceful, but because it will admit them and at the same time point out that there were other and nobler aspects in the stages of our nation's evolution..." Historians who do the contrary, under the

41 Bisheshwar Prasad, Presidential Address, (General), Proceedings of Indian History Congress, Ranchi Session, 1964, pp. 9, 16.

impression of rendering some good to the country, do otherwise specially in a country like ours which has suffered much on account of its national defects which we must know and understand them to be able to remedy them.  

Jadunath Sarkar's analysis of why Muslims could not merge into Hindu society and culture, of incompatibility of Islam in making non-Muslims citizens on equal footing under a theocracy or that the greatest obstacles to Shivaji's goal came not from Muslims or Peripogis but from his own countrymen and society, certainly invites unpopularity when viewed from the vision of a 'national' historian or a politician. The analysis based on facts and objectivity, however, stood vindicated, falsifying the unqualified affirmations of a national past, with the formation of Pakistan as a separate Islamic state, as well as by the present dilemma faced by Islamic States in context of modern secular form of a state.

Some of the works from Aligarh School have emphasised, economic and technological changes, class interests and conflicts, thereby 'transferring the discussion' after Jadunath Sarkar's analysis of fall of the Mughal empire, to structural studies.  

43 Ibid., Foreword, vi. Rajendra Prasad to J.N.Sarkar.  
44 Ashin Das Gupta, "The International Context", John Correia Afonso, ed., Historical Research in India, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1979, pp. 69-70.
have not only emphasized a particular aspect only, of the structure, namely the material structure, but have also viewed it only from above, from the Mughal imperial court. Such an approach has its limitations. It is evident from J.F. Richards, *Mughal Administration in Golconda* (Oxford, 1975). After a survey of administration of Golconda from 1587 to 1724, in consciousness of the larger problems facing the empire, it is apparent that 'the reasons usually advanced to explain the larger imperial crisis and subsequent decline and collapse, do not satisfactorily explain incomplete consolidation of eastern Deccan, not for that matter, it is possible to assume that the problems of the empire were uniform throughout the Deccan'.

Contrary to the argument advanced by Irfan Habib that Mughal rule became a victim of agrarian crisis, that resulted from the structural flow of Jagirdari system under the Mughals, supported by some seventeenth century observers and elaborated, indirectly in works of Satish Chandra, Athar Ali and Waman Ahmad Siddiqi. J.F. Richards' study points out that the

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crisis at least in eastern Deccan occurred not because, 'the Mughal system worked, but because it did not work' Satish Chandra's and Athar Ali's works also point out the rise of sharply divided factions in the Mughal nobility which contributed in a big way to the collapse of the empire. The collapse is traced to the 'economic squeeze', the conflicts over the allocation of jagirs that were becoming progressively scarce as a result of Aurangzeb's appointments, of Muslim and Maratha nobles from the Deccan, to the imperial service in his efforts to control the region, J.F. Richards' study shows that at least in 'Hyderabad, Bijapur and the two Karnatiks'... "the crisis of the jagirs ... was not caused by a physical shortage of land available for that purpose. Instead, the excess of demand over supply was caused by the inability of empire to assimilate and administer properly the large territories in the Deccan annexed in 1686-87". 46

46 J.F. Richards, Mughal Administration in Golconda, p. 214.
Hence, J.F. Richards' significant attempt to 'fill in a peculiar regional gap in his (Jadunath Sarkar's) narrative,' taking full account of the analysis of material structure, reverts the focus again on Aurangzeb. "Who faltered noticeably in his administration of Golconda... he failed to realize the economic potential of Gonconda... administrative failure can be directly attributed to Aurangzeb's larger goals in the Deccan... In the highly centralized Mughal system, the direction of these men (Mansabdars) could only come from the energetic attention of the emperor." 48

Still in an assessment of historiography in India, in the last quarter of the 20th century, the tendency towards an examination of 'the structure within

47 Ibid., Acknowledgements, vii. "Today... his narrative approach and his intellectual concerns appear a bit old fashioned. Only a historian who has tried to develop an accurate narrative of political and public events, using the fragmented sources, typical of this period, can appreciate the magnitude of Sarkar's contribution".

48 J.F. Richards, Mughal Administration in Golconda, pp. 306, 309.
which the individuals have functioned' is unmistakable'. The structure, however cannot be confined to material structure alone. The structure in its broadest sense includes much more - the society, culture, civilization, as a whole viewed from above and below. Jadunath Sarkar's study of an individual in terms of age and his reference to the impact of civilization and society on fortunes of emperors and empires is evident to readers of his major works.

Jadunath Sarkar as a historian, studied in terms of his own age, emerges, something more than 'political historian of the old school'. When reviewed in light of 'criticism' and 'attempted revisions', it reminds us of the lines he chose to describe the quality of another historians' work:

"Of toil unserved from tranquility,
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in response,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry".50

Having done the digger's, sifter's, stone dresser's and
not merely the architect's job for historiography in his
own field he "laid the bedrock of ascertained and unassailable facts, on which alone the superstructure of a philosophy
of history could be raised by (his) happier successors".51
As early as 1908, the historian sought to present a history
of India woven of latest individual studies in a series.

50 Mathew Arnold quoted by J.N. Sarkar "Govind Sakharam
Sardesai", Sardesai Commemoration Volume, ed. S.R.
Tikikar, Kashav Bhikaji Dhawie, Bombay, 1938, p. 300.

51 J.N. Sarkar in William Irvine's Later Mughals, 'Irvine
As a Historian', xxiv.
Again in 1918, he proposed that 'The Cultural Aspects of India's Past' should be written by 'a Syndicate of Scholars'. Time however, was 'not yet ripe and there were 'not enough scholars to do justice to every part of the subject'. Another attempt that began in 1937, to present 'A New History of the Indian People' in 20 Volumes, became a casualty of the partition of the country and only one of the series was published. His collection also

52 J.N.Sarkar, Foreword to 'A General History of the Indian People', Lahore, 1946 (From J.N.Sarkar Collection, National Library, Calcutta), 'A New History of India embodying all this accumulated knowledge and ab Squad of latest research must fill many volumes. Such a work both by reason of its size and diversity of its contents can be produced only by a syndicate of scholars. The writing of such a co-operative History of India was first discussed by me with the late Mamohan Chakravarti in 1908 after the first volumes of the Cambridge Modern History had come out... a fourth project confined solely to the 'cultural aspects of India's Past' on the model of the 'Heritage Series' was pondered over by me and even lists of chapters drawn up (1918 and 1920) with the late Rev.J.Purshar... all these schemes very soon came to nothing because we felt the time was not yet ripe and we had not enough scholars to do justice to every part of the subject.'

53 Through 'Bhartiya Itihas Parishad Scheme, of which Dr. Rajendra Prasad was to take charge of the administrative and financial side, while Jadunath Sarkar was to be the Chairman of the Editorial Board. See General Scheme of 'A New History of the Indian People, with Foreword to the only issue of the series published. See the Vakataka Gupta Age, edited by R.C.Majumdar and A.S.Altekar, Lahore, 1946, reprint 1960, Motilal Banarasidass, New Delhi. Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan's History and Culture of the Indian People has largely followed the scheme.
contains a suggested list of topics covering, 'Hindu Learning', 'Mughal Civilization', 'Land Revenue System', 'Early Sea Borne Trade of India' and 'Economic History of India'.

The wide range of Jadunath Sarkar's research and writing with the spirit Quaere, I am seeking, evince that the 'social or sociological trends' attacking the 'exclusively political domain of history' as well as the idea of weaving individual studies into a series of standard history are after all not so recent in Indian historiography as is sometimes made out. Nevertheless,

54. Typed Ms. Sitama, 1940, now in 'Sir J.N. Sarkar Collection', National Library, Calcutta, is a comprehensive list of 25 topics covering a wide range of non-political aspects.

55. E.g. S.P. Sen, ed., Historians and Historiography in Modern India, Preface, ix. "Not till the forties of the present century did the Indian historians think of undertaking a multi-volume history of India incorporating the result of researches in different fields till that time"; also Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, "History and Historians of Medieval India", The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, Vol. III, 1963-64, Nos. I & II, p. 69. "Indian writers on Medieval India came to realize the need of 'Social Studies' nearly a century after the West. The delay was partly due to the British origins of medieval Indian historiography, Lord Acton (1834-1902) in England and Barr (1863-1954) in France emphasized the urgency of historical synthesis". Apart from Jadunath Sarkar's works on economics, Government, topography and essays on art and society in the first quarter of the 20th century, Moreland's 'India at the Death of Akbar' (1920), From Akbar to Aurangzeb (1923) were published during the same period.
Jadunath Sarkar has suffered at the hands of the present
day trends in historical writing after having been used
in the field, as a pedestal for the so-called 'New history'.
The votaries of New History forget that Sarkar's
contribution to the evolution of Indian historiography
lay in providing its terra firma of 'ascertained and
unassailable facts', and his 'excursions' into social
and economic history prove something more—a vision of
infinity in history. In the attempt to cope with such
an infinity, he had become in the immortal company of
Thucydides, Niebuhr and Ranke—a classic.