CHAPTER I

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Economy has been the life-line of human society since the very dawn of civilization. The roots of the Indian economy can be traced far back to the distant past, when the highly urban and sophisticated civilization of the Indus Valley people came into existence in the third millennium B.C., and ever since the economic forces have certainly played a dominant role in Indian history, viz. in the rise, progress, decline and dissolution of several empires and societies. Yet, despite the vital importance of economic forces in shaping the course of history, surprisingly the study of the economic history of India "hardly drew the attention of historians except incidentally".[1] Excessive emphasis on political themes led to the virtual neglect of socio-economic and cultural aspects of the historical process. In the recent times however, a novel trend has emerged which has brought about a transformation in the Indian historical scenario. The focus of interest has now visibly shifted from the study of a primarily political history and the history of institutions, military exploits of Kings, viceregal policies and court politics/intrigues, to an interestingly new and fascinating field of socio-economic, cultural and religious history. The new trend therefore, takes into consideration the development of civilization in all its aspects. Thus, in the modern times, history is being written on a much broader canvas. "Moreover, today more than ever before it is being realised that economic factors are fundamental and that they constitute the basis of man's existence",[2] as the relation of a human being to his material environment, so essential to his life and progress can hardly be

ignored. As pointed out by K.T. Shah, "Economic factors condition and influence materially the entire life of the community". The study of economic history has since emerged as a 'burgeoning subdiscipline' in the historical field.

It is to this particular field of historiography that W.H. Moreland belongs. He in fact, started his career as a British Civil Servant in India and it culminated in his being a pioneer in the field of economic history of medieval India. Born on 13 July, 1868 in Northern Ireland, William Harrison Moreland was the son of Mr. W.H. Moreland of Belfast.[4] Moreland received his education first at Clifton College, where he spent five years as a scholar and exhibitioner from 1881 to 1886, the year when he qualified for the Indian Civil Service at a young age of eighteen years. During the period of probation at the Trinity College, Cambridge, Moreland obtained a first in the Law Tripos and became an LL.B.[5] The young civilian officer proceeded to India and arrived there on 11 November, 1889[6] and was posted to the United Provinces. From 1889 to 1893 Moreland served as Assistant Magistrate and Collector at Allahabad, Rampur State, Jaunpur, Kanpur and Fyzabad.[7] In 1893 he became Under Secretary, North-Western Provinces, and from 1893 to 1896, Moreland served as Assistant Settlement Officer, Unao.[8] Thus began Moreland's long apprenticeship in the field of Indian land revenue administration which spanned over a long period of twenty-five years.

[8] Ibid.
On the death of the Settlement Officer, Mr. J. Penny, Moreland completed the work of assessment and published an admirable final report in 1896. It was probably Moreland's practical work as Assistant Settlement Officer which sparked off his interest in the country's revenue administration. Appointed as Joint-Magistrate of Partabgarh and Bulandshahr in 1896, the same year Moreland became Assistant Commissioner, Bulandshahr. The next year, Moreland was appointed Joint-Magistrate and held this post till March 1899, when he rose to the high position of the Director of Land Records and Agriculture in the United Provinces, which he held till 1914 "with conspicuous merit". Unfortunately Moreland was greatly handicapped by increasing deafness which according to R. Burn, "disabled him from ordinary duties and undoubtedly preventing his rising to the highest posts in the service ....". Yet it was only on account of his abilities and wide experience that he was marked out for the post of Director of Land Records and Agriculture. During the period of twelve long years when he held this post Moreland was responsible for several commendable works. For instance, "he had to deal with the important questions of simplifying the systems of land records and settlement of land revenue". This led to the revision of the records of rights-procedure by Moreland. He also made arrangements for the improvement of the training of the ganungos, and a major administrative achievement of Moreland was the transformation of the agricultural school at Kanpur into a College, "with a staff of experts new to the country and suspicious of the head of a department with no specialised scientific training". However, a willing student all his life, Moreland's official reports on a variety of topics reflect his grasp

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
of facts and also the results of continuous study of economic theory.

In 1905, Moreland was honoured with the title of C.I.E. (Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire). For services rendered during the famine of 1907-08 Moreland received special recommendation and Sir John Hewett appreciated Moreland's services in the resolution on the Famine in the United Provinces thus, "... much valuable information embodied in this resolution has been supplied by Mr. Moreland, whose long study and mature judgement of the economic conditions of the United Provinces has been of the greatest assistance to the Lieutenant Governor throughout the past year".[14] In 1912, in recognition of his official services, the honour of the C.S.I. (Companion of the Order of the Star of India) was bestowed upon him. It seems to be unfortunate that deafness stalled the advance of Moreland's career and led him to seek pre-mature retirement in 1914 at the age of forty-six, having spent all his service in the United Provinces, where he had many friends who were attracted by his high character and abilities.[15] Moreland, however, remained unmarried. For the next two years, 1914-1916, he served as Agricultural Adviser to the princely State of Indore in Central India. "On returning to England Moreland became associated with the weekly, Indiaman (afterwards Great Britain And The East)".[16] Thus, while Moreland's early retirement put an end to his active career as an administrator, it also marked the beginning of his emergence as an historian. An efficient and innovative administrator, Moreland was destined to be a still greater historian, who became known as one of the leading authorities of medieval Indian economy.

Notwithstanding the three manuals that Moreland wrote during his stay in India, it was in his years of retirement that he produced an exhaustive range of works and articles and thereby made an everlasting

[15] Ibid., p. 156
contribution to the chosen historical field. His publications may be listed as follows:

1. A Report on Australian Methods of Testing and Improving Wheat and Their Applicability to India; With Special Reference To The Prevention of Rust, 1901.


3. The Revenue Administration of the United Provinces, 1911.


5. An Introduction To Economics for Indian Students, 1913.


9. Moreland collaborated with (a) Professor Geyl in a translation of Jahangir's India, the Remonstrantie of Fransisco Pelsaert, 1925 and,

10. Also with (b) Sir Atul Chatterjee in A Short History of India, 1936.


12. For the Hakluyt Society he edited, Peter Floris, His Voyages to the East Indies in the Globe, 1611-1615, 1934.

Moreland wrote over forty articles:

1. "Reh. An account of the attempts which have been made to utilize the upland barren lands (usar) of the United Provinces for profitable purposes" Agricultural Ledger, 1901.


17. Dutch Sources for Indian History : 1590 to 1650", *Journal of Indian History*, 1922-23.
22. "A Dutch Account of Mogul Administrative Methods", *Journal of Indian History*, 1925.
31. "Recent Work in Indian Economic History (1905-1928)", *Journal of Indian History*, 1929.
32. "The Indian Peasant in History", *Near East and India*, 1929.
34. "The King of Vellore", *Journal of Indian History*, 1932.
35. "Pieter van den Broeke at Surat (1620-1629)", *Journal of Indian History*, 1932.
38. "Zat Rank in the Mogul Empire", *Journal of Indian History*, 1936.
40. "Johan van Twist's Description of India", *Journal of Indian History*, 1937.
42. "From Gujarat to Golconda in the Reign of Jahangir", *Journal of Indian History*, 1938.

Not a professional historian, it was the need to know his
field of work better which impelled Moreland to undertake the study of the agriculture and the revenue administration of India, to begin with. After his first work, Moreland's "advance towards being a historian was unbroken .... In his second volume, The Revenue Administration of the United Provinces (1911), the metamorphosis was well under way, the grub which had fed full on Settlement Reports and the masterly historical Introduction to the Oudh Gazetteer is bursting from the chrysalis, the wings which later soared over Mughal India are already visible".[17] His interest thus aroused, Moreland then set about to explore and concentrate on the economic history of medieval India for which original sources were available in abundance. The 'groping for information' began which was reflected in his enthusiasm for the past records of the land revenue department. Moreland's passion to have an easy access to new and original sources made him a polyglot and with great zeal he mastered Persian, French, Dutch and Portuguese.[18]

Moreland, therefore, began as an explorer in the field, which till then had not drawn sufficient attention of the other civil servants. That was also the time when polemical feelings among most of the British historians ran high and Moreland too could not remain immune to this trend. His earlier works, especially India at the Death of Akbar (1920), reveal his polemical feelings where he is always on the defensive to justify the policies of the British Government in India. Gradually as he evolved as a historian Moreland abandoned to a great extent, his polemical approach to Indian history, which is evident in his major works like, From Akbar to Aurangzeb (1923) and The Agrarian System of Moslem India (1929).

Apart from being an able administrator and an eminent historian Moreland had love for sports also. While at Cambridge he ran for the University in his cross-country contest with Oxford. As Director


he taught his young qanungos to play hockey and soccer "a task that would have seemed impossible forty years ago".\[19\] An indefatigable walker, for many years after his retirement Moreland's short annual holiday was spent walking thirty miles a day in the country where there was no danger from traffic. According to Richard Burn, "His many friends valued his correspondence, a letter on a serious subject generally ending with a flash of humour".\[20\] For instance, just three days before his sudden death Moreland wrote apropos of a book he proposed to edit for Hakluyt Society: "The Traveller Struys turned up, and I am now considering whether at 70+ I am justified in committing myself to 400 quarto pages of black letter, with notes ranging from Russia to Java ... I suppose I must take it on; it looks like a lifer".\[21\] At a meeting of the East India Association held in 1920, where Moreland read a paper entitled, "The Study of Indian Poverty", the Chairman, Lord Meston most befittingly acknowledged Moreland's contribution in the following words, "Mr. Moreland's name is a household word to any one interested in the question of Indian economics... It was through his continuous and untiring efforts that the foundations were laid of that advancement in rural prosperity which is now so prominent in the United Provinces. Since he has retired he has devoted himself to thinking and studying and lecturing and writing on the same subject, to the great advantage of India, and everyone interested in it".\[22\] On 28 September, 1938, came to an end the illustrious career in service and historical research of a man whose association with the Indian land revenue administration and economy proved highly significant in filling up a crucial gap in the study of the history of medieval period.

A study of the historical environment before the emergence on the scene of W.H. Moreland requires a retrospective view of the

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
main trends in the evolution and development of historiography in modern India, the foundation of which was laid down in the colonial era by the western scholars, particularly the British. In fact, the growth and development of British historical interest in India's past synchronized with the territorial expansion of British in India. As appropriately stated by J.S. Grewal, the eighteenth century formed the background for the British historians writing on India, which was inspired as much by efforts at self-understanding as by self-interest.[23] With the foundation of the British rule in India thus laid, the servants of the East India Company were faced with the pragmatic task of governing the areas falling under their control. Meanwhile, in the early 1770's when the shocking reports of the East India Company's oppression, exploitation and mismanagement started making rounds in England Horace Walpole remarked, 'we shall lose the East before we know half its history'. But the prophecy proved incorrect since the British were destined to rule over India for more than one century and a half. Besides, the East India Company itself had no desire to remain ignorant of the history of the country they were conquering and intended to rule over. More important was the fact that the Company had a very active imperial interest in India. "As a chartered Company possessing an exclusive trade to India and China, the Company had a financial stake in the continuance of trade and Empire. Its survival as a commercial corporation, indeed depended on the preservation of the Indian Empire".[24] Consequently, it was not in their interest to misgovern or lose India and to remain ignorant of its history. Therefore, necessity more than curiosity drove the British to explore India's history, its past institutions and administrative set-up. Indeed at the very outset of the expansion and consolidation of British Empire in India, Alexander Dow pointed out that, "the political connection of Great Britain with


India imposed the obligation of knowing the history as well as the politics of India, for without a knowledge of India and its past no successful policy could be formulated whether in politics or in government.\[25\] Hence, for administrative purposes also, the British officials began to show a keen interest in India's past, its history, and classical languages. Besides, the assumption of political responsibilities by the Company imposed upon it the necessity of knowing the principles of past governments in India. Since the British looked upon the Muslims as their immediate predecessors in conquest and supremacy over India, knowledge of past Indian politics and government in Muslim India appeared to offer clues to present political and administrative problems. It is not surprising that in the late eighteenth century the Company became a very zealous patron of historical, legal and Persian studies.\[26\]

The course of the British historical writing on India was greatly influenced by certain factors, whose impact albeit direct and indirect at times, was nonetheless decisive, and also provided the broad undercurrents of British interest in India's past. The emergence of four broad ideological trends exercised a tremendous impact upon the thinking of the writers. These contemporary British schools of thought classified most of the historians writing on India into the representatives of Enlightenment, Evangelical, Utilitarian and Romanticist schools. Thus, Alexander Dow, Jonathan Scott and John Briggs represented the school of Enlightenment on medieval India. Alexander Dow was the most ardent spokesman and exponent of 'Enlightened self-interest'. Evangelicalism found its supporters in Sir John Shore, Charles Grant, Marshman, Peggs and James Vaughan. Utilitarianism had its most vocal spokesman in James Mill, to be followed by Henry Elliot and Henry George Keene among others.

Mill, "denied both the uniqueness and grandeur of Hindu

\[26\] Ibid., p. 23.
He launched "a massive assault on what he regarded to be the 'rude' and decadent State of Hindu Civilization". [27] In fact, both the "Evangelicals and Utilitarians alike were committed to radical reforms and shared radical expectations of their success". [28] Romanticism with its sympathetic attitude towards India's past found in David Price, Glig, Elphinstone and James Tod, some of its most prominent British historians on medieval India. In fact, a very significant undercurrent was, that almost from the beginning the British historical writing on India lend itself to an inherent unity of idea and their appreciation for India would not proceed beyond a certain point. Thus even while the British historians belonged to different schools of thought and wrote on different phases, there was one unifying factor which marked their writings: no British historian failed to impress the superiority of, as well as, to justify the British rule in India vis-à-vis the Muslim rule that preceded it. [30] Even the great Orientalist, William Jones, for all his appreciation and intense admiration for the Hindu Civilization and ancient Hindus, whom he called Greeks of Asian Civilization, subscribed to the contemporary view point of his fellow historians, who assumed the intellectual superiority of European nations over Asians. For Jones Europe remained 'the fair princess of the World' and Asia her 'handmaid'. [31]

It was however, the publication of The History of India As Told By its own Historians (1867-1877) by Elliot and Dowson, which "appeared to have put the history of Muslim India on altogether a new

basis".[32] Elliot was the first British historian of Muslim India who was contemptuous in his attitude and hostile in his tone, in his treatment of the Muslim rulers.[33] Elliot's assertion was that, "The history of the Muhammadan period remains yet to be written".[34] The "despotic Government and rigorous and sanguinary laws" of the Muslim rulers under which, "The common people must have been plunged into the lowest depths of wretchedness and despondency"[35] came under Elliot's harsh attack. While justifying the 'foreign' British rule in India, Elliot tended to belittle the achievements of the Muslim rulers. He further asserted that the British Government had done more for the Indians in fifty years than what the Muslim rulers had done in five hundred years.[36] Thus after Elliot, conscious or unconscious comparison of the Muslim with the British rule became more or less a general or regular feature of the British writing on medieval India.

While the polemical feelings pre-dominated in the British historians, an important feature which marked the contemporary historical writings was, that one form of history, that is, the political history and regional studies, held the prime attention of the British historians and economic aspects of history featured only in a subsidiary manner in their works. For instance, V.A. Smith, one of the best known exponents of the imperialist view of Indian history, made a significant observation that, in the ancient times land was owned by the King.[37] "This theory suited the British colonial interests and was upheld by several other British historians, who apparently wanted to make out a case for introducing agrarian changes by the British

[33] Ibid., p. 172.
[34] Elliot & Dowson, The History of India As Told by its own Historians, Vol. I, Allahabad, xxii.
[35] Ibid., pp. xx, xx1.
[36] Ibid., p. xxvii.
government in the late 19th and early 20th centuries". [38]

The study of Indian history by British historians greatly inspired Karl Marx, who between 1853 and 1857 wrote a series of articles on India, exposing the nature of British rule in India. However, he too believed in the superiority of the British nation. "Like James Mill, he had no patience for the view that India had once enjoyed a 'golden age' from which it had lapsed only after European intervention". [39] Thus, the British indeed had a 'mission' to perform, which, according to Karl Marx was two-fold: "one destructive, the other regenerating - the annihilation of the old Asiatic Society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western Society in Asia". [40] Marx pointed out that although, "the English milliocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expenses, the cotton and other raw materials for their manufacturers", [41] but still railway system in India would truly be the forerunner of modern industry, the introduction of which "will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labour upon which rest the Indian Castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power". [42]

Though the British historians in general, did not pay much attention to economic factors, yet some aspects of it, especially the land-revenue system had drawn their attention, as apparent by works such as, John Briggs, The Present Land Tax of India (1830), E. Atkinson, Statistical and Historical Account of the N.W. Provinces (1875-94) and

[41] Ibid., p. 29.
[42] Ibid.
Baden-Powell, The Land Systems of British India, 1892.

In the meantime, the development of nationalism and political consciousness among the Indians, made the Indian scholars keenly aware of the economic exploitation of India by the British. "The rise of liberalism and Marxism led to the development of ideas and movements which were opposed to political subordination and economic disparity and which attributed the alarmingly increasing impoverishment of India to British rule".[43] In the last decade of the nineteenth century the prevalent condition of Indian economy gave rise to lively debates between the apologists of the British rule and its critics, as to whether the Indian people were better off under their previous rulers than under their present ones. These debates led to the emergence of a new trend in historiography, in modern India. The debates took place between the two prominent schools of thought, namely, the Indian Nationalist economic historians and the British administrator historians. The Nationalist school of economic historians which was led by such eminent personalities as Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade and R.C. Dutt made a brilliant attempt towards an understanding of the structure of colonialism and colonial economy, in order to lay bare its exploitative nature and the consequent impoverishment of India which involved the ruin of her trade and industry. Greatly intrigued by the stark reality of Indian poverty, ruin of the indigenous industry, the plight of the peasants who were being crushed under the burden of rack-rent, this group of historians inferred, that the British rule was economically injurious to India. Their biggest complaint was that, India was being drained of its wealth and capital, which was causing poverty, lack of capital growth and also crippling her industry. All these economic evils, they came to feel, were the direct or indirect consequences of British economic policy in India. Thus "if the Indian economic world was out-of joint", the responsibility was largely that of Britain. Hence, in the eyes of the nationalist leaders, all the other

advantages of British rule in the past and the present paled before its economic disadvantages.[44]

"An acknowledged nationalist leader, Dadabhai was the first to initiate a systematic study of colonial economy" and also "contributed more than anybody else towards establishing the theory of drain, the resultant loss of capital and poverty of India".[45] Dadabhai's Poverty and Un-British Rule In India (1901) was an attempt to prove "the appalling poverty and distress" of the Indian people and "the astounding indifference and extravagance" of the British rulers which, he considered, quite "Un-British" in character and suicidal to Britain. [46] According to him, "The chief cause of India's poverty, misery, and all material evils is the exhaustion of its previous wealth, the continuously increasing, exhausting, and weakening drain from its annual production by the very excessive expenditure on the European portion of all its services and the burden of a large amount a year to be paid to foreign countries for interest on public debt, which is chiefly caused

[44] Bipin Chandra, The Rise And Growth of Economic Nationalism in India, Economic Policies of Indian National Leadership, 1880-1905, Peoples Publishing House, Delhi, 1982, Reprint, p. 739. Initially the Nationalist Historians were dazzled by the establishment of law and order, a modern centralised government, spread of modern Western education. "In the field of economics, it was the prospect of rapid industrial development that attracted them. The railways, roads and canals, the link with the flourishing markets of the world, the early textile industry, and the foreign commercial, industrial and plantation enterprises appeared to be a preparation for a prelude to the coming industrial development", p. 737.


by the British rule". [47] Further, "As the drain prevents India from making any capital the British by bringing back the capital which they had drained from India itself, secure almost a monopoly of all trade and important industries and thereby further exploit and drain India, the source of the evil being the official drain". [48] Dadabhai Naoroji estimated the annual economic drain from India between thirty or forty million pounds. [49] Although Naoroji did not ignore the bright side of the British rule, but the drain according to him was one of the most unfavourable results of the present system of administration, under which India was suffering seriously in several ways and sinking deeply in poverty. [50] According to him, "It is useless for the British to compare themselves with the past Native rulers. If the British do not show themselves to be vastly superior in proportion to their superior enlightenment and civilization, if India does not prosper and progress under them far more largely, there will be no justification for their existence in India". [51] Thus, while Dadabhai was the first who seriously drew attention to a national economic ideology, Mahadev Govind Ranade, through his numerous essays and lectures gave "a well-defined form, content and direction to the study of Indian national economy of the late nineteenth century". [52] However, on the question of the drain, Ranade maintained a reserved and moderate posture. [53]

Another historian, R.C. Dutt, a product of the nineteenth century Renaissance devoted himself to the economic history of India for three decades (1873-1904), that is, from the Battle of Plassey in 1757 to the dawn of the present century, and "... the historiography of

[48] Ibid., p. 34.
[49] Ibid., p. 25.
[50] Ibid., p. 1.
[51] Ibid., p. 192.
[53] Ibid., p. 83
Indian nationalism enshrines Dutt, the author of the two-volume expose of the economic consequences of British rule in India, as one of the proponents of what is described as economic nationalism.\[54\] R.C. Dutt's economic history was a critical review of, and a scathing attack on, the entire British rule in India.\[55\] Land revenue and the related agrarian problems figured prominently in his works. R.C. Dutt exposed the tyrannical revenue policy of the government which bled the agriculturist and caused extreme penury leading to recurrent famines.\[56\] The policy of the British Indian government of preferring railway construction to irrigation works was also attacked by R.C. Dutt, since he believed that being basically an agricultural country, India needed irrigation works more than railways. Similarly, the British commercial policy also came in for Dutt's sharp criticism. In his opinion, with the establishment of British rule India lost not only her political independence but industrial and economic independence as well. She became the supplier of raw materials which the British industries required and demanded a vast market for British goods and a field for profitable investment of British capital. Thus, India lost not only her old manufacturers but home industries as well.\[57\] Dutt claimed that while British rule had given India peace, but British Administration had not promoted or widened the sources of National Wealth in India, such as, "Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures and sound Financial Administration". Thus, if manufactures were crippled, agriculture was overtaxed and a third of the revenue remitted annually out of the

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\[55\] Subodh K. Mukhopadhyay, Evolution of Historiography in Modern India, 1900-1960, p. 95.

\[56\] Bisheshwar Prasad, in Bipin Chandra's, Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India, Foreword. p. ix.

country, any nation on earth would suffer from permanent poverty and recurring famines.\[58\] And the poverty of the Indian population under the British was unparallel in any civilized country. Dutt further pointed out that under the Afghans and Mughal Emperors, "the proceeds of taxation flowed back to the people and fructified their trade and industries. But a change came over India under the rule of the East India Company. They considered India as a vast estate or plantation, the profits of which were to be withdrawn from India and deposited in Europe. In one shape or another all that could be raised in India by an excessive taxation flowed to Europe, after paying for a starved administration".\[59\]

It would not be out of place to refer to J.N. Sarkar's *Economics of British India* (1909), which contained a vigorous attack on the economic policy of the British Indian government, which had reduced India to "the position of a debtor country".\[60\] Thus, while India was one of the richest countries in raw materials, the effect of the Home Charges meant compelling India to part with over thirty crores of rupees worth of goods in excess of her imports annually.\[61\]

Mention may also be made of William Digby, a notable British administrator-scholar, whose *Prosperous British India* (1901) laid bare several facts relating to India's economic condition. Digby dedicated his book to "Every Man or Woman or British Birth, who is desirous that our rule should become a Blessing to the people of India" and hoped that "Facts" recorded may lead to the amelioration of the condition.

\[60\] Jadunath Sarkar, *Economics of British India*, Calcutta, 1917, 4th Edg p. 141. The work also dispels the impression that the historian had an unstinted admiration for Pax Britannica. See also "India, A Debtor Country", pp.137-147, and "Swadeshi versus Protection", pp.327-334.
\[61\] Ibid., p.282.
of millions of British subjects. The author made a bold attack on the report of Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, in which he had indicated in The Times, that, "There is a small school in this country as well as in India who are perpetually asserting that our rule is bleeding India to death ... I admit at once that if it could be shown that India has retrograded in material prosperity under our rule we stand self-condemned and we ought no longer to be entrusted with the control of that country. But no such facts, figures or evidence have I ever been able to obtain".[62] However, Digby sought to counter this statement by marshalling facts from official records and to establish, "The great, the dismal, the awful, retrogression, not only in material prosperity but also in other important respects, of the country you govern".[63]

Contrary to Lord George Hamilton's claim that no facts and figures existed, William Digby indicated the abundance of figures, facts and economic data in the official records, which he himself utilised to prove his argument. Indicating the existence of two schools, Digby pointed out that while, "One is always referring to the increasing prosperity of the country and people, and claiming unstinted praise for England as the creator of this prosperity: the other is incessantly dilating upon the rapidly growing and now alarming impoverishment of both country and people".[64] However, in Digby's opinion, "That school which declares the country is in a bad way and the people in a worse way", was right, and it was exactly this statement which he set out to prove in his work. He indicated that "the Indian subject of the British Crown is taxed more than four times higher than is his Scottish fellow subject, and three times higher than his English Compeer".[65] Further, Digby perceived that, "The connection between the beginning of the drain

[64] Ibid., p. xix.
[65] Ibid., p. 8.
of Indian wealth to England and the swift uprising of British industries was not casual: it was causal".[66] Digby was perhaps, one of the first British scholars holding a responsible position under the British-India Government who acknowledged that, "England's industrial supremacy owes its origin to the vast hoards of Bengal and Karnatik being made available for her use ....... Before Plassey was fought and won, and before the stream of treasure began to flow to England, the industries of our country were at a very low ebb".[67]

Thus, the Nationalist School of economic historians, and others who shared their views, apart from initiating the study of economic history of India in a systematic manner, deeply voiced their resentment against the drastic impact of the colonial economy. Their drain theory, which formed the focal point of their economic ideas, "broke the hold of the dynastic and the regnal framework and brought the discussion of history to a newer level".[68] On the other hand, the concepts of the economic exploitation of India were ignored by most of the British administrator-historians as already pointed out, who as the ardent propagandists of the British rule tended to highlight the positive aspects of the British rule in India. They claimed that "in terms of the establishment of the effective law and order, compared to the Muslim rule, when perpetual conflict between Hindus and Muslims prevailed, and the technological and economic progress in terms of railways, telegraph",[69] the British rule had certainly been beneficial for India. Since these British administrator-historians had their own cause to serve; they strove to impress the superiority of the British rule as compared to the Mughal rule in India. Even if some of them happened to admire India's heritage, they were "handicapped by their subconscious, social and cultural bias emanating from their orientation,

[67] Ibid., p. 30.
[69] Ibid.
intellectual and moral".[70]
In this historical environment at the turn of the present century, it was perhaps not possible for W.H. Moreland also, as a British Civil Servant to shake off or to remain uninfluenced by the contemporary "British Civil Service temperament" of the British authors, who thus viewed the history of India through a coloured glass. In fact, in his Preface to *India at the Death of Akbar* (1920), Moreland specifically expressed his "gratitude to the past and present members of my old service", from whom he derived immense inspiration. However, Moreland's vision of Indian history was also doubtless primarily influenced by economic factor, though its standard of evaluation was the British administration,[71] at least initially. As the founder of modern historiography on the economic history of medieval India, W.H. Moreland occupies a unique and significant place in the field of historical research. Despite the fact that from the time of the advent of British their interests in India were commercial and the Mughal Empire was considered to be the forerunner of British Empire yet the economic factors operating in the history of medieval Indian Empire had drawn scant attention of British historians before Moreland. As observed by a modern historian, "The working hypothesis of most modern historians that a society must be studied in its own terms and that all aspects of the life of a people, a society or a civilization are to be assumed to be interconnected and interdependent - seem not to have greatly influenced the study of medieval Indian History".[72]

Before Moreland's emergence on the historical scenario, occasional writings on medieval Indian economy did appear, as

for example, Edward Thomas' two volumes, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* and *The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India*, (1593-1707), published in 1871 and Sir Jadunath Sarkar's, *The India of Aurangzeb* (Topography, Statistics and Roads Compared with the India of Akbar) 1901. Edward Thomas', *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* was illustrated by coins, inscriptions and antiquarian remains' of Mahmud Ghazna, Muhammad Ghori, Slave Kings, Khaljis, Tughluqs, Sayyids, Lodis, Sher Shah Suri and his successors and of the provinces also. The work also listed the coinage of Babar, Humayun and Akbar. As a supplement to the *Chronicles*, Edward Thomas published *The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India*, 1593-1707, in November, 1871. That the revenues had begun to draw attention is clear from the preface of the work, "The growing interest of the subject, and the surprise expressed at the fully the available data and to present them in the amplified form of a supplement to the *Chronicles*,[73] of the Pathans. For the first time the total revenues of the Mughal Empire were studied and examined by a Britisher. Sir Jadunath Sarkar's *India of Aurangzeb*, also filled an important gap in the statistical and topographical history of India for the period extending from 1595 A.D. to 1760 A.D. The work carries a very detailed comparison between the India of Akbar and broadly speaking, the India of Aurangzeb. Besides revenue figures, the work also contains a description of area of measured land, local crops and industry, which was based on the contemporary official records.

Although the above mentioned works undoubtedly supply numerous valuable economic details but the fact remains that they do not constitute economic history of medieval India in a comprehensive manner. Hence, the economic history of the medieval Indian period seemed to have been comparatively neglected till W.H. Moreland, the 'doyen of economic historians', struck a new path and brought out a series of pioneering works and writings on medieval Indian economy and thus firmly laid down the foundation of the study of the economic life and conditions of medieval India in a systematic way.