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## NEW MOVEMENTS IN REGIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY IN SOUTH INDIA

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### Abstract:

Regional history refers to the study of specific geographical areas, focusing on the historical events, developments and interactions that have occurred within those regions. Historiography represents different schools which revels and represented their identity through certain identifiable styles, techniques, approaches, methods and justification. As the modern Indian historiography is the more the outcome of western ideas than locally developed one. It is out of the very nationalist historical writings that regional historiography got its motivation. This trend flared up in the last few decades due to the consent surfacing of new pieces and also due to the need to draw a new identity and drew a comparative perspective. Regional historiography is used to identify the social and economic reason for a change and historical trend refers to a contestant’s pattern or change in social, economic political or cultural condition over a period of time.

Over a couple of decades we noticed the inevitable changes in the writing and researches in history. These changes from national level to touching down to grass route level. We should not regard history just as study of the past anymore, rather with new schools and interdisciplinary approaches broadened our study. It is very important to necessary a new paradigm and we attempt to write regional historiography which is different than the conventional one. This study is also helpful in the context of the flow of currents and cross currents in the country as whole or diverse parts. This paper attempts to discuss the role which the regional historiography can play in the reconstruction of the comprehensive and full-blooded image of country’s history of the past. The historians while writing regional history try to eliminate personal errors and focus on new light on history and search for new trends in regional history.

**Key Words:** Regional, History, Change, Interdisciplinary & Paradigm

### Introduction:

Over the last couple of decades, we notice the inevitable changes in the writings of history. These changes range from the nationalist level to touching down at grass root levels i.e. subaltern. We should not regard history just as a study of past anymore; rather with new schools and interdisciplinary approach its scope has been broadened and widened. Similarly, over the years a lot of archaeological pieces of evidence has surfaced, which now helps in promoting history through a different perspective. We find new areas been projected rather than just the political past, like the socio-economic, religious, environmental, art and architecture etc.

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To study the past and to present it, we require a thorough and systematic approach to writing history. Though the history of India is very old and rich, Indian historiography is of comparatively recent origin. As R C Majumdar is of the view that “the study of Indian history by the Indians, in the last century, started, almost as a reaction against the writing of Europeans scholars, who often gave a prejudiced and distorted version of India's history and culture which was a conventional historiography”.

### Objectives:

In conventional historiography, the inclination was more towards the political and dynastic history. However, the merit of the conventional approach certainly cannot be completely ruled out as they provided us with a sound chronological framework of political history and information base to us. It has provided new insights, fresh interpretations, new methods of analysis etc. As a result, the vision of the past has significantly changed. ‘Indian historiography in spite of its detractors has been slowly emerging into a distinct discipline within the broad framework of historical studies’. A review of modern Indian history writing can be classified in two levels – one all India and second regional. The first one includes those works which deal with the history of the entire country without limiting itself to any boundaries or regions. Whereas the second includes those works which primarily covers the history of a particular region.

- This study is also helpful in the context of the flow of currents and cross currents in the country as whole or diverse parts.
- There are attempts to discuss the role which the regional historiography can play in the reconstruction of the comprehensive and full-blooded image of country’s history of the past.
- The historians while writing regional history try to eliminate personal errors and focus on new light on history and search for new trends in regional history.

### Methodology:

The first challenge which the historians generally face while writing a regional history is how to define the/a region? And what parameters should be used for defining it? One of the acceptable definitions can be that a region may be defined as ‘a continuous part of a surface or space or body with more or less definite boundaries or with certain characteristics; or an administrative division of a country.

The geographical definitions of a region form the starting point and provide features, which give some character to the region. It requires a co-relation of many facets for better understanding. It was proposed by Dr.M.G.S. Narayan in his presidential address that ‘there is need to understand common pattern of development in different regions of India, to follow regional studies without regionalism and to place regional history in the context of the history of the sub-continent through the integrated use of archaeological: epigraphically and literary pieces of evidence. The historian must be conversant not only with modern tools, and techniques, but also with modern ideas and theories of social development put forward by philosophers of history, by sociologists and anthropologists to explain social phenomena.

The nature of society, politics, economy etc. in India is such that regional history has become obscure and to get a comprehensive assessment of historical research in modern India, regional history can provide a good platform. As we know that ‘the study of local history has become popular in recent times like the history of localities, local customs, manners and traditions, merchant and trade guilds, trade routes, temples etc. have now become important in explaining a large segment of social interest & activity’. One of the approaches of studying regional history can also be on the micro or selective level i.e. the ‘core region’ within the region. Core regions are important historically, as nuclei of power, of relatively more advance economies and as centers of administrative and cultural control, e.g. Magadha, Delhi, Poona etc. ‘Such areas often have a more homogenous cultural identity, which becomes a point of reference and is exploited by contemporary groups for a variety of reasons. We can do advanced study and have a deeper understanding of the history of the region and its place in



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National life with particular reference to towns, farming and industry, religious changes and controversies; the impact of military events and political developments at different periods. Each state in India will, as a result, have voluminous material to input.

A general pattern can be followed to study the region like importance of the region in the broader context of Indian history, historical evolution of the region tracing back to pre or proto history to the present day; indicating the major gaps in historical studies which remain to be filled up; the nature of source material available in different parts of the region; the changing boundaries of the region throughout different period; their interaction or trade with other regions and its influence or impact on them etc.

There are different trends by which the 'regional history is so far studied like, periodization, search for golden age etc. But some historians view that the concept of regional history would be applicable only when a particular region is permanently occupied by a certain community or group of people. Rajwade views history in broad universal terms 'transcending region and period, as they are necessary points for historians, but they cannot be his end.

If historiography is the study of historians' methods, a historiographical trend is an evolving pattern in the methods used by historians. These methods can be grouped into various categories like political, economic, and social history. A historical trend refers to a consistent pattern or change in social, economic, political, or cultural conditions over a period of time. Understanding these trends helps to identify how events and movements have shaped societies and influenced future developments.

### Scope:

The contribution which regional history can make will leave no scope for generalization. History is indeed been now used as a tool for the conception of national integration and they fear that regional approach might encourage parochialism, local chauvinism and sectarian aggressiveness, which may lead to disintegration. This theory certainly cannot be refuted, but it also depends on how the regional history is studied. For e.g Rajwade, Khare and Parasnis stimulated the desire for the search of originals documents in Maratha historiography in 1910 and it eventually led to The Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal was established at Poona. So it is Historians prerogative as to how he looks at a region so that he can redefine the pattern of the region at a micro-level. Regional historiography also encourages the search for new pieces of evidence or sources' ranging from archaeological to archival which also helps in opening up of new waves of interpretations.

Karnataka Ithihasa Academy founded in the year 1986 under the leadership of eminent historians G..S.Dixith and Dr.Suryanath Kamath. They are devoted to bring awareness about culture and history of Karnataka to all, especially the youth. They also promote workshops, seminars, conferences and activities with sponsorship from many institutions. Karnataka is the home to innumerable Veerakallu Masthikallu showcase the valour of the region. Learn to identify them. The various types of anatomy and enable you to reconstruct story of these heroes. Since 38 years they are working for reconstruct and study of regional history with more care and special attention to regional importance.

### Role of the regional historian:

The connection between the craft of writing a history and personal ideology does overlap in many cases. The challenge to the regional historian is equally forceful, but the historian must stick with the truth with all the lucrative and adverse conditions. The 'adoption of the inter-disciplinary approach will necessitate not only a close familiarity with the sources but also some understanding of the methods with which other disciplines concerned & analyze their data.. If we can also check the documented official records especially the district records of the state, which also 'contains very useful data for the history of the region'

We must remember that the partisan approach to history prevents the observer from recognizing the sanctity of the objective of facts. We should set forth the example of Kalhana who propounded an ideal of impartiality for the historian and made a



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critical study of numerous earlier works on the History of Kashmir called Rajtarangini all of which incidentally have disappeared. He thus gives us ‘a glimpse of the tradition of historiography in a medieval Indian kingdom which is very valuable since most of the old literature has perished. In reconstructing the past from innumerable tiny fragments, in organizing evaluating and interpreting the data, the historian will constantly need to decide which of them to use, which to reject partly or provisionally. The onus of redefining the region and alienating from the mainstream is generally larger here and so does runs the risk of coming closer to exaggeration and glorification.

### Recent Trends in Indian historiography History from Below:

The traditional histories, which focused almost entirely on the political, social, and religious elites, prompted the creation of History from Below.

The great legacy of administrative and political historiography established by Ranke and his followers gave the conventional history of the great exploits of the upper elite an additional boost. In resistance to this 'History from Above', the History from Below was an effort to write the history of the general public. It is a historiography concerned with the actions and views of those individuals and locations that earlier historians should have considered.

This historiographical tradition began to place a premium on the concerns of the underprivileged and working classes, women and underrepresented groups, 'faces in the crowd,' and those who had vanished into history. History from Below aims to make history writing more inclusive by examining the experiences of marginalized groups and individuals, exploring new sources, and reinterpreting old ones.

To succeed in history, students must think about history in new and challenging ways. Real history is more rigorous and challenging than simply ‘knowing what happened’ or memorizing and reciting facts from the past. Histories students must begin to think and work like historians. They should learn to search for information and evidence, read extensively and examine relevant historical sources, like documents, images and artifacts.

The first step towards thinking like a historian is learning some important historical concepts. Like most other disciplines, history has its own concepts, skills, terminology and approaches to thinking. Students will frequently encounter terms like change and continuity, cause and effect, sources and evidence. It is important for students to learn these terms and, once confident, to incorporate them into their own thinking and writing.

Change is perhaps the most important of all historical concepts. Exploring, explaining and evaluating change is a universal focus for people who study or work in history. When investigating the past, most historians focus not on a specific moment in time but on how society changed and evolved over a longer period.

Human societies are never static. All societies are undergoing some form of change, however minor or unnoticeable it might be. One of the aims of a historian is to identify, describe and explain this process of change. They seek to find out the conditions and factors that caused change. They try to identify how this change affected the society in question.

The speed of change is also significant. Most historical change is slow, gradual or evolutionary; it causes little disruption to society and its individual members. But some historical change – like the upheaval caused by a war, a revolution, an economic depression or political radicalism – can be abrupt, fast moving and tumultuous.

Other important historical concepts are cause and effect. Every significant event, development or change is triggered by at least one cause. To understand an event, the first task of the historian is to identify and study the factors that caused it. Every significant historical action or event also has effects or consequences. Historians study the aftermath of these actions and



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events, to identify and evaluate the impact they had on society. Understanding the effects of an event or change allows us to gauge its significance or importance.

## NEP Syllabus:

Introduced in the year 2020-21 by the Mangalore University given importance to regional history. It helps understand the history of Coastal Karnataka and Kodagu and analyze the important Political changes of this region. Understand the influence of political influence on the people and culture of this region. Appreciate the divergent Political changes of this region. Understand the history and culture of Political History of Local region with special reference to Coastal Karnataka region. To the importance of regional dynasties relations with Dakshina Kannada ruling families.

The student should acquire knowledge of terms, concepts, political events, ideas, conventions, problems, trends, personalities, chronology and generalizations etc. related to the study of History of Coastal Karnataka and Kodagu. The student should be able to recall, recognize, show and read the history of the region. The student should develop understanding of terms, facts, important events, trends, etc. related to the history and Culture of History of Coastal Karnataka and Kodagu. The student is able to classify facts, illustrate events, compare and contrast events, explain events, discriminate, identify, arrange facts, detect the errors, interpret and extract. The subject leads to develop the interest in the study of History of Coastal Karnataka and Kodagu. It also creates a critical thinking ability among the students. The student will be able to identify, analyze, collect, select, draw and verify the historical facts. The subject enables the students to develop practical skills which help in the study and understanding of historical facts. The student should be able to draw maps, charts, diagrams and prepare models, etc. This course enables students to explore various aspects of pre-history, political, Culture and Heritage and also the cultural diversity of History of Coastal Karnataka and Kodagu in historical perspective that discusses numerous cultural practices that have evolved over centuries.

## Pioneers of regional historiography in India :

The emergence of writing the history of the region was primarily to refute the charges leveled by the European scholars such as James Mill, Elphinstone, Grant Duff and others, as 'it became the powerful motive of taking to the writing of history'. Some prominent historians of the regional history were Rajendra Lal Mitra who is regarded as the first original historian trained in western method & technique wrote *Antiquities of Orissa Vol. I & II (1875-1888)* 'it is regarded as an authority of the subject'. The Muhammed Latif's *History of Punjab (1881)*. It is an important piece of work based mainly on secondary sources. It is considered as a milestone in the 19th century Indian historiography because it gives for the first time a complete account of Punjab. The contribution of Kaviraj Shyamal Das author of *Vir Vinod (1886)* a five Vols history of Mewar in Hindi. He compiled the detailed history of Mewar. Balaji Prabhakar Modak wrote in *Four Vols Kolhapur Ani Karnataka till Rajya ani Sansthanancha Itihas (1886)*. He pursued the documents in Kolhapur Archives. The works of Rajwade, Telang, Vasudeo Vaman Shastri, Khare, Ranade, Tilak, Ram Krishna Gopal Bhandarkar. The celebrated works of Nilkanth Shastri a detailed history of South India, which brings out the multi-colored and fascinating information about the politics, society, institutions, religion and philosophy, art & literature, foreign trade etc. The works titled, *The Pandyan Kingdom (1929)* *A history of South India (1955)*. *The Culture and History of Tamils (1964)* etc. The name of K.M. Pannikar also needs listing here work Indian nationalism its origin history and ideals. The list can be very exhaustive and elaborate. The attempt is made to just give an idea of regional writings during the late 19th & early 20th century.

## Conclusion:

While writing the regional history the historian's approach should not diversify to any particular region from the mainstream of India life. As the macro & micro studies of Indian society should proceed in juxtaposing and historians should always attempt an impartial, accurate and scientific history. It is difficult, but not impossible to achieve. As we strongly know that the past has happened and it cannot be changed, but the interpretation and understanding of it continue to happen and will never stop changing. While we look to the past, then we must also anticipate the future. It is like maintaining a delicate



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balance between the introspection and action, hearing and believing, thinking and writing, this is indisputably the most crucial need for any historian going about his work. Though purely objective history is, however, a noble dream, but can certainly strive to maintain its essence.

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