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I am deeply conscious of the great honour conferred upon me by electing me the President of this Section of the Indian History Congress. Words fail me to express adequately my thankfulness for the kindness extended to me. The distinguished scholars who have assembled here are thoroughly conversant with the valuable work carried out by eminent scholars on this period since we last met at Gawalior and I need not inflict upon you a hurried review on it and it is also not possible in the brief time at my disposal to review all the very good works that have been done on the early medieval period during the course of the past one year. However, I would very much like to place before you the few problems that had been occupying my mind during the long span of my association with this period of Indian History.

The 13th century is a very important land mark in Indian History. It marks the introduction of new important elements in Indian Culture which with great rapidity exerted themselves throughout the length and breadth of India and have given a new orientation to all aspects of its culture, Ideological, Architectural, Linguistic, Artistic, Epigraphical, Numismatic, etc.

It is gratifying to note that the general interest in Indian History is increasing and in recent years more and more specialised knowledge of various periods of Indian History is being stressed and arrangements are being made to facilitate research and scientific work in them. But I have been realising that scientific and sound study in this period has suffered in quality and quantity.

There is no gainsaying about the fact that the writing of a regular history of India was started during this period and histories or other works throwing light on this period are available by hundreds, many of them have found mention in the

Bibliographical Index prepared more than hundred years ago by Henry Myres Elliot and some of them have been published in the Bibliotheca Indica Series. Unfortunately no other attempt has been made on a similar scale to make the index upto date or to publish the sources in original. The Anjuman Makhtutat Farsi Hyderabad has got the publication of two or three manuscripts to its credit. The Idarai Adabiyat Urdu has also published works of considerable importance. At Aligarh Prof. Habib and his worthy colleagues are sparing no pains to publish or re-edit the valuable material. But for one reason or another, mostly the lack of financial support, these institutions can not expand their out put to satisfy the growing needs of the scholars.

Since the publication of Elliot's index many manuscripts have been discovered and noticed, but no attempt has been made to make the index up to date. I wish some University or Society may take up the work which is bound to be of immense use to students and scholars.

The need for the study of languages in the study of history can not be ignored. Unfortunately this aspect has been very much neglected by us. Much useful information regarding the medieval history is available in regional languages while an enormous amount of information is also available in Persian and Arabic. It augurs well that interest in regional languages is consistently on the increase and the rapidly growing number of the publication of the manuscripts and material of the regional languages is bound to open new avenues for research. But it is a pity that the interest in Arabic and Persian is on the wane and the editing of original sources by eminent scholars like those who have worked for the Bibliotheca Indica series has become rare. The diplomatic and cultural ties with the Middle and Near East demand sufficiently large number of scholars with proficiency in these languages. But we are not much concerned with it here. As most of the original sources of the History of this period are in these languages, those who want to pass a verdict

on any salient matter, controversial or non controversial, should be sufficiently strong in them for grasping correctly the meaning of the author, otherwise the researches carried by scholars lacking in the knowledge of the language are liable to be more misleading, than some of the English or other translations of the sources. In order to strengthen and organise this aspect of our research it is essential that Universities which have no arrangements for it be persuaded to institute diploma courses and examinations in such languages. Candidates who have to base their researches on sources found in any particular language should be asked to obtain a diploma in the language before the submission of their thesis. Dr. Buddha Prakash's learned article on Porus, which has already been published, and his another article entitled 'Chandragupta Maurya in the Shah Nama', which is going through the press are sufficient testimony of the fact that Persian sources shed a flood of new light on our history even of Pre-Christian Era.

An enormous amount of material is available in European and Asiatic languages. Accounts of the Foreign travellers, despatches, and foreign archives are full of useful information. Their copies, microfilms, photostats and translations by reliable scholars should be collected at some central place preferably in the National Archives of India and made available to scholars. Similar arrangement will be equally useful regarding other periods of Indian History.

The great advance in knowledge and learning has resulted in proportionate expansion in the scope of history. Many of the works of medieval period on contemporary history have been held in high esteem by earlier people judged by the standards required at that time. Today they may justly be considered as hopelessly deficient in useful information required by a present day student. But this deficiency can very easily be supplemented by literary, mystic and other works which are being neglected and allowed to perish in manuscript form

before they see the light of print. In addition to it antiquities belonging to medieval period showing the art and culture of the time and locality are available even today in considerable abundance. But our deplorable lack of interest in visual education and our indifference to art is considerably responsible for their not being adequately collected for the purposes of study and promotion of knowledge.

It may appear unusual to some people, but it is vital that History Congress should insist on the establishment of Museums devoted to various periods of Indian History. Nothing can make a historian more familiar with, nothing can make him more closely associated with this period and nothing can give him a greater insight in it than a visit to this fountain of inspiration, I mean the Museum of antiquities of the period. It has been said of Firdausi that in order to inspire him to write his great Epic, Shah Nama, halls were filled with pictures of war. In advanced countries, Museums and Halls are constructed to serve this purpose.

This period abounds in inscriptions which are to be found scattered in great numbers all over India. Most of them are at present in a hopelessly neglected state. A comprehensive programme should be chalked out to ensure their safety from vandalism and from being lost to the scholarly world. This is a matter which demands immediate initiative on the part of all those who can in any way contribute to their preservation. Next comes the question of the preparation of the facsimilies which should be made easily available to those who are in need of their use to further their work.

There is a great urgency for making a scientific village to village epigraphical survey. This may sound ambitious but those who had occasion to tour and explore in the country are conscious of the fact that there is no dearth of inscriptions in the country side and many a times inscriptions of great epigraphical value have come from villages where they were least expected.

They have opened new chapters in the History and have given a new orientation to the views and thoughts of the scholars. It is obvious that this work will be too much for any single department.

Epigraphy is suffering immensely under the misconception that it is a highly centralised subject. The constitution has made it explicit that being one of the branches of Archaeology it is a Central, State and Concurrent subject. States and Universities can not divest themselves of the great responsibility of promoting the study and research in this important science which is an indispensable source for the reconstruction of National as well as regional History and which furnishes reliable data about many of the dynasties and periods regarding which our knowledge is meagre.

There is a sufficiently strong Dept., for Epigraphy for Southern India but it is hardly sufficient to cope with the work ahead with the result that many of the inscriptions have not been even surveyed and many are yet to be studied and published. The early medieval period inscriptions of Northern India have received still much less attention. A reference to 'Revealing India's Past' will make the matter clearer.

Here it may be added that the latest number of Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica available is of 1939-40. After that no issue has appeared as yet. It is understood that efforts are being made to regularise its issue and to considerably curtail the interval of two years at which it was previously appearing. This will indeed be great service to Indian Epigraphy.

There does not appear to be any arrangement for imparting instructions in Arabic and Persian Epigraphy and Numismatics in any of the Indian Universities, with the result that scholars capable of deciphering Arabic or Persian inscriptions of India are very rare. I hope Universities will pay due

attention to this urgent need and help in tackling scientifically the original material of our Medieval Indian history.

I strongly appeal to the Universities, Government and Public Institutions to stimulate Epigraphical studies within their own spheres and to make arrangements for their proper publication. This work must precede the writing and compilation of any authentic and comprehensive history of the country.

Many of the rulers and dynasties of this period whether of Delhi or other parts of India, have not received comprehensive treatment as is the case with some other periods of Indian History and our knowledge about many of the dynasties which played an important role in the history of the country is simply sketchy and no exclusive book about them exists.

Prof. Sherwani a devoted scholar of Bahmani period has brought out a laudable book on the Bahmanis. It has been done admirably well as a private and individual enterprise. But if he had the services of a financially strong institution the book could have been brought out in a manner befitting the wealth of knowledge contained in it and the reader could have got a more vivid and clear idea of the cultural and aesthetic achievements of this dynasty at places even far away from Bidar. It is the duty mostly of State Governments and Regional Universities to bring to light the achievements of the regional dynasties in proportion to their importance and through well got up publications pay a befitting homage to the attainments of the people who flourished in the area and have left precious legacies for posterity which in several cases are of international import. This will be not only a regional service but it will also raise the prestige of the country in the eyes of the out siders.

I must say a few words about another source of Indian History which is Numismatics. In the study of this branch of science, it appears that there have been currents and fashions in vogue and scholars had been more or less following trend of

the time. There was a time when study of the Mughal coins particularly of the Zodiac Muhars was the fashion of the day. Now this craze has considerably subsided but there does not appear to be a strong effort to give a balanced attention to the Numismatic study of various dynasties that ruled from the earliest times to the present day. Means and methods have to be devised to promote equal interest in all the branches of Indian Numismatics so that there may be a uniform progress. Elliotts Numismata Orientalia for South India and Deccan has no counter part for many of the dynasties of the medieval period which ruled the Deccan and South India. In the same way many of the dynasties of North provide extensive scope for the study of their coins. I am sure that Numismatic Society of India which is rendering valuable service to Indian Numismatics will devise means to achieve this object also.

You will be glad to hear, that several eminent scholars who possess specialised knowledge of this period have contributed valuable articles to this section. Some of them which I have received display high erudition and directly or indirectly emphasise the views which I have endeavoured to place before you. You will shortly have the pleasure of hearing them, but I would like to refer to a few of them in order to elucidate what I have submitted. Prof. Venkataramanayya, has with the help of an inscription found in the Deccan established that Alauddin Khalji was not the first Muslim King to invade the Deccan in 1296 but the first invasion had actually taken place 30 years earlier, and he has given a short account of it. Sri Vijyakanta Mishra has drawn our attention to the little known Oiniwara dynasty of Mithila which flourished from the beginning of the 14th century to about the end of the early medieval period, and has established their tentative chronology. This shows the wide extent of the scope of the work ahead of the scholars interested in this period. A very interesting paper has been contributed by Dr. Nazir Ahmed on the Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi, an unpublished manuscript on Indian Music, compiled in

Persian during the reign of Sikandar Lodhi, at the instance of his Prime Minister. The manuscript is based on Sanskrit texts which have been duly acknowledged. It shows the close intimacy of Muslim authors with Sanskrit language during this period, and also shows that how far the collection, preservation and study of manuscripts can be helpful in the reconstruction of the Social and Cultural History of this period. Dr. A. E. Srivastava has contributed a very valuable paper on Nasiruddin Khusrav Shah of Delhi and has pointed out that how some of the eminent historians can become victims of pitfalls by not grasping the implied sense of the language of original source. I have made these stray remarks at random about the papers received by me up to the time of the writing of these lines and therefore, these references of mine to the valuable and learned papers received by me or which are yet to be received may in no case be misconstrued as comprehensive and exhaustive. I have deliberately refrained from making these references more elaborate so that you may get the first thrill of the valuable knowledge contained in them while the distinguished authors are themselves reading their papers. The pleasure of it we are going to have in a few minutes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have taken much of your precious time and I cordially thank you for the patient hearing you have given to me.



