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# Indian history is not what the Left wants it to be: It belongs to Indians



By Vicky Nanjappa

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In all our shastras, importance was given to values. Historiography itself was value-based and not based on names, dates and wawr, say DK Hema and DK Hari, founders of Bharat Gyan, an NGO

**Bengaluru:** We have all learnt history through various forms. It has either been through books or from what our parents and grandparents have told us. Now when a third party tells you what your parents have told you is wrong, what do you do? Would you trust a thief or those who have given birth to you and brought you up?

Over the past couple of years, there has been a lot of talk about Indian history and with many saying that it does not cover the entire picture. To understand this more, MyNation caught up with DK Hari and D K Hema, founders of Bharath Gyan, an NGO.

Did India make an effort?

Hari and Hema say that whenever a nation becomes independent, its history is written. This happens across the world as those writing it want to bring in their perspective rather than a colonial perspective.

India on the other hand did not make an effort to re-write its history from our own perspective. Now this is a glaring error.

History is not limited to the freedom struggle alone. While our nation is young, our civilisation is very old. There is a nice contrast over, they say. Here have been attempts by people in the last few decades to write an Indic version of India. There was RC Majumdar who did a lot of multi-volume work, but he was suppressed.

Then there was Kulapathy Munshi, who was a minister in the Nehru Cabinet. He was instrumental in building the Somnath Temple. Majumdar was a Bengali, while Munshi was a Gujarati. There was Ram Swaroop Nath in North India, Sitaram Goyal in Hyderabad and Byrappa in Karnataka.

You have people across India writing this from an Indian perspective. This is a continuous process.



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Munshi wrote for the 1960s, Majumdar for the 1980s, Goyal for the 70s and Byrappa for the 2000 millennia, Hari and Hema say. There has been a pan India effort and a pan generation effort.

When we at Bharat Gyan got down to doing this work, we thought that there was a real dichotomy. Most of the history was limited to the Ganga-Yamuna basin. 80 per cent of India was left out of it. Moreover Indian history was limited to a few 100 years. India is not a nation, it is a civilisation, they say.

At Bharat Gyan we wrote about civilisation, not just history. Culture, anthropology, trade, craft etc all form components of civilisation. We are an old civilisation and hence we need such a treatment, they added.

Indians should write about India:

Hema and Hari say that they called the work as the autobiography of India. Indians should write about India, not outsiders. Till date we have done 35 volumes. It is a 50-volume effort.

In the last 50 years world history has become very boring. Brighter students take up science and the average commerce. Only the residual go for BA History. This wrong structure or placng or portraying our history has reduced the very subject of history.

The narrative that we have held for the past 70 years has killed the subject itself. It is a very self-defeating approach. Not only has it depreciated the nation, but also the very subject. It has dealt a dual blow. To rejuvenate the subject in the mind of the youth we must have a fresh look at the subject itself, they say.

Chemistry and physics are read for the content. However history is a mind bender. It bends your mind about how you think about your own civilisation. From there on, it creates a narrative among the social talk. Hence it is a lot more mind-affecting subject, because of which history is too serious to be left for the historians alone. People from all walks of life, economists, scientists all have to be part of it.

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Indian history dismissed as mythology:

The colonials have dubbed Indian history as mythology. They dubbed everything as mythology. The word mythology comes from the Greek word, mythos or myth, which means not true. It can also be a small truth from which a large imaginary story has been built. This comes from the Sanskrit word 'mithia', which means untrue or false.

Hema and Hari say that basically everything in India has been dubbed as false with one terminology. After enormous research, both the Ramayana and Mahabharata have been concluded true to be historical. The dates, chronology all have been identified and it is no longer mythology. It is history, they say.

The fundamental point is that if you look at the text of Ramayana and Mahabharata, it has been referred to as 'Itihasa.' It is a three-part word- ithi, ha and asa. This means, it thus happened and the terming was very clear.

Itihasa is something we learnt from our grandfathers and parents. If some third party is telling us what they told us is false, what do we do. A thief who comes to loot your house and negates everything that our parents have told us should not be trusted. Would you listen to a thief who has come to loot you or will you trust a person who has given birth to you and nurtured you?

Now, why did the colonialists call it mythology. They said 200 years back that God created earth at 9 am on October 23 4004 BC. Events in India are recorded before that date. They argued that that the earth did not exist and hence how can there be a history in India. Hence they summarily dubbed everything as mythology.

Now when that date is thrown out of the window, you have a free space in your mind to play back the antiquity of Indian history to its right timeline. Earlier it was dubbed as mythology to compress to fit into this date.

It was Bishop James Usher who gave this date in Ireland in 1623. A date given by him as a declaration, is now used as a rule to compress the history and timeline of India. We are now uncaged to set it back right, they add.



The case is similar when we look at Buddha's date. The man who came up with this was EJ Rapson. When he came up with this date in his book, Ancient India, he clearly wrote that it is a provisional date, just to start working in India. He did that to fit everyone in the 4004 BC timeline. Unfortunately, all the colonial historians made the provisional date as the benchmark for dating Indian history, which is totally incorrect. Now, when the 4004 BC is removed and we take a re-look at Buddha's date, it works out to 1800 BC.

Max Muller had never agreed to the date of 450 BC. He had given a date of 1020 BC for Buddha. India's history better suited for values:

In historiography, there are two things to it. In Europe, history was important as there were only two periods of its 700-year history. 350 BC to 350 BCE and then from 1350 BCE onwards.

The in-between period of 1,000 years is called as the dark ages. This was because of constant fight between the Christians and Pagans. There is no history in that period for them. Their history spans are short of 700 years each.

What was important in their historiography is about the dates and which king won which war. That is what became important for them.

Whereas in India, you have over 7,000 years of unbroken and continuous history. The historiography of Europe cannot be applied in India. This was recognised by our Puranic writers many millennia ago. What they said is the names of kings, the years they lived, how many wars they fought, won or lost is not of so much consequence. Kings come and go, but what is more important to tell in history is values. Through history one needs to inculcate values.

The names kept changing, but what will not change is the values. What is needed for society is the values, Hari and Hema point out.

In all our traditional literature, importance was given to values. Historiography itself was value based and not based on names, dates and war. These were our place holders. The focus was values. In today's world we need values. Hence India's historiography style is better suited for

today's needs and not the style of colonial Europe.

In Bharat Gyan, we normally say that kings and kingdoms come and go, whereas the civilisation is made up of people and their efforts. This is what should sustain. We need to go beyond history and focus on civilisation, which is what we have been doing.

The people today are not reading history books. We have created a new range. We have books for those who want to read for 5 hours. We have mini books for those who read for 20 minutes and articles for those who want to read for 5 minutes. If you have only 3 minutes, we have a short film and if you have 30 seconds, we have an e-banner. One needs to provide a bouquet to the youth, Hari and Hema explain. For the youth of 2020, the study should be about civilisation.

India's history belongs to Indians:

When asked why those, particularly from the Left oppose the re-writing of Indian history, Hema and Hari say let the people have access to all varieties. Let people from all walks offer it and put it in public domain. Let the people choose among the whole bouquet.

History and civilisation belong to the people of India. Let there be a debate. The people have the right to choose between right and concocted history. It should be a bottom up approach of the people choosing after a public debate, Hema and Hari say.

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Ramayana

Mahabharata

Left

history