

CBSE Class–VIII Social Science
NCERT SOLUTION
History Chapter 1
When and where our past

1. State whether true or false:

a) James Mill divided Indian History into three periods- Hindu, Muslim, and Christian

Ans. False

b) Official documents help us to understand what the people of the country think.

Ans. False

c) The British thought surveys were important for effective administration.

Ans. True

2. What is the problem with the periodisation of Indian History that James Mill offers?

Ans. James Mill divided his book into three period, namely: Hindu Muslims and British. According to his prejudiced version of Indian history, the British rule represents all the forces of progress and civilisation, while the period before British rule represents darkness, ignorance, despotism, religious intolerance, caste taboos, superstitious practises, etc.

The view of Mill has several problems which is not acceptable due to reasons:

(i) All the Asian societies were less civilised than the European ones. So the British could civilise India by conquering all the territories of India.

(ii) The Hindus and the Muslims are not capable of ruling India.

(iii) All rulers in ancient India did not share the same faith. So naturally there wouldn't be religious tolerance. This will be a hindrance to the progress, enlightenment and happiness of the nation.

Thus the problem with the periodisation Indian history that James Mill offers is that the subjective account of a historian distorts the facts.

3. Why did the British preserve official documents?

Ans. The British preserved the important official documents because these served as records

of what the officials thought, what they were interested in and what they wished for. According to the British, writing was more important than speaking as the documents in archives and museums could be utilized for reference at a much later period whenever required for studying or debating. These can also serve as an information or proof of any decision or action taken earlier on some matter.

4. How will the information historians get from old newspapers be different from that found in police reports?

Ans. Information is essential for writing history of a time which can be gathered from various sources. Apart from official documents in the archives, historians gather information also from old newspapers, diaries of people, accounts of pilgrims, autobiographies of important personalities and booklets etc.

Information found in newspapers is varied, based on incidents that have happened across the country. They may be showcasing incidents based on the views and thinking of the correspondents, news editors etc.

Whereas, the police reports are true, pragmatic, limited and localized. Because of this fact, sometimes the information historians get from the old newspapers, are not as useful as it is from that found in police reports. However, for any incidence the newspaper may not quote all the reasons behind it and it would be biased as per the thinking of reporter while in police records we could find some evidences for an incident and unbiased reports.
