

Beginning of the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

History evolves gradually, primitive man was a mere food collector, after knowing about the food production the man began settled life which led to the civilizations. Since then rapid changes occurred in the life of the man. The concept of State emerged and that led to wars based on the region, religion and race which led to the emergence of the Nation States. After the downfall of Constantinople in 1453 the existing trade routes were closed by the Ottoman Turkish Emperor thus there was a necessity of sea explorations to the Europeans that led to the Geographical discoveries, establishment of the Colonies and Imperialism, this is considered as the beginning of Modern Era. The Renaissance, the Reformation and Counter Reformation encouraged Humanism, Experimentalism, Empiricism and Rationalism. With the discovery of new warfare methods and gunpowder led to decline of feudalism. The Geographical discoveries encouraged international trade and commerce led to the emergence of joint stock companies and the middle class. During this period within Europe there were so many revolutions which curtailed the powers of the King and gradually paved the way for Parliamentary, Democratic and Republican form of Governments. In historiography also changes were there. The modernization has its impact on all the spheres of human life.

Key words: Food collector, food production, the State, Geographical discoveries, Colonies, Imperialism, Revolutions, Democratic, Parliamentary, Republican, historiography

INTRODUCTION

Evolution of culture and civilization is History. Civilization emerged gradually from nomadic stage to settled life, from food collection stage to food production stage meanwhile fire was discovered during Mesolithic age and the wheel was invented during Neolithic age. In this evolution process new thoughts and inventions occurred, in this process more formulae and theories emerged.

The downfall of Constantinople in 1453 is the turning point in the history of mankind and considered as the beginning of the modern period which led to the scientific temper, empiricism, rationalism and humanism as the part of the Renaissance which occurred in Italy. In this context Giordano Bruno's Proto Heliocentric theory, Copernicus's Heliocentric theory were propounded by condemning Ptolemy's Geocentric theory which had acceptance of the Church, Kepler's law of Planetary motion and Galileo Galilee proved the heliocentric theory with the help of the telescope which is invented by himself only, Newton's laws of motion and universal theory of gravity, in 1859 Charles Darwin published his magnum opus '*On the Origin of Species*' brought changes in the thoughts of mankind. In 1450 John Gutenberg invented the printing press which led to the development of innumerable vernaculars and the books could reach the common people and made them to think on their own. Thus the scientific temper taught rationalism by questioning the creed.

Scope of the Study:

1. To study the impact of the downfall of Constantinople
2. To understand the journey of the political power towards the people through the revolutions

GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERIES

After the downfall of Constantinople the Ottoman Turkish emperor Mohammed II obstructed the trade route which connected Asia – Europe immediately and there remained only one trade route via red sea and Mediterranean Sea by which Venice merchants benefited a lot, but in 1507 this trade route was also closed. To break the monopoly of the Venice

merchants other Europeans kept rigorous efforts to explore the sea routes; thus Portugal started the exploration followed by Spain and others.

COLONIES

The geographical discoveries led to establishment of the colonies all over the world out of the Europe. This colonialism led to the capitalism, industrialization and imperialism; which led to the First World War 1914-1918 and this war was concluded with Paris treaty 1919. Mean while important changes occurred in the form of revolutions in the Europe continent which dismantled the divine theory of kingship... the puritan revolution 1649 where the King Charles I was persecuted by the people, the glorious revolution 1688 where the King James II fled to France, the American revolution 1783 defied the Britain monarch's rule and declared themselves as a republic and this is the first republic of the modern era, the French revolution 1789 brought the power into the hands of the bourgeois and gave slogan '*liberty, fraternity and equality*' which has its relevance till now, and this French revolution had its impact on the then European countries that's why there emerged a proverb '*if France catches cold, Europe sneezes*', thus Unification movements of Italy & Germany and this newly emerged States were also demanding the colonies on par with the earlier colonial powers, the Unification of Germany had sown the seeds of the first world war, in Asia after restoration of the *Meiji* (enlightened rule) Japan also emerged as a powerful nation and competed with the European colonial powers for the colonies at least in Asian continent, for that purpose it gave a beautiful and attractive slogan '*Asia for Asians*',... the motive of the slogan of Japan was Imperialism only.

In the colonies also the national movements were begun because of alienation of the people and systematic exploitation of the resources which led to the independence /liberation of those particular colonies gradually. The Paris peace treaty 1919 was called as a *dictated peace* because the losers were insulted, humiliated and exploited territorially, colonially, economically and militarily also, thus the insult to Germany led to the emergence of Nazism, injustice to Italy led to emergence of Fascism and deprivation of acquired territories of Japan in China by the USA and its European allies led to the militarism, ultimately led to the second world war 1939-45. The outburst during the war in the colonies paved the way for their independence. The world polarized into two blocs, that was capitalist bloc under the leadership of the USA, communist bloc under the leadership of the USSR and thus started the cold war which was compared with *the sword of Damocles* by Jawahar Lal Nehru

EVOLUTION OF THE STATE

At primitive stage man was mere food collector but gradually he could know the food production i.e. agriculture which led to the settled life, since then he started to live along with other people which are called as tribes, this tribe emerged as jana, jana as janapada, janapada as maha janapada, mahajanapada as kingdom, kingdom as an empire. At earlier stage of settled life the ruler was chosen, thus emerged primitive republics for instance in 6th century BCE there were four republics, those were Sakyas, Koliyas, Moriyas and Baggus apart from the 16 Maha Janapadas and one among them was Vajji was confederation of 8 republics; in case of India it was Rajan during the early Vedic age and was controlled by the village assemblies: sabha and samiti and he was paid voluntary tax by name *bali*. But gradually the ruler has gained much prominence and his authority also expanded, emerged as the superior among the subjects thus they started to bear the titles such as *Devanampiya* (Beloved of God), *Devaputra* (son of god), later on the incarnation of God, in medieval period they took the titles of Nabāb-e-Khudā (Acolyte of God), Jhil-e-Ellāhi (Shadow of God), Khudā-e-Vandgār (Devotee of God) and the King was accountable to the god only, this phenomenon was prevalent all over the world irrespective of the religion of the King, a proverb '*the King can do no wrong*' also emerged, thus the King asserted his position and concentrated all the powers in him only, which led to despotism. But there was enlightened despotism for a certain period of time in some parts of the world.

In England - 1215 Magna Carta, 1628 Petition of Rights, 1689 Bill of Rights; in France 1789 Declaration of Human Rights curtailed the indisputable powers of the Kings and the rights of the people were recognized. The intellectuals were known as the *morning stars* of this period, they always played the key role in awakening of the people all the time, Montesquieu advocated the rule of separation of powers in his famous book '*the Spirit of Laws*', Voltaire propagated democratic values such as right to expression against the oppression of the State, Rousseau in his magnum opus book '*The Social Contract*' preached to rebel against the Ruler if his rule is against the will of the people led to the establishment of the responsible republican parliamentary form of governments.

The Industrial revolution began in the late 18th century and gradually spread all over Europe first and the world later. Interestingly two contradictory classes emerged with the industrial revolution i.e. Capitalists and Proletarians. This

revolution brought the issue of exploitation of the proletariats which led to the theories of Socialism, Communism. In 1917 Russian revolution brought the power into the hands of proletariats.

WAR

The primitive man fought with nature for his survival, gradually prepared the tools to ease the food collection later on for farming; gradually weapons were manufactured apart from the tools. The research and development in science and technology led to the manufacture of the new equipment such as gunpowder, dynamite, atom bomb and nuclear bomb have brought tremendous changes in the war waging pattern. In earlier days humans fought on the soil by confronting each other directly, later archery was developed, after the discovery of the gunpowder there occurred great changes. Infantry, elephant force, cavalry, chariot force and navy were used in the wars. During the great wars @ world wars trenches were dug, submarines, air force and bio-chemical weapons were also used. Now wars can be waged remotely also.

ECONOMY

The economy evolved from the barter system to present digital currency, from ancient occupational guilds to present merchant guilds, commerce and industrial chambers and banks, from punch marked coins to crypto currency, offline commerce to e-commerce. Agriculture sector, industrial sector and service sector among these the service sector plays pivotal role in present economy.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

There are tremendous changes in historiography also. Up to the medieval age the history means the eulogy of the king only by the courtiers. But in modern times it has become the history of the people, particularly after the emergence of Marxism the shift is clearly towards the people's contribution in history. *As long as the lions don't write their own history, the quail stories told by the hunter will be recorded and glorified as history* – African proverb, in this way the history of suppressed, exploited has become the historiography at present.

EPILOGUE

The Renaissance liberated the human being from the Medievalist church/religious centric thoughts which led to rationalism, humanism, experimentalism and empiricism, the Reformation fought for the religious freedom by defying the authority of the Catholic Church, the Puritan Revolution 1649 challenged the supremacy of the Monarch, the Glorious Revolution 1688 established the supremacy of the Parliamentary, representational governments and led to establishment of the constitutional monarchies, the American Revolution defied the Crown's rule and declared itself as a Republic for the first time in modern era brought the political liberty, the French Revolution fought for the liberty, equality and fraternity, the Russian Revolution 1917 fought not only for the political liberty but also for the economic equality. The Constitutions of the various States which emerged as independent nations incorporated the values of the revolutions. Eminent persons like Edward Gibbon, David Hume and Voltaire defined history as *'History doesn't only mean to record the past events but to explain the cause and effect relation and reconstruction of the past'*. Thus to continue the virtues, to prevent the previous mistakes, to acquaint and accept the multiplicity of the society, culture and polity the history shows the way to the world.

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