Sources of Ancient Indian History

Origin of the Word 'Itihasa' (History):

The word Itihasa (History) originates from three Sanskrit words—Iti (thus), Ha (indeed), and Aasa (was). Literally, it means "Thus indeed it was," implying that history comprises events that certainly occurred in the past.

Definition of History:
History is a branch of social science that involves the chronological study of past events or persons associated with them.

First Real Historian of the World – Herodotus:
The Greek historian Herodotus (484 BCE – 425 BCE) was born in 484 BCE in Halicarnassus, Asia Minor. His only known work, The Histories, was written in 430 BCE. This work is also known as The Researches or The Inquiries.
The term Histories derives from the Greek word Historia, which literally means “knowledge acquired by investigation.” The English word History is derived from Historia. Herodotus was the first to use the word Histories and established history as a distinct field of study.
He described history as:
A scientific discipline (because its methodology is critical and analytical),
A humanistic discipline (as it records human activities),
A rational discipline (since its facts and conclusions are evidence-based), and
An instructive discipline (as it sheds light on the future in the context of the past).

Herodotus laid the foundation for real historical writing. He was the first historian to systematically collect materials, examine their accuracy, and present them in an organized and vivid narrative. His work The Histories offers a detailed and engaging account of the Greco-Persian Wars.

The Roman philosopher Cicero (106 BCE – 43 BCE) called Herodotus the "Father of History."

Definitions of History

Western Historians

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), German Philosopher

(i) Hegel viewed world history as nothing more than the progressive realization of human freedom. In his words: "**The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.**"

(ii) Hegel also believed that historical patterns tend to repeat, and that major events and figures often re-emerge in different forms over time. "**All great events and personalities in world history reappear in one fashion or another, i.e., history repeats itself.**"

(iii) Reflecting on humanity's relationship with history, he remarked: "**We learn from history that man never learns anything from history.**"

Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), German Historian Known as the *Father of Modern History*, Ranke emphasized a fact-based and objective approach to historical writing. He asserted: "**History's task is not to judge the past, instruct the present, or shape the future. It merely aims to show what actually happened.**"

Karl Marx (1818–1883), German Philosopher, Economist, and Historian

(i) Marx viewed history as a dynamic and dialectical process driven by conflict, particularly between social classes. "**The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles.**"

(ii) He also commented on the cyclical nature of history, stating: "**History repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce.**"

John Seeley (1834–1895), British Historian Seeley emphasized the close link between history and political activity. He famously wrote: "**History is past politics, and politics is present history.**"

J.B. Bury (1861–1927), Irish Historian Bury advocated for a scientific approach to history, distancing it from literary stylization. According to him: "**History is not a branch of literature. It is a science—nothing more, nothing less.**"

Henri Pirenne (1862–1935), Belgian Historian Pirenne focused on history as a human-centered discipline. He defined it as: "**History is the narrative of the actions and achievements of people living within societies.**"

E.H. Carr (1892–1982), British Historian
Carr described history as a dynamic interaction between the past and the present:
"**History is an unending dialogue between the past and the present.**"

Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), Italian Philosopher, Historian, and Aesthetician.
Croce emphasized the relevance of historical interpretation to the present. He argued:

"**All history is contemporary history," implying that our understanding of the past is always shaped by present concerns.**

G.M. Trevelyan (1876–1962), British Historian
Trevelyan asserted that the true value of history lies not in its scientific precision but in its ability to educate.
"**The value of history is not scientific. Its true value is educational.**"

R.G. Collingwood (1889–1943), British Historian and Philosopher
Collingwood viewed history as the reconstruction of thought. For him,
"**All history is the history of thought,**" meaning that historical events must be understood through the ideas and intentions behind them.

G.R. Elton (1921–1994), British Historian of German Origin
Elton emphasized the subjective role of the historian in constructing history. He stated:
"**History is what the historian writes.**"

Famous Definitions of History

Indian Historians

Kalhana (12th Century CE, Author of Rajatarangini)

Kalhana emphasized impartiality and truthfulness in historical writing. He believed that:

"**Only that historian is worthy of praise whose narrative, free from attachment and aversion, presents past events truthfully like a judge.**"

Ziauddin Barani (1285–1357 CE, Medieval Indian Historian)

Barani considered history a mirror of human action that guides moral and social behaviour. According to him:

"**History is a reflection of human activities; it guides faltering steps in the journey of life. A retrospective view of the past offers rare insight, enabling individuals to distinguish right from wrong, virtue from sin, and friends from foes, thereby helping to improve the present. It is only through history that one can learn from the experiences of others.**"

Abul Fazl (1551–1602 CE, Historian in Akbar's Court)

He regarded history as both a scientific and spiritual treasure. In his words:

"**History is a unique gem of science that calms both physical and spiritual unrest, illuminating internal and external darkness.**"

James Mill (1773–1836), British Historian

Mill advocated for a critical and evaluative approach to history. He held that:

"**History should be analytical and judgmental. It must evaluate both the material presented by the historian and the evidence upon which the truth of that account is based.**"

Vincent A. Smith (1848–1920), British Historian of India

Smith emphasized history's relevance to the present. He stated:

"**The value and interest of history largely depend on the extent to which the present is illuminated through the past.**"

R.G. Bhandarkar (1837–1925), Indian Historian and Indologist

Bhandarkar argued for a judicial and objective approach to historical inquiry. He believed:

"**A historian should proceed on the principles of evidence, much like a judge. He must remain entirely impartial, neither glorifying his own country and people nor harbouring prejudice against them. His aim should be to present nothing but the bare facts.**"

R.C. Majumdar

History, according to R.C. Majumdar, is **the study of human behaviour in relation to others and the coordination of interactions among human groups.**

D.D. Kosambi

D.D. Kosambi defined history as **the chronological presentation of progressive changes in the means and relations of production.**

Romila Thapar

Romila Thapar emphasized that **history is not merely a collection of narratives about individuals or events. Rather, it is a disciplined field of study that relies on methods of analysis and critical inquiry.**

Constituents of History

History is composed of four essential elements: Time, Person, Place, and Event. These components form the foundation of historical inquiry and narration. A brief overview of each is as follows:

1. Time

Time is the most fundamental aspect of history, as it addresses the question "when" an event occurred. The chronological ordering and dating of events are essential for ensuring the authenticity and reliability of historical accounts. Without accurate temporal context, historical narratives risk becoming fictional or speculative. Therefore, time determination and chronology are crucial for writing and understanding credible history.

2. Person

The second core component of history is the person, which answers the question "who" was involved. History must include individuals as key actors—commonly referred to as historical figures or agents. Determining who qualifies as a historical figure is the responsibility of the historian, typically focusing on those who made a significant impact on society, such as Gandhi, Nehru, or Tagore.

3. Place

Place is the third vital element in history, responding to the question "where" something occurred. Identifying the geographical context of events is critical to avoid confusion and to understand the spatial dimension of historical developments. Historical narratives usually include locations of notable significance—such as Pataliputra, Rajgriha, Prayagraj, Daulatabad, Kannauj, Panipat, or Plassey—due to their roles in shaping historical outcomes.

4. Event

The fourth constituent is the event, which addresses the question "what" happened, along with its causes and processes. History must document events that have lasting or transformative importance. Examples include the Kalinga War, the Battles of Panipat and Plassey, and the Revolt of 1857. These events are included in history due to their broader political, social, or cultural significance.

Christian Era (C.E.)

The Christian Era, or Anno Domini (A.D.), is a system of dating that begins from the traditionally estimated birth year of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. Initially, it was believed that Jesus was born on 25th December, 1 A.D. However, subsequent scholarly analysis, particularly by Sheth, revealed that his actual birth likely occurred on 25th December, 4 B.C.

The Christian calendar was formally introduced in 527 A.D. by Dionysius Exiguus, a monk from Scythia Minor, also known as Dennis the Little (c. 470–544 A.D.). The use of this calendar in India began with the arrival of Europeans, and it gained wider acceptance after 1757 A.D. during the establishment of British colonial rule.

At present, the Christian calendar is the most widely used calendar system globally. All dates preceding the birth of Jesus are referred to as B.C. (Before Christ), while dates following his birth are labelled as A.D. (Anno Domini)—a Latin phrase meaning "in the year of our Lord". For instance, 2000 B.C. denotes a time 2000 years before the birth of Christ, whereas 2000 A.D. indicates a point 2000 years after his birth.

Julian and Gregorian Calendars

The Christian calendar has evolved over time through two primary stages:

Julian Calendar (46 B.C.): Introduced by Roman Emperor Julius Caesar, this calendar was a reformed version of the Roman calendar. It is considered the precursor to the Christian calendar, hence named the Julian Calendar.

Gregorian Calendar (1582 A.D.): Later, Pope Gregory XIII implemented a major reform of the Christian calendar to correct the inaccuracies in the Julian system. This revised version is known as the Gregorian Calendar, which is now the internationally recognized civil calendar.

The Christian calendar as we know it was formally established in 527 A.D., built on the foundation of the Julian Calendar and later modified by the Gregorian reform.

Key Terminologies in the Christian Calendar

1. B.C. (Before Christ)

"B.C." stands for Before Christ and refers to all years before the birth of Jesus Christ. In the Indian context, this is commonly translated as ई. पू. (ईसा पूर्व).

Example: Gautama Buddha was born in 563 B.C. and attained Nirvana (death) in 483 B.C. Likewise, Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C. and died in 323 B.C.

2. A.D. (Anno Domini)

"A.D." stands for Anno Domini, a Latin phrase meaning "in the year of our Lord." It refers to all years following the birth of Jesus Christ. In Hindi, this is denoted as ई. (ईसवी) or sometimes ईस्वी.

Anno Domini (A.D.) – "In the Year of the Lord (Jesus Christ)"

The term Anno Domini (A.D.), meaning "in the year of our Lord (Jesus Christ)", refers to the Christian calendar era that begins from the estimated birth year of Jesus Christ. This era is referred to in shorthand as A.D. Although traditionally dated to 1 A.D., later scholarship suggests that Jesus was likely born in 4 B.C. The Christian calendar begins with this presumed birth year.

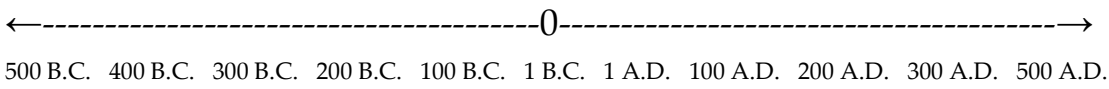
It is essential to include "A.D." when referring to dates from ancient times, whereas for medieval and modern periods, its use is optional.

Examples:

Jesus Christ was crucified in 29 A.D.
Kanishka, the Kushan emperor, ascended the throne in 78 A.D.
Prophet Muhammad was born in 570 A.D. and passed away in 632 A.D.

In contemporary historiography, many scholars prefer the terms B.C.E. (Before Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era) in place of B.C. and A.D., respectively.

A time line is a visual representation used to display chronological events from the past in sequential order.



Some essential time-related terms include:

- Decade: A period of 10 years
- First Half (of a Century): The initial 50 years of a century, i.e., from the 1st to the 50th year
- Second Half (of a Century): The latter 50 years of a century, i.e., from the 51st to the 100th year
- Century: A time span of 100 years**.**
- Millennium: A time span of 1,000 years.

Circa (Ca./C.) – Approximate Dating

When the exact date or period of an event is uncertain or unknown, the term "**Circa**" (abbreviated as **Ca.** or **C.**) is used to indicate an approximate time.

- The **first decade of the 20th century** refers to the period from **1901 to 1910 A.D.**
- The **fifth decade of the 20th century** covers **1941 to 1950 A.D.**
- The **last decade of the 20th century** refers to **1991 to 2000 A.D.**
- The **first half of the 20th century** (also called the *early 20th century*) extends from **1901 to 1950 A.D.**
- The **second half of the 20th century** (also called the *late 20th century*) spans from **1951 to 2000 A.D.**

Century-Based Historical Periods

- The **6th century B.C.** spans from **600 to 501 B.C.**
- The **4th century B.C.** refers to **400 to 301 B.C.**
- The **16th century A.D.** refers to **1501 to 1600 A.D.**
- The **20th century A.D.** refers to **1901 to 2000 A.D.**

Millennium-Based Historical Periods

- The **Second Millennium B.C.** spans from **2000 to 1001 B.C.**
- The **First Millennium B.C.** covers **1000 to 1 B.C.**
- The **First Millennium A.D.** spans from **1 to 1000 A.D.**
- The **Second Millennium A.D.** covers **1001 to 2000 A.D.**

Major Indian Eras (Samvatsara/Calendars)

Era	Commencement (Year)	Remarks
Kali Era	3101 B.C.	Begins 20 years after the Mahabharata war, traditionally linked to the death of Lord Krishna and the birth of King Parikshit.
Saptarshi Era *(also called Laukik)*	3076 B.C.	Begins 25 years after the Kali Era; predominantly used in Kashmir.
Vikram Era	58 B.C.	Initiated by King Vikramaditya of Ujjain (Malwa) to commemorate his victory over the Shakas. Also known as *Krita Samvat* or *Malava Samvat*.
Shaka Era	78 A.D.	Started by the Kushan ruler Kanishka to mark his accession. In southern India, it is known as *Shalivahana Shaka*. On **March 22, 1957**, the Government of India adopted the Shaka Era, alongside the Gregorian calendar, as the **National Calendar of India** (starting from 1 Chaitra 1879 Shaka).
Kalachuri Era	248 A.D.	Initially introduced by King Ishwarasena of western India; later adopted by the Kalachuris

		of the Chedi dynasty and the Haihaya rulers of central India.
Gupta Era	319–320 A.D.	Commenced to commemorate the coronation of Chandragupta I. Even after the decline of the Gupta dynasty, the era continued to be used and was later renamed **Vallabhi Era** by successor states. The historian J.F. Fleet (1887) was instrumental in establishing the beginning of this era.
Harsha Era	606 A.D.	Started by Emperor Harshavardhana upon his accession to the throne.
Hijri Era	622 A.D.	Initiated by the second Caliph of Islam, **Umar ibn al-Khattab** (r. 634–644 A.D.), to commemorate Prophet Muhammad's **Hijrat** (migration) from Mecca to Medina.
Kollam Era	825 A.D.	A regional calendar still used in parts of Kerala (Malabar region).
Newari/Nepali Era	879 A.D.	Introduced by King **Jayadeva Malla** in the Kathmandu Valley.
Chalukya Vikrama Era	1076 A.D.	Commenced by **Vikramaditya VI**, a ruler of the Western Chalukya dynasty of Kalyani, to mark his accession.
Lakshmana Era	1119 A.D. (approx.)	Likely introduced by **Lakshmanasena**, a ruler of the Sena dynasty in Bengal.

Ilahi Era	1556 A.D.	Instituted by **Mughal Emperor Akbar** in **1584 A.D.**, but retroactively calculated from his accession in 1556 A.D. Abolished by **Aurangzeb** in 1658 A.D.
Raja Shaka Era	1673 A.D.	Established by **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, the founder of the Maratha Empire, upon his coronation.

Notes

1. Except for the **Vikram**, **Shaka**, and **Hijri** eras, most other Indian historical eras have either become obsolete or are now confined to specific regions or communities.
2. The **Shaka Era** was adopted as **India's National Calendar** in 1957 and is still used officially in some government documents. However, the **Gregorian calendar** remains the dominant and practical system in daily use across the country.

Conversion Between Eras

Using the below methods, dates can be converted between different calendar systems. Below are examples of converting Gregorian dates to Indian eras and vice versa:

1. Converting Gregorian Year to Vikram Samvat (V.S.)

Add **57** to the Gregorian year.
Example: Convert 2013 A.D. to Vikram Samvat
2013 + 57 = 2070 V.S.

2. Converting Gregorian Year to Shaka Samvat (S.S.)

Subtract **78** from the Gregorian year.
Example: Convert 2013 A.D. to Shaka Samvat
2013 − 78 = 1935 S.S.

3. Converting Vikram Samvat to Gregorian Year

Subtract **57** from Vikram Samvat.
Example: Convert 2070 V.S. to Gregorian
2070 − 57 = 2013 A.D.

4.Conversion of Shaka Era to Gregorian Calendar

Add **78 years** to the Shaka year.
Example: To convert Shaka year 1935 to A.D.:
1935 + 78 = 2013 A.D.

Dating Methods in Historical and Archaeological Studies

Dating methods are generally classified into two major categories:

1. **Relative Dating Methods**
2. **Absolute Dating Methods**

1. Relative Dating Methods

Relative dating techniques determine the age of an object or event in relation to other objects or events. It does not provide an exact date but a comparative one. Common relative dating methods include:

- **Stratigraphy**:
  Based on the study of successive layers (strata) of soil or sediment deposits found in archaeological sites.
- **Typology**:
  Involves the classification and comparison of artifacts based on their shapes, styles, and designs to determine their relative chronology.
- **Geomorphological Method**:
  Relies on the study of landforms and geological features to infer the relative age of archaeological sites.
- **Palaeontology**:
  Based on the analysis of fossilized remains of plants and animals to understand the chronological context of a site.
- **Palynology** (Study of ancient pollen):
  Utilizes the analysis of fossil pollen grains to reconstruct past environments and establish chronological sequences.
- **Fluorine Test**:
  Measures the accumulation of fluorine in bones over time. The

greater the fluorine content, the older the bone, when comparing specimens from the same site.

2. Absolute Dating Methods

Also known as **Chronometric Dating Methods**, these techniques provide a **precise chronological age** for archaeological materials. Major methods include:

- **Varve Analysis**:
  Based on the annual layering of glacial sediments known as "varves" (a Swedish term). This method can date sedimentary layers year by year.
- **Dendrochronology (Tree-Ring Dating)**:
  Involves studying the annual growth rings in trees to determine their age. This method can date trees and wooden artifacts up to 2,000–3,000 years old.
- **Thermoluminescence Dating**:
  Used to determine the age of objects such as pottery or fired clay. It measures the trapped electrons accumulated since the object was last heated.
- **Radiometric Dating Methods**:
  These are based on the decay rate of radioactive isotopes in materials. Key techniques include:
  - **Radiocarbon Dating (Carbon-14 Method)**:
    Widely used to date organic materials by measuring the amount of radioactive carbon-14. Effective for dating objects up to about 50,000 years old.

- **Potassium-Argon Dating:** Potassium-Argon Dating is a radiometric dating method used to determine the age of rocks and minerals by measuring the ratio of radioactive potassium-40 (^{40}K) to its decay product, argon-40 (^{40}Ar). This technique is especially effective for dating volcanic materials and is commonly employed in geology and archaeology to establish the timing of geological events or the age of hominin fossils. The method is based on the principle that ^{40}K decays at a known rate into ^{40}Ar, which becomes trapped in the mineral structure after the rock solidifies, allowing scientists to calculate the time elapsed since the rock's formation.

- **Thorium-Lead Dating:** Thorium-Lead Dating is a radiometric dating technique that measures the decay of thorium isotopes, particularly thorium-232 (^{232}Th), into stable lead isotopes, such as lead-208 (^{208}Pb), to determine the age of geological materials. This method is primarily used to date very old rocks and minerals, especially those containing uranium and thorium-bearing minerals like monazite. By analyzing the ratio of parent thorium to daughter lead isotopes and applying known decay rates, researchers can estimate the time since the mineral crystallized, making it a valuable tool in geochronology and the study of Earth's early history.
- **Uranium-Lead Dating:** Uranium-Lead Dating is a radiometric dating method that determines the age of minerals and rocks by measuring the ratio of uranium isotopes (^{238}U and ^{235}U) to their stable lead decay products (^{206}Pb and ^{207}Pb). This technique is widely regarded as one of the most reliable and

precise dating methods, particularly effective for dating zircon crystals found in igneous and metamorphic rocks. Because uranium decays at a known rate over millions to billions of years, the accumulated lead isotopes provide a measurable record of the time elapsed since the mineral's formation, making the method essential in studies of Earth's early history and geological timescales.

These methods are used primarily in geological and early archaeological contexts to date older and inorganic materials.

Radiocarbon Dating (Carbon-14 Dating Method)

Radiocarbon dating is a modern and scientific method for determining the age of ancient organic materials. It relies on measuring the amount of radioactive **Carbon-14 (^{14}C)** present in a specimen. The technique is named accordingly because it uses **radioactive carbon-14** as the principal dating agent.

This method was developed by American chemist **Willard Frank Libby** in the early 1940s, although he publicly announced it in **1947**. For his groundbreaking contribution, Libby was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Chemistry** in **1960**.

Scientific Basis of Radiocarbon Dating

Living organisms, including plants and animals, continuously absorb carbon from the atmosphere during their lifetime. Carbon exists in different isotopic forms, among which **Carbon-12 (^{12}C)** is stable and non-radioactive, whereas **Carbon-14 (^{14}C)** is radioactive. In living organisms, both isotopes are found in relatively constant and measurable proportions.

However, upon the death of an organism, it ceases to absorb carbon. While the amount of **Carbon-12** remains constant, the **Carbon-14** begins to decay at a known rate, due to its radioactive nature. By comparing the ratio of **Carbon-14 to Carbon-12** in a specimen with the ratio found in the atmosphere, scientists can estimate the time that has passed since the organism's death.

This method is particularly useful for dating ancient organic materials such as:

- **Plant remains** (wood, seeds, charcoal)

- **Animal remains** (bones, shells, fossils)

The lesser the remaining Carbon-14 in a specimen, the older the object is presumed to be. Using this technique, it is possible to determine the age of materials that are up to **approximately 60,000 years old**.

Notation in Radiocarbon Dating: BP

In radiocarbon dating, dates are often expressed using the abbreviation **BP**, which stands for "**Before Present.**" Here, "Present" is conventionally fixed at the year **1950 A.D.**

- For example, **3000 BP** means **3000 years before 1950**, which translates to **1050 BCE** (i.e., 3000 – 1950 = 1050).
- Likewise, **500 BP** refers to **1450 A.D.** (1950 – 500 = 1450).

Although this notation originated with radiocarbon dating, the use of **BP** has since extended to other absolute dating techniques as well.

Potassium-Argon Dating Method

The **Potassium-Argon (K-Ar) dating method** is a radiometric technique primarily used to determine the age of very old geological and archaeological materials. This method is based on measuring the ratio of **radioactive Potassium-40 (^{40}K)** to its decay product, **Argon-40 (^{40}Ar)**.

The technique was developed in the **1950s** by **W. Jentver** and is particularly useful for dating **volcanic rocks and ash layers**. It is capable of dating materials ranging in age from approximately **30,000 years** to over **3 billion years**.

Due to its wide dating range, the Potassium-Argon method is not suitable for dating materials younger than **30,000 years**. However, it remains

invaluable for geological studies involving ancient volcanic activity and the formation of the Earth's crust.

Periodization (Kāla – Time/Period)

Binary Division of History

Traditionally, history has been divided into **two broad periods**:

1. **Prehistoric Period**
2. **Historic Period**

The **Prehistoric Period** refers to the era **before the invention of writing**, for which **no written records** are available. Conversely, the **Historic Period** denotes the time **after the development of writing**, characterized by the availability of **written sources**.

In simple terms:

- The period **preceding the advent of writing** is known as the **Prehistoric Period**.
- The period **following the emergence of writing** is termed the **Historic Period**.

Chronological Span:

- **Prehistoric Period**: c. **3,000,000 BCE to 600 BCE**
- **Historic Period**: From **600 BCE onward**

Ternary Division of History

A more refined approach to periodization involves the **threefold division** of history. According to this classification, history is divided into the following **three periods**:

Period Name	Time Span	Definition	Examples
Prehistoric Period	c. 3,000,000 BCE – 2,500 BCE	The era for which no written records are available.	The Stone Age
Proto-Historic Period	c. 2,500 BCE – 600 BCE	The period where written records may exist, but either remain **undeciphered** or are **unreliable**.	The Indus Valley Civilization, the Vedic Culture
Historic Period	From 600 BCE to the present	The era for which authentic and deciphered **written records** are available.	From the Mahajanapada period onwards

Chronology in Historical Writing

The concept of historical periodization into **three major epochs—Ancient**, **Medieval**, and **Modern**—was formally introduced by the **German historian Christoph Cellarius** (1638–1707). He first proposed this division in **1688 CE**, which later became a **standard framework** in the discipline of historical studies.

Periodization of Indian History

Indian history is also divided into **three main phases**:

1. **Ancient India**: From the **Stone Age** to the **death of Emperor Harshavardhana in 647 CE**.

2. **Medieval India (647 CE – 1757 CE):** Begins after the death of Harsha and ends with the **Battle of Plassey (1757)**, which marked the beginning of British colonial dominance.
3. **Modern India (1757 CE – Present):** Starts with the **Battle of Plassey (1757)** and continues to the present. Marked by the gradual establishment and consolidation of **British colonial rule**, followed by the **Indian independence movement** and eventual **freedom in 1947**.

Sub-periods within Ancient India:

Period	Time Span	Key Features / Notes
Prehistoric Period	c. 3,000,000 BCE – 600 BCE	Characterized by the absence of written records. Divided into three sub-periods based on tool usage: Stone Age, Chalcolithic (Copper/Bronze Age), and Iron Age.
Indus Valley Civilization	c. 2,500 BCE – 1750 BCE	Urban Bronze Age civilization, script undeciphered.
Vedic Culture	c. 1500 BCE – 600 BCE	Early and Later Vedic periods; introduction of Sanskrit texts and rituals.
Mahajanapada	c. 600 BCE –	Rise of 16 major states (Mahajanapadas)

Period	Time Span	Key Features / Notes
Period	322 BCE	and emergence of heterodox philosophies.
Mauryan Empire	322 BCE – 185 BCE	First major empire; prominent rulers include Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka.
Post-Mauryan/Pre-Gupta Era	185 BCE – 319 CE	Regional powers like Shungas, Satavahanas, Kushanas, etc.
Gupta Period	319 CE – 550 CE	Considered a Golden Age; advancements in art, science, and literature.
Post-Gupta / Vardhana Dynasty	550 CE – 647 CE	Includes the reign of Harshavardhana, marking the end of ancient India.

Sub-periods within Medieval India:

Period	Time Span	Characteristics
Early Medieval Period	647 – 1206 CE	Rise of regional kingdoms like the Palas, Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, and Cholas.
Delhi Sultanate	1206 – 1526 CE	Rule of various Islamic dynasties: Mamluks, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, Lodis.
Mughal	1526 –	Established by Babur; peak under Akbar,

Period	Time Span	Characteristics
Empire	1707 CE	Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb.
Late Medieval Period	1707 – 1757 CE	Decline of the Mughal Empire; rise of regional powers and European trading companies.

Phases of British Colonialism in India:

Phase	Time Span	Characteristics
Phase I: Commercial Phase	1757 – 1813 CE	Monopoly trade; companies focus on profits through trade and territorial control.
Phase II: Industrial Phase	1813 – 1860 CE	Direct investment and free trade policies; India becomes a market for British goods.
Phase III: Financial Capitalism	1860 – 1947 CE	British capital investment in railways, plantations, and industries; economic drain.

British Policies Toward Princely States

Policy Name	Time Span	Description
Ring Fence Policy	1757 – 1813 CE	Indirect control through buffer states; limited intervention.
Subordinate Isolation Policy	1813 – 1858 CE	Increased political isolation and surveillance of native states.

Policy Name	Time Span	Description
Subordinate Union Policy	1858 – 1935 CE	Integration of princely states as subordinates within the British Empire.
Equal Federation Policy	1935 – 1947 CE	Proposal of federal union with princely states and provinces as equals.

Indian National Movement

Phase	Time Span	Key Features
First Phase (Moderate Phase)	1885 – 1905 CE	Early Indian National Congress (INC); moderate leadership; constitutional reforms.
Second Phase (Extremist Phase)	1905 – 1917 CE	Assertive nationalists; Swadeshi movement, protests, boycotts.
Third Phase (Gandhian Phase)	1917 – 1947 CE	Mass-based movements led by Mahatma Gandhi; Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India Movement.
