NCERT Solutions for Class 8 History Chapter 1 How, When and Where

1. State whether true or false:

(a) James Mill divided Indian history into three periods – Hindu, Muslim, Christian.

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

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

Answer.

(a) False

(b) False

(c) True

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

Answer.

The problem with the periodisation of Indian History that James Mill offers is the superiority of British shown over Hindu and Muslim. James Mill has put Indian History into three periods – Hindu, Muslim and British, claiming that it was necessary to introduce European manners, arts, institutions and laws in India.

James Mill's views have several defects given below:

a. He thought that all Asian societies were at a lower level of civilisation when compared to Europe.

b. According to his telling of history, before the British came to India, Hindu and Muslim despots ruled the country.

c. Religious intolerance, caste taboos and superstitious practices dominated social life before the British came to India

3. Why did the British preserve official documents?

Answer.

British had preserved official documents because they thought if they write and record everything, it will later be easier for them to study them and debate. They kept official records of what they thought was right, so that in the future, those records can serve as proofs of all the decisions that they had taken.

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

Answer.

The nature of information that the historians get from old newspapers and police reports can be entirely different. Typically, a historian would collect information from a wide variety of sources that includes both official and unofficial documents. The police report comes from an administrative viewpoint, and the types of details that we can obtain from them are often restricted.

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A police report is strictly confined to the procedures and is concerned with record-keeping, rather than building a narrative. Journalism and reporting tools follow a different approach that might bring out the finer details about an event or a happening. Often police reports might oversee or neglect information that does not directly serve the function of law enforcement.

Being a mass media, newspapers provide more backdrop, context and elaborate descriptions. But the relative merits and accuracy of a piece of information from any source can only be determined after proper research and investigation. For getting a balanced and clearer picture of a period in history, historians often go through as many sources as possible, while keeping in mind the biases and interests that could be behind them.

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