TEMPORAL DIVIDES:
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE MAJOR SCHEMES
OF PERIODIZATION IN INDIAN HISTORY

*Tanvir Anjum

Abstract

The vast span of time becomes comprehensible when it is bifurcated into historical periods, also referred to as epochs or eras, but the act of periodizing history is not without problems. Not only there are conceptual intricacies involved in it, the whole process of periodization has been politicized. Moreover, the chronological frontiers of historical periods become conceptual barriers, which restrict historical imagination. Presently, varied schemes of periodization of Indian history are prevalent in historical studies. Even within one scheme of periodization, there are serious disagreements over the chronological spans of various periods, owing to difference in approaches to ascertaining variables or indicators, which distinguish one historical period from the other. The present article critically analyzes three tripartite schemes of periodization in Indian history: namely, ancient-medieval-modern, Hindu-Muslim-British, and precolonial-colonial-postcolonial. While bringing out the limitations of all these schemes, it urges the need for exploring alternative schemes of periodization of Indian history.

The study of continuity and change in specific spatio-temporal contexts is what constitutes history. The phenomenon of change serves as a basis for periodization of history, whereby past is periodized, or divided into various eras/epochs/periods, or units of time. The purpose of periodization of past is to render history and time intelligible.

The roots of periodization can be traced back to medieval European historiography, when efforts were made to discern a divine plan in history. While doing so, the unfolding of the divine plan in history was perceived as something gradual, phased-out in various progressive stages. It gave birth to the notion of historical ages, each one of which was initiated by an epoch-making event in history.[1] Nevertheless, the medieval historian-philosophers had a theo-centric

* Lecturer, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

approach to knowledge, and thus, Christian doctrines formed the nuclei of their ideas.

Presently, varied schemes of periodization of history are prevalent in historical studies. Even within one scheme of periodization, there is no consensus among historians on the chronological spans of various periods. The present article attempts to critically analyze three tripartite schemes of periodization in Indian history; namely, ancient-medieval-modern, Hindu-Muslim-British, and precolonial-colonial-postcolonial schemes. But before we proceed, it does not seem out of place to briefly highlight some critical issues in periodization.

Critical Issues in Periodization

Periodizing history is not a simple task; it is quite problematical and complex owing to a host of reasons. Not only there are conceptual difficulties in generalization involved in it, the whole process of periodization has been politicized. Moreover, once firmly rooted in academic traditions, historical periods restrict historical imagination, and one finds oneself confined in their conceptual barriers. A brief discussion on these problems in hereunder:

1. Conceptual Difficulties in Abstraction

Since periodization involves abstraction and generalization, there are conceptual difficulties in it owing to the assumptions on which a generalization is based. The crux of the issue is the conceptualization of what constitutes historical change in a given spatio-temporal context. In other words, the problem revolves around the question of locating indicators or variables that determine change in history, which help draw a diving line between eras or epochs, and thus, demarcate one historical period from another. Nonetheless, there is a lack of consensus among historians and researchers on these variables. There are varied opinions about the variables of change and continuity in history, which ahs given birth to different modes or schemes of periodization of history. Here it seems pertinent to cite Morony's note of caution to historians, who maintains that the apparent cultural and institutional inertia that is generally taken to be continuity in history, is nothing but a slow and

gradual change.[2] So a historian must be mindful of the intricacies of these variables of change and continuity, which form the basis of any scheme of periodization.

2. *'Politics' of Periodization*

Periodization is rendered further convoluted owing to 'politicization' of the whole issue of periodizing history. It is for this reason that the phrase 'politics of periodization'[3] has been coined. At times the criterion of periodizing history is consciously or unconsciously politically driven. That is why, historians have challenged the nomenclature of historical periods and their underlying assumptions, arguing that certain historical periods reflect the hidden biases of those who had drawn them. A historian accepting and using a particular scheme of periodization may not be mindful of these political considerations and the assumptions behind it, which serve the interests of their formulators. Since historical periods are generally taken for granted and uncritically accepted by historians, their historical accounts too become a source of perpetuating the biases and prejudices.

3. *Historical Periods as 'Intellectual Straitjackets'*

Though historical periods serve as important conceptual tools to grasp and comprehend the vast temporal stretch of human history, at the same time they tend to restrict historical imagination, particularly when the historical periods become firmly rooted in academic traditions. Instead of taking a historical period as a conceptual construct, historians unconsciously start perceiving it as a historical reality. Thus, not only the underlying assumptions of historical periods largely remain unquestioned, their chronological frontiers become conceptual barriers limiting the historical thinking of historians. As generally people tend to think within their given categories, it becomes difficult to transcend such conceptual limitations and go beyond them. Referring to this 'rigidifying power of periodization', Green has rightly argued: "once firmly drawn and widely accepted, period frontiers can become intellectual straitjackets that profoundly affect our habits of mind—the way we retain

images, make associations, and perceive the beginning, middle and ending of things".[4]

4.   *Non-academic Usages of Historical Periods*

With the passage of time, a thick layer of meaning has been deposited on some of the labels of historical periods, making them loaded and biased. As a result, they have lost their neutrality as concepts. Moreover, these concepts have gained common currency, and are being used as ordinary terms in everyday speech. Since these terms have acquired loaded connotations, which at times make them politically-charged as well, this non-academic usage of historical periods further complicate their scholarly usage for historiographical purposes. For instance, the term 'medieval', far from its usage as a concept in historical studies, has come to denote derogatory connotations in everyday speech and language. References to the medieval psyche of Taliban, medieval mindset of feudal lords, and medieval Islam are common examples in point.

Indian History and Varied Schemes of its Periodization

Though the centuries-old annalistic scheme of periodization, preserving the record of historical events year by year, or centuries by centuries, has been abandoned in Indian history long ago, one still finds history arranged in periods based on state or dynasties in the textbooks of history.[5] Nevertheless, this practice of periodization by state or dynasty has too been largely given up.

Periodization of Indian history is problematic for contemporary researchers and historians, including indigenous and non-indigenous.[6] It can be assessed from the fact that some historians have even questioned the viability of periodizing Indian history. For instance, Madeleine Biardeau maintains regarding India that "one cannot periodize its history as one does for other areas, or divide it into territories as restricted as those of European countries..."[7] Nevertheless, despite such assertions, historians have attempted to tackle the problematic of periodization of Indian history. Locating varied indicators and variables for determining historical change, Indian history has variously been periodized by

historians and researchers, coming up with different schemes of periodization. Three such schemes have been critically reviewed hereunder:

1. *Scheme of Ancient, Medieval and Modern Eras*

The most prevalent mode of periodization of Indian history is its division into ancient, medieval and modern eras. This tripartite scheme was borrowed from a similar tripartite mode of periodization in European history, where ancient, medieval and modern eras have remained the dominant standard epochal frontiers since the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, historians have challenged the European mode of periodization. It does not seem out of place here to quote Green, who, while critically analyzing the tripartite division in European periodization, contends that the standard periods have become "self-contained entities, and this influences the way we identify issues and apply emphases".[8] In the wake of colonial rule, this scheme was applied by the European historians and orientalists to the colonized regions in Africa and Asia, including India, for historiographical purposes.

The chronological constructs of ancient India, medieval India and modern India are now commonly used as convenient labels. Despite their common usage, there is no general consensus among historians as to what constitutes ancient, medieval and modern India. Furthermore, these three periods have been sub-divided as well. As for the ancient India, almost all historians begin it with an account of the pre-historic times followed by the Aryan invasion and the Vedic age. The problem arises whereto bring ancient India to a close and commence medieval period of Indian history.

Medieval period is often referred to as the Middle Ages, and also understood as a post-classical age denoting a radical shift from ancient or classical period. The indicators or variables determining this transition from ancient to medieval in Indian context have been a subject of heated debate and controversy among historians. There are different opinions regarding the chronological span of the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history. According to some historians, ancient period continued

till sixth / seventh century A.D., whereas to some it continued till the close of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century.[10] According to the former scheme, the chronological reference points seem to be the Arab invasion of Sindh and Gujarat in 712, whereas according to the latter mode of periodization, the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in northern India in the wake of Sultan Muhammad Ghori's death in 1206 seems to mark a watershed in the history of India. Being reinforced by textbooks, the latter scheme is more commonly accepted among the students of history. It is significant to bring out that historians who accept the first decade of thirteenth century as marking a dividing line between ancient and medieval India have not overlooked the historical importance of the Arab invasion of Sindh and Gujarat. It is for this reason that ancient India has been further sub-divided by some historians into two periods; first up to 711, and second from 712 to 1206.[11]

For most of the historians, medieval India commences from the establishment of Muslim rule on the Indian soil. The origin of this notion goes back to the medieval historians such as Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni, the author of *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, to whom the Muslim conquest of India served as a convenient dividing line for historical periodization.[12] In this regard, the opinion of Lane-Poole seems worth-citing, as he writes that the medieval period:

> ... begins when the immemorial systems, rule, and customs of Ancient India were invaded, subdued and modified by a succession of foreign conquerors who imposed a new rule and introduced an exotic creed, strange languages and a foreign art. These conquerors were Muslims, and with the arrival of the Turks under Mahmud, the iconoclast, at the beginning of the eleventh century, India entered upon her Middle Age.[13]

However, there is no consensus regarding the actual commencement of the Muslim rule in India. Badauni, for instance, begins his account with the conquest of north-western regions of India by

Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, which resulted in the establishment of Muslim political power in regions like the Punjab, Multan and parts of Sindh, whereas most of the contemporary historians have drawn the dividing line at the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in northern India in the first decade of the thirteenth century.

Mukhia opines that it was under the influence of the Arab historiographical traditions that most of the Muslim historians of medieval India had employed the "*jahiliya*-Islam dichotomy' for periodization of Indian history.[14] It may be true for the historians of medieval India, Badauni being an example in point, for whom the conquest of north-western regions of India by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna was primarily a religious phenomenon, as it facilitated the spread of Islam in the conquered regions. But it may be added here that the contemporary historians, who accept the establishment of Delhi Sultanate as a dividing line between ancient and medieval India, have referred to it as a historical phenomenon of political significance primarily, not of religious one.

For most of the historians, barring few exceptions, the medieval period in Indian history stretches from variables, which distinguish the medieval era from the ancient period. Regarding this historiographical abstraction of period frontier of medieval India, Grewal observes that it is based on a few assumptions including the hegemony of Muslim political power in Indian politics, the presence of two distinct communities—the Hindus and the Muslims—in India, and interaction between the Hindu and Muslim societies in religious, social, cultural and political spheres. Moreover, the intellectual and institutional differences between the age to which these contemporary historians belonged, and the times about which they were writing also conditioned their conceptualization of medieval India.[15]

As for the first characteristic of medieval India, i.e. the hegemony of Muslim political power, it can be said to be true for the northern India. In its first phase, in addition to the Sultanate, there existed powerful rival kingdoms of Chola in south India, and Chalukya.

Vijaynagar and Bahmani Kingdoms in Deccan. Excluding the Bahmani Kingdom, rest of them were ruled by Hindu rajas. Moreover, there existed other kingdoms in Jaunpur, Malwa and Gujarat, but they were not as strong as the above-mentioned kingdoms. However, the chronological label of medieval is not only used in relation to the Sultanate in north India alone, it is also used for the Cholas in south India and the Chalukyas in the Deccan as well.[16] As for the question of Muslim political hegemony, it was under Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji (1296-1316) that the Muslim rule expanded to the south in Deccan,[17] only to be overthrown after some time. In the latter phase, as for the Mughal Empire, it enjoyed considerable territorial stretch, but it was under Aurengzeb Alamgir that the vast areas of Deccan were annexed, and the Muslim rule was established there.

In short, the hegemony of the Muslim political power in India was not absolute and complete, nor it was consistent and unvarying throughout the said period. Though interaction between the Hindu and Muslim societies in various spheres did occur, the phenomenon of the Hindu and Muslim communities existing side by side in India reflecting communal harmony and tolerance has been a subject of controversy among historians.

Treating Indian 'medievalism' as a distinct phenomenon, historians have also come up with varied sets of its traits. For instance, according to Ray, the following constituted the major characteristics of medievalism in India: emergence of regional dynasties, transition from a money economy to a natural economy, crystallization of regional characteristics in language and literature, proliferation of sects and sub-sects in religious sphere, and development of regional schools in art.[18] In view of Chattopadayaya, while identifying the characteristics of medievalism in India, Ray has tried to draw parallels from European history, and his explanation of the transition to medievalism is based on the Indian feudalism model.[19] It should be borne in mind here that the medieval period of Indian history does not exactly correspond with the Middle Ages of Europe.

The debate on the transition from ancient period to medieval era has been closely associated to the issue of the rise of feudalism. Indian feudalism has found numerous advocates as well as critics among Indologists.[20] Feudalism, in fact, originated in Western Europe in post-classical age or medieval times, and for this reason, 'feudal' and 'medieval' are mistakenly used as interchangeable terms in non-medieval academic speech and writing. The European experience of feudalism as an economic, social and political order was largely different from that of the Indian society. Usage of the term 'feudal' in extra-conceptualization of periodization in Indian history is largely Euro-centric, 'Indian feudalism' has mistakenly been used as an explanatory model to describe the transition from the ancient times to the medieval ages.

Medieval era, like ancient period, has too been sub-divided into eras. According to Niharranjan Ray, for example, medieval India stretches from 7th to 18th centuries, with three sub-periods: (i) 7th to 12th centuries; (ii) 12th to the first quarter of the 16th centuries; and (iii) first quarter of the 16th to the close of the 18th centuries.[21] Nonetheless, the most common sub-divisions are the early and latter medieval periods. Again, there are differing views of historians regarding their chronological span. 1206-1526 was assigned the label of Early Medieval India by Indian History Congress.[22] Early medieval is used for referring to the period stretching from the Arab invasion of Sindh and Gujarat in early eighth century to the decline of Delhi Sultanate by Professor Mohammad Habib.[23] Chattopadayaya, however, treats six hundred years stretching from the seventh and to the thirteenth centuries as early medieval India.[24] André Wink includes 7th to 11th centuries in Early Medieval India.[25] As for the latter medieval era, those who treat pre-Sultanate times as early medieval period, refer to the Sultanate of Delhi as latter medieval India, but others include Mughal Dynasty in latter medieval period. For instance, A.B. Pandey starts latter medieval era from the advent of Babur in India and the establishment of Mughal rule in India (1526), and covers till 18th century.[26]

The validity of using the very term 'medieval' has too been questioned by historians. Reuter, for instance, in his article 'Medieval: Another Tyrannous Construct?' argues that the term 'medieval' is too conventionalized to be of much use for the purpose of dialogue between medievalists of different geographical locales, since "it does not clearly define either a social formation or a stage of development".[27] On the contrary, Chattopadayaya, in his work on early medieval India, contends that "continuing with the term 'early medieval', rather than using terms such as 'late Hindu' or 'late classical', has an advantage. This term goes beyond the narrowly political and cultural dimensions of history, and further, it clearly projects continuities in the operation of major societal processes well into latter phases of Indian history".[28] So one finds historians on both sides of the fence; some advocating for discarding the concept of medieval, and others suggesting its use on concessional grounds. Nonetheless, it clearly shows the misgivings regarding the use of the concept of 'medieval' in periodization.

As for the closing of medieval India in or around eighteenth century, it is evident that this century witnessed the rise and growth of the British power in India. For historians, from eighteenth century onwards begins the modern era, which continues to date. For instance, Lane-Poole has brought medieval India to a close in eighteenth century, with the British victory and defeat of the Mughals in the Battle of Buxar in 1764 as a dividing line, indicating the fall of the Mughal Empire and the Hindu Revival in India.[29] In this case, Battle of Buxar has been taken as a chronological reference point, as it signified the first major step towards political domination and control by the British.

The construct of modern India was inspired by the European notion of 'progress',[30] which took roots in European intellectual traditions in the wake of enlightenment. According to this idea, movement of time was considered to be signifying a constant improvement in human conditions. In other words, every period or stage in human history was an advance over the previous one in terms of intellectual developments and other human achievements. Where this

notion imparted a sense of control over human destiny to the eighteenth and nineteenth century European mindset, allowing for greater freewill to previously predetermined courses of action to humans, it also sought to underrate and minimize the achievements of pre-modern people. Moreover, in colonial context, the chronological construct of modern India, associated with the notion of modernism/modernity, implied an advance from the 'pre-modern' times (sans political and social values such as liberty and freedom, etc.), thereby providing legitimacy for colonial domination of India.

The chronological constructs of ancient-medieval-modern are largely being used in the contemporary times. Nevertheless, the absoluteness of this tripartite division has too been questioned by scholars in recent decades. For instance, Anne McClintock has argued that mid-1980s witnessed the collapse of the idea of 'progress' as a linear teleology, which underlay both the capitalistic and the socialist worldviews. With this collapse, the finality and absoluteness of the long-venerated tripartite periodization of European history into ancient-medieval-modern periods was too challenged.[31] The present and future times came to be conceptualized by referring to the concept of 'post-modern'. Though the nomenclature apparently suggests an era coming after the modern period, the concept is more than a mere chronological construct; it refers to a distinct approach in social sciences.

As a catch-all term, the definition of post-modernism has become ever more inclusive. How post-modernism is understood is summarized as such: Post-modernism has emerged as an intellectual tradition of experiential and epistemological decentredness. The linear and teleological structures underlying all the metanarratives of modern Indian history have been challenged by post-modernist historians. The term post-modern is paradoxical; on one hand, it suggests that modernism is decisively over and a new era has ushered, but on the other hand, it implies that successor movements are dependent in it, or in continuous revolt against it. Post-modernism is also referred to a condition associated with the fading of progressive modernity, marked

by distinctive ideological, philosophical, cultural, social and technological circumstances. But according to critics, post-modernism has now become more than a social condition and cultural movement, it has become a world-view. It designates a set of cultural trends and directions, marked by eclectism, pluriculturalism, and a post-industrial, hi-tech, internationalist frame of reference, coupled with a skeptical view of the technical progress.[32] The concept of 'post-modernism' has not only rapidly become popular in academic world and gained considerable common currency, it has generated a lot of heated debates on theoretical and conceptual issues in social sciences as well.

2. *Hindu, Muslim and British Periods*

Another alternative scheme of periodization of Indian history is its division into Hindu, Muslim and British periods, which, according to its proponents, roughly correspond with the ancient, medieval and modern eras of Indian history. For this reason, historians have used the nomenclatures of two schemes of periodization interchangeable.[33]

Prior to the publication of the works of Sir William Jones, an eighteenth century British orientalist, Indian history was referred to as 'Indo-Muslim' history, but with Jones' shift of focus of his historical research to ancient India, the history of ancient times came to become synonymous with Hindu History.[34] Thus, it was in the works of Jones that the idea of a Hindu and a Muslim India took roots in Indian historiography. Later, James Mills crystallized the periodization into 'Hindu, Mohammaden and British India' in 1817 through the publication of his work "The History of British India".[35] Mukhia observes that the nomenclature used by Mills is 'asymmetrical' as the first two periods carry religious identities, whereas the last one is associated with a secular, national identity.[36] Moreover, this nomenclature reflects Mills' utilitarian propensity, as the first two periods were not "merely descriptive of the religion of the dominant ruling dynasties; they carried in them strongly pejorative undertones as the antithesis of the enlightenment informed by modern scientific rationality".[37] In a similar vein, Eaton criticizes the orientalists' triadic formulation of Hindu,

Islamic, and British periods of Indian history as "blatantly essentialist and statist in nature".[38]

Other orientalists followed Mills' nomenclatures for Indian historiography,[39] till it was replaced by the ancient-medieval-modern division of Indian history at the turn of the twentieth century, when the former chronological constructs were challenged by historians. For this reason, the practice of using nomenclatures having religious identities for periods and eras in history has now largely been given up for historiographical purposes. But notwithstanding misgivings about them, one still comes across references of terms like Muslim India in earlier[40] as well as relatively recent studies[41] on Indian history as well.

Interestingly, and confusingly as well, one finds historians concurrently using the two above-mentioned schemes of periodization of Indian history by either fusing them or separately using them in a same text. For instance, V.A. Smith in "The Oxford History of India" has used the terms Ancient and medieval India along with the label of Hindu India.[42] Similarly, other titles carry phrases such as "Medieval Hindu India"[43] and "Modern Muslim India",[44] signifying the merger of two different schemes of periodization.

3.   *Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial Eras*

The discussion on periodization in Indian history is not complete without a reference to 'post-colonialism',[45] with which is associated another alternative contemporary scheme of periodization of Indian history, i.e. pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. In literary and cultural studies, post-colonialism refers to a type of cultural theory that focuses on the cultural conditions of societies, which were once colonized. It seeks to study the impact and affect of colonial interlude on the cultural conditions of these societies. Though not a widely-used scheme of periodization, it is generally employed by contemporary historians while discussing any phenomenon with reference to colonialism.[46]

The term 'post-colonial' dates back to early 1970s. In context of South Asia, according to this scheme, the advent of the British and

establishment of the British rule in India is used as a chronological reference point. In this scheme of periodization, the colonial era seems to occupy center of the stage. The time preceding the colonial rule is labeled as pre-colonial and the one coming afterwards as post-colonial. Ella Shohat contends that post-colonial implies a "narrative of progression in which colonialism remains the central point of reference in a march of time neatly arranged from the pre to the 'post'..."[47] This mode of periodization has backward and forward looking dimensions in it, as pre-colonial signifies looking back to something from a specific point, and the prefix of post suggests going forward from a certain point.

Pre-colonial and post-colonial periods are always used in reference to the colonial era. An assumption seems to be underlying here: the advent of the British in South Asia marks a clear break with the past. Thus, the notion of contrasting the pre- or post-colonial eras with colonial period seems implicit in it. On one hand, it tends to overlook historical continuities and similarities in pre-colonial and colonial eras, and on the other, the points of contrast and differences seem to be over-magnified. Moreover, the long span of pre-colonial times is reduced to a continuous singularity without much change until the British came and there opened a new chapter in the history of India. Similarly, the post-colonial period appears more like a legacy of the British rule, having little of its own value.

Last but not the least, the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial scheme is not a universally applicable mode of periodization as colonialism was not a global experience. In addition, many still believe that colonialism has retreated only in a formal sense, and its other expressions--such as structural continuities of the colonial times in terms of laws--are very much there. Moreover, the term 'neo-colonialism', signifying a new expression of colonialism, refers to the economic dependence of the once colonized countries to the former colonial powers.

Concluding Remarks

Periodization of history is indispensable for historiographical purposes. Nevertheless, instead of being used as systematic concepts, the chronological labels of ancient medieval and modern have become ordinary terms used in everyday speech and writing without much ado. Having been jargonized, these labels have acquired specific connotations with the passage of time, which have divested them of their academic neutrality. So these terms have somewhat become inappropriate for scholarly purposes. As for the Hindu-Muslim-British scheme of periodization, it has serious inconsistencies and limitations. The first two chronological labels indicate religious overtones, whereas the last one reflects a secular connotation, thus making them inapt for academic usage. Regarding the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial scheme of periodization, it is not without implicit and explicit conceptual discrepancies. This scheme not only lacks universal applicability, the chronological constructs suggest biases and prejudices as well. In a nutshell, the prevalent modes of periodization are unable to adequately explain the historical realities taking into account the historical changes as well as continuities in a given time. Given these and many other problems, which restrict historical thinking, alternative schemes of periodization of Indian history may usefully be explored.

References

1. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford, 1978, p. 53. Collingwood cites an example from medieval periodizing. Joachim of Floris in 12th century A.D., for instance, divided history into three periods: (i) the reign of the Father or unincarnate God, (the pre-Christian Age), (ii) the reign of the Son (the Christian Age), and (iii) the reign of the Holy Ghost (yet to begin in future). p. 54.

2. M. Mornony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton, 1984, pp. 5, 507, as cited in Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Muslim History: Reflections on Periodization and Categorization", *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1998), p. 197.

3. Tarif Khalidi has analyzed what one might call the 'politics of periodization' in Arabic historiography. Tarif Khalidi, "Reflections on periodization in Arabic Historiography", *The Medieval History Journal,* Vol. 1 No. 1, (1998), p. 107. For details see pp. 107-24.

4. William A. Green, "Periodization in European and World History", *Journal of World History,* Vol. 3, No. 1, 1992, p. 14.

5. See for instance, S.M. Ikram, *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan (93-1273/ 711-1856): A political and Cultural History,* Lahore, 1961. The work is divided into two parts dealing with the Sultanate Period and the Mughal Period.

6. "For a detailed discussion on the methodological and conceptual problems in periodization of Indian history, see Introduction in Brajadulal Chattopadayaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India,* Delhi, 1998. (first published 1994). pp. 1-37.

7. Madeleine Biardeau, *Hinduism: The Anthropology of a Civilization,* New Delhi, 1989, p. 3, as cited in Ibid., p. 3. The statement is reflective of the multi-faceted problems involved in periodizing Indian history.

8. Green, *"Periodization in European and World History",* p. 14. For a detailed discussion on how, why and when this standard European periodization came into being, see pp. 16-29.

9. For instance see R.C. Majumdar (et al.), *An Advanced History of India,* London. 1950.

10. For instance, according to the scheme of periodization followed in this Indian History Congress, ancient India came to a close in the first decade of 13th century, when Muslim rule was established in Northern India with Delhi as its capital. See *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* 13th session (Nagpur 1950) and 14th session (Jaipur 1951).

11. Ibid.

12. Mulla Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh,* (ed.), Maulvi Ahmad Ali, Calcultta, 1869.

13. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Medieval India Under Muhammaden Rule (A.D. 712-1764)*, Lahore, 1997, (first published 1903) p. iii, Preface.

14. Harbans Mukhia, " 'Medieval India': An Alien Conceptual Hegemony?", *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1998), p. 97.

15. J.S. Grewal, *Medieval India: History and Historians*, Amritsar, 1975, p. 134.

16. Chattopadayaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, p. 6.

17. The nature of political control in the south is worthy of mention here. The Muslim rule in Deccan was nominal, as the conquered areas were not annexed but only subjugated, and the rulers of small kingdoms were allowed to rule on the condition that they would pay annual tribute to the Sultan. Kishori Saran Lal, *History of the Khaljis A.D. 1290-1320*, Karachi, n.d., pp. 259-60.

18. Niharranjan Ray as cited in Chattopadayaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, p. 9.

19. Ibid.

20. See D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, chapters 9 and 10, Harbans Mukhia, "Was there Feudalism in India?", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3., April 1981, pp. 273-310, D.N. Jha, *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, Delhi, 1987, Brendan O' Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History*, Oxford and Cambridge, (Mass.) 1989, B.D. Chattopadayaya, "State and Economy in North India: 4th century to 12th century" in Romila Thapar (ed.), *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, Bombay, 1995, pp. 309-46, and Ram Sharan Sharma, "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?" in Hermann Kulke (ed.), *State in India 1000-1700*, Delhi, 1995, pp. 48-85.

21. N.R. Ray, "The Medieval Factor in Indian History", General President's Address, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 29th session, (Patiala 1967), pp. 1-29.

22. See *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 13th session (Nagpur 1950) and 14th session (Jaipur 1951).

23. For instance, see K.A. Nizami (ed.), *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period: Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib*, Delhi, 1974.

24. Chattopadayaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*.

25. Andre' Wink, *Al-Hind: the Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, Volume I: Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam, 7th-11th Centuries, New Delhi: 1999.

26. A.B. Pandey, *Later Medieval India*, Allahabad, 1978.

27. Timothy Reuter, "Medieval: Another Tyrannous Construct?", *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1998), p. 25. For a detailed analysis see pp. 25-45.

28. Chattopadayaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, p. 36.

29. Lane-Poole, *Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule*.

30. For a detailed discussion on the idea of historical progress, see Collingwood, essay titled "Progress as Created by Historical Thinking" in *The Idea of History*, pp. 321-34.

31. Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Postcolonial' " in *Social Text*, 31/32, (1992), p. 96, as cited in Richard M. Eaton, "(Re)imag(in)ing Other'ness: A Postmortem for the Postmodern in India" in *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 134-5.

32. Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley (ed.), *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, London, 1999, pp. 673-5.

33. Lane-Poole has, for instance, used the terms 'medieval era/middle ages' and 'Mohammedan period' interchangeably in his work *Medieval India Under Mohammedan Rule*.

34. Grewal, *Medieval India: History and Historians*, p. 32. For details see Chapter 3: Sir William Jones on Hindu Civilization, pp. 32-53.

35. James Mill, *The History of British India*, ed. H.H. Wilson, 10 Vols., London, 1858.

36. Mukhia, " 'Medieval India': An Alien Conceptual Hegemony?", *The Medieval History Journal,* p. 99.

37. Ibid., p. 100.

38. Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History,* p. 146.

39. For example see E. Marsden, *History of India (Part I: The Hindu Period),* London, 1910.

40. S.M. Ikram has, for example, used the term Muslim India in *History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan,* passim.

41. For instance, Peter Jackson has used the term "Early Muslim India" in his recent work *The Delhi Sultanate: A political and Military History,* Cambridge, 1999, p. 6.

42. V.A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India,* London, 1922.

43. C.V. Vaidya, *Indian Historical Researches: History of Medieval Hindu India,* New Delhi, 1990 (First published 1926).

44. S.M. Ikram, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan,* Lahore, 1951.

45. For detailed discussion see Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, "What is Post-colonialism?", *Textual Practice,* Vol. 5, No. 3, 1991, pp. 399-414, and Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism", *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 20, No. 2, (Winter 1994), pp. 348-56.

46. For instance, see Henry Schwarz, *Writing Cultural History in Colonial and Postcolonial India,* Philadelphia, 1997.

47. Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial' ", *Social Text,* 31/32, (1992), p. 107.