

# Introduction to Human Sciences (HS8.102)

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Abhinav S Menon (2020114001)

## Question 1

### Part A

The two errors of historical interpretation (or what the author considers to be errors) that the author seeks to redress in the beginning of the passage are:

- The portrayal of Gandhiji's struggles as "monolithic", uniting peoples from all parts of the country against the British.
- The "myth of an all-embracing nationalist movement", which cut across divides of religion, class and ethnicity to include all communities, and was supported by all sections of society.

It tells us that in this text, the author is attempting to critique what has been hitherto a popularly held perspective of Gandhiji's agitations against the British. The author's viewpoint is thus possibly contrary (in at least some aspects) to that of existing accounts of the movement.

Notably, the author also seems to implicitly equate the "nationalist movement" with Gandhiji's struggles (or at least, considers only that part of the nationalist movement which was led by Gandhiji).

### Part B

I feel that if the author prefers the term "subcontinent" over "India", it is because the use of the latter gives rise to ambiguities (as the geographical boundaries of the entity named "India" changed in 1947).

This is a piece of evidence (among several) that the author was writing in the post-Independence era.

### Part C

As noted above, the passage appears to have been written after 1947. We can see this from the fact that the author uses the term "subcontinent" over "India" (as

noted in Part 2) and that they speak of the nationalist movement and Gandhiji in the past tense. It is also clear that a “number of scholarly studies” on nationalism have taken place, which means that it is likely to have been written a significant time after 1947.

It is harder to pinpoint an upper bound on the time of writing. The author makes no reference to the state of present politics or any other circumstances which could give us a clue; the only possible lead is the mention of our “perceptions of the great agitations . . . [growing] in subtlety and detail”.

## Question 2

### Part A

The purpose of this document appears to be to narrate in brief the history of the city of Baroda and its rulers. The phrase “. . . are describe[d] in the article on Guzerat” seems to indicate that the text is an extract from a larger document, consisting of articles on various regions of the subcontinent; thus it is probably taken from a survey or census of some kind. This conclusion is further supported by the figures of population, revenue and army strength given in the fourth paragraph.

It was probably written by a British official or civil servant involved in the survey.

It (the survey) might have been meant as a general compendium of information about the state of the subcontinent, intended for the readership of British officials who came into power or took up residence in new places.

### Part B

This document was definitely written after the year 1840, since this is the date of the last event judged significant by the author in the history of Baroda (the abolition of sati).

The spellings that the author uses are exclusively those which were current during the British Raj, *e.g.*, “Mahratta”, “Guzerat”, “Joudpore”. This shows that the text was written before 1947. Furthermore, as noted above, since nothing “to notice” happened in Baroda from 1840 till the date of writing, it cannot be too far removed from 1840.

Moreover, the author mentions “the reigning prince” without mentioning who succeeded Syajee Rao. Thus it is reasonable to assume that Syajee Rao is the prince in question; and since he ascended to the throne in 1819, it is likely that the year of writing was not later than the 1850s.

## Part C

The foreigners in Baroda are

- the British Resident, whose house is mentioned in the second paragraph
- the British officials and their families residing in the British cantonment, mentioned in the third paragraph (although, strictly speaking, this is outside the town)

In addition to these, until 1802, the Arab garrison has been mentioned to be in Baroda as well.

## Part D

The information in this document can be corroborated by comparison with documents from the relevant time period. For example, memoirs of British officials, royal letters or decrees, Indian historical sources (if any), and so on.

One example of fact contained in this document is the distance of Baroda from Ahmedabad, mentioned at the end; this is easily verifiable and does not depend on the perspective of the author.

One example of the author's opinion in this document is that "there is little to notice in the history of the Guicowar state" between the signing of a treaty in 1805 and the disputed between the Guicowar and the Peshwa. This is a judgment of the author which might be disputed by other sources; significant events may have occurred in the interim.

## Question 3

### Part A

Some of the explicit pieces of information available in this document are:

- 50,000 rupees was authorised by the Governor General to try to incite communal violence
- Captain Gowan was to have carried out this attempt
- The attempt was unsuccessful as the "thakoors" were not willing to collect men, and so the amount was not spent

Some of the implicit pieces of information are:

- The British were pouring tangible resources into sowing discord among Indians
- The "thakoors" paid only lip service to the British without actually supporting them

## Part B

The origin of this source is the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh (Awadh), George Cowper. It is an official letter.

It also contains an extract by Captain Gowan, an official in the British army.

Its perspective is that of the British ruling class carrying out divisive policies among the populace of India. The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner maintains an official, objective tone, while the Captain (an extract of whose letter is included) betrays frustration and condescension towards the “thakoors”’ attitude.

This letter was written towards the end of the year in 1857. This is the year in which the first significant rebellion against British power in India occurred, the Sepoy Mutiny (or the First War of Independence). It might be fair to say that the Mutiny had shaken the complacent attitude of the British towards their rule over the “natives”, and they were taking steps to strengthen their foothold in the subcontinent. One manifestation of these steps was the attempt to create communal disharmony in the country, and this letter refers to the failure of one such attempt.

The audience of this letter is, clearly, the intended recipient, *i.e.*, the Secretary to the Government of India, G. I. Edmonstone.

## Part C

To test the reliability of this source, we must first note that there are two types of information it has: one is information related to the proceedings of the British administration (the facts that 50,000 rupees were authorised to be spent in the attempt to raise violence, and that this amount was not actually used); and the other is what actually happened at the ground level (the “thakoors”’ response to Captain Gowan).

The first kind of information can be corroborated by other official documents. These may include previous communications by either of the involved parties, the ledgers (or any financial accounts) of the treasury of the British government, and so on.

The second kind of information is harder to verify. It is possible that some of the Indians involved in the happenings may have kept a record of them; alternatively, other British officials’ personal communications may bear out the information presented here.