BASICS OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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READING NOTES

BASICS OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
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LESSON-I

DISTINCTIVENESS OF HISTORICAL INQUIRY: THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

STRUCTURE

1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After learning this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between history, the past, memory, and myth, recognizing the distinctive nature of historical inquiry.

2. Comprehend the connections between history and social science theories and ideas, including how they influence one another.

3. Recognize and examine the various dimensions of history, such as social, political, economic, religious, cultural, and ecological factors.

4. Value the extensive range of historical research and its significance in interpreting modern society.

5. Engage critically with key readings to delve into fundamental concepts in historical methodology and theory.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Historical inquiry provides a distinctive perspective to examine, interpret, and comprehend the intricacies of human experience. Unlike memory or myth, which often fulfill cultural or emotional roles, history is anchored in critical examination, evidence, and context. This unit aims to highlight the uniqueness of historical inquiry by exploring its boundaries, limitations, and relationship with other social science fields.

Interacting with history involves more than just following one story or perspective. It includes multiple areas (social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological), each offering unique insights that help grasp the complete picture of the past. It also requires navigating the relationship between facts, interpretation, and theory, making it an endeavor that blends science and art.

Through the works of historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, Marc Bloch, E. H. Carr, Thompson, Braudel, Max Weber, and Arthur Marwick, students will investigate the essence and breadth of history, gaining insight into its ability to address contemporary social issues. Moreover, this unit will prompt students to critically engage with the methodologies and frameworks that underlie historical research, establishing a robust basis for further exploration of the discipline.

Key topics, including the importance of history, its dialogic characteristics, and its integration with social theory, will be examined. As students advance, they will enhance their abilities to evaluate historical sources, formulate significant interpretations, and recognize the relevance of history in making sense of the modern world.

1.2 SOCIAL RESEARCH AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Social Science Research

Social science research can be simply described as the scientific study of human society. It encompasses major disciplines such as sociology, economics, anthropology, history, political science, public administration, and demography. Social science research is a systematic method employed by social scientists and researchers to understand people and societies. This understanding enables the design of services that cater to the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

Social science research, also known as social research, systematically discovers and verifies new and old facts, their succession, connections, fundamental explanations, and the natural laws governing them. In essence, it is a scientific endeavor within the social sciences aimed at acquiring new facts. This research involves manipulating things, concepts, and symbols to extend new knowledge or verify existing knowledge, whether it contributes to theoretical construction or practical applications.

Rummel defines social science research as "a devoted study of mankind in his social environment and is concerned with improving his understanding of social orders, groups, institutions, and ethics." Social science research provides authentic, scientifically proven information that end-users can rely upon for practical and theoretical purposes.

History as Knowledge

The history of knowledge is a field encompassing the accumulated and documented human knowledge created or discovered throughout written history. It involves the historic forms, accumulation, bearers, impacts, mediations, distributional contexts, conditions, and methods of knowledge production.

Scientific Methods as Applied in History

Scientific methods have been applied in historical research since ancient times. However, their formal documentation is credited to Francis Bacon of England, who developed inductive methods for scientific inquiry. The scientific method is a logical, rational, and systematic problem-solving approach applicable across various fields of study, including history.

Scientific inquiry requires two essential conditions:

1. A society free from primitive and traditional constraints that promotes scientific attitudes.

2. An investigator who is intelligent, rational, and unbiased.

What is history?

People constitute a society and are both the makers and products of history. In modern society, history is inescapable, forming an integral part of life and influencing daily decisions based on past experiences. History, as commonly understood, may refer to events themselves or the record of those events. Partner explains, "History may be interpreted very broadly, to include nature as well as man. There is a history of the process of evolution, as Darwin made clear, but in general usage, history refers to the study of man and what happened to him (1997, vol. 12, p. 147)."

Daniels describes history as "the past experience of mankind. More exactly, history is the memory of that past experience as it has been preserved, largely in written records (1996, p.226)." Thus, history is the product of historians' work in reconstructing the flow of events from available sources and presenting it in a narrative form.

Definition of Historical Research

Historical research is "the systematic collection and objective evaluation of data related to past occurrences in order to test hypotheses concerning causes, effects, or trends of those events which may help to explain present events and anticipate future events" (Gay, 1981, p. 432).

According to Isaac and Michael, historical research involves reconstructing "the past systematically and objectively by collecting, evaluating, verifying, and synthesising evidence to establish facts and reach defensible conclusions, often in relation to particular hypotheses" (1981, p.44).

"True historical research, or historiography, is concerned with analysing and interpreting the meanings of historical events. It is the process by which a researcher is able to reach a conclusion as to probable truth of an event in the past by studying objects available for observation in the present" (Goldhor, 1972, p.98).

It may be considered, "as a scholarly attempt to discover what has happened" (Mouly, 1978, p.157). Historical research is "the process of systematically examining past events to give an account of what has happened in the past" (Johnson, chapter 12, p.1).

The above definitions are certainly useful ones. Gay points out the role of hypotheses. Isaac and Michael emphasise the establishing of facts systematically and objectively. Goldhor uses the term 'true historical research' and refers to probable truth of an event in the past. Mouly gives a very simple definition, stressing on 'a scholarly attempt'. Thus, we may conclude from above that true historical research is a process of reconstructing the past through systematically and objectively collecting, evaluating, verifying and synthesising evidence relating to the past

events to establish facts and defensible conclusions, often in relation to particular hypotheses (if appropriate), to arrive at a scholarly account of what happened in the past.

What is not Historical Research?

True historical research must be distinguished from chronology. Here chronology is defined as "simply the setting down of events in the order of their occurrence, a process similar to the older concept of historical research" (Powell, 1991, p. 137). Chronology of events is merely a first step in the process of historical research, providing data or material for latter steps. A description of past events is not considered historical research. It serves as background for the researcher. It can be starting point for him. A mere collection of facts including their description, does not constitute historical research. Facts can serve as a base. Facts have to be related, and a total picture drawn, to become meaningful and contiguous one.

What Constitutes Historical Research?

True historical research, or historiography, involves analysing and interpreting the meaning of historical events. It is a process through which a researcher examines present-day evidence to determine the probable truth of events that occurred in the past (Goldhor, 1972, p.98). This type of research provides a flowing, dynamic account of past events, enriched by interpretations that aim to recapture the nuances, personalities, and ideas influencing those events.

As Johnson explains in his lectures (Chap. 1), historical research attempts to create a vivid narrative that brings to life the environment, personalities, and ideas of the past. By interpreting these elements, historical research offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping historical events. It involves constructing a detailed and insightful narrative based on the study of available evidence, presenting an informed account of the events, individuals, and circumstances that defined a particular period.

1.3 THE NATURE OF HISTORY

Historical research tries to maintain the relationship between the facts and it comes to the conclusion related to their past events or evidences or things. The past evidence with respect to present situation and interpretation can be done by the researcher and because of study between past and present it will be helpful for the researcher to predict what will be happen in the future related to that research problem. Main objectives or aim of the historical study that accurate, legal documents related to the past events or things must important to clear, So the prospective as in present situation such as knowledge enables to the researcher partially to draw conclusion about the future as well as to control existence in future related to the problem. This type of historical research includes delimitation about the problem, generalizations about the possible solutions or hypothesis data analysis and with the help of all these things conclusions may be drawn with the help of inductive-deductive method but there are number of difficulties before the researcher such as lack of control about the evidences or events which happen in the past and data measurement.

It has been not in the researchers control about sample and there is no possibility for the duplication about the evidences. The data related to the historical research works closed type with fixed locus and researcher can't do anything about their opinion related to sampling and he or she considered to search a type of data. For use in research historical research is different from the experiment but observations, reports cannot be repeated. The researcher may handle the data in different way but not in the same tactic means it is unique way to handle the data. Researcher collects the events in past with different types of forms or documents records other things which directly or indirectly affected on the event of study. The main duty of researcher is very complicated because he or she find out the truth from the evidences which was a

historical thing. The main difficulty related to the historical research which is invariably, inadequate as well as time study which is in dependability with respect to data and researcher depend upon observations made by others or witnesses maybe doubtful competence and objectivity also sometime doubtful. The post difficulty related to interpretation of objectivity is also found historical events occurred in various periods, this is also another difficulty and how to determine partly is also difficulty because in every system broad change in regular interval of a calendar, so that incomplete information's to collect partly is very difficult.

"History encompasses more than just the examination of past occurrences; it signifies a broader understanding." As an intellectual domain, history aims to reconstruct and interpret the myriad complexities of human experiences throughout different epochs. "History serves a dual purpose: it acts both as a record of what has occurred and as a framework for understanding present-day challenges." One of the fundamental traits that define history is its reliance on evidence. Historians carefully analyse primary and secondary sources—such as documents, artifacts, oral traditions, and contemporary interpretations—to create narratives that accurately represent historical realities. This process requires critical assessment, verification, and contextualisation to differentiate history from myth, memory, or legend, which often prioritise narrative or cultural meaning over factual precision.

1.3.1 Distinction from the Past, Memory, and Myth

The past forms the foundation of history, yet it is fundamentally different from past events, which include everything that has happened prior to the present. History involves a selective and interpretative process that engages with the past, highlighting particular events, processes, or phenomena that historians consider important. In a similar way, history differs from memory, which is inherently subjective and often influenced by personal or collective feelings. Memory often retains a version of events that reinforces identity or fosters community, while history strives for critical evaluation and broader relevance. Myths, on the other hand, are narrative structures that frequently fulfill cultural or moral roles, intertwining fact and fiction to impart meaning or bolster ideologies. History aims to interrogate and refine these narratives, distinguishing evidence-based conclusions from imaginative or symbolic storytelling.

Grasping the differences between history, the past, memory, and myth is crucial for understanding the distinctive character of historical research. The past includes everything that has taken place prior to the present (a limitless sequence of events and experiences). On the other hand, Mark Block has highlighted that history is a conscious and systematic examination of the past. It entails selecting, analysing, and interpreting evidence to create narratives that illuminate particular phenomena or trends. While the past is extensive and largely undocumented, history concentrates on specific fragments of it, influenced by the historian's inquiries and approaches.

Memory, whether it is individual or collective, is a concept that differs from history. Individual memory includes personal recollections that are shaped by emotions and personal experiences, whereas collective memory encapsulates the shared memories of a group, often tailored to strengthen identity or foster unity. Hobsbawm emphasises the selective aspect of memory, which is influenced by contemporary needs. In contrast to memory, which maintains its significance through subjective emotional perspectives, history rigorously investigates and validates these memories with the use of evidence. For instance, a community's collective memory of a revolution might focus on themes of unity and heroism, while historical research could uncover intricate details such as internal conflicts or unforeseen outcomes.

Myths, conversely, are stories that intertwine fact and fiction to express cultural, moral, or spiritual truths. Marwick pointed out that Myths prioritise meaning and symbolism rather than

factual correctness. Its aim to inspire, educate, or unite, but they can also obscure actual historical truths. For example, the legend of Rome being founded by Romulus and Remus provides insight into Roman identity but requires historical analysis to distinguish symbolic aspects from available archaeological and textual evidence. Historians critically examine myths to reveal their factual foundations and the societal values they express.

Although history is separate from memory and myth, they frequently overlap. Memory serves as essential material for historical analysis, though it necessitates careful scrutiny, and myths provide cultural perspectives that enhance historical study. Nevertheless, historians must be cautious to prevent merging evidence-driven conclusions with personal or symbolic narratives. As Gerald Schlabach discussed, this interaction deepens historical comprehension while reinforcing the field's dedication to analytical precision. Ultimately, history stands out as a critical and evidence-based examination of the past, offering complex viewpoints that enable societies to engage meaningfully with their shared and varied experiences.

1.3.2 Multi-Dimensional Nature of History

History is essentially complex in nature and incorporating various aspects such as social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and ecological. These dimensions allow historians to explore the relationships among various forces and processes that have shaped human societies. For instance, to fully grasp a nation's political history, it is essential to also consider its economic structures, cultural practices, and ecological context.

The intricate nature of history highlights its ability to encompass and analyse the diverse elements of human existence and societal development. History is not confined to isolated events or singular narratives; it examines the interconnected aspects of socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-religious, and ecological realities. Every facet enhances historical analysis, enabling historians to craft thorough accounts that capture the complexities of human experiences over time. Marc Bloch argues that history must consider the "totality of human activity," recognising that no part of the past functions in isolation. For example, the political dimensions of a revolution cannot be entirely understood without taking into account its economic roots, social effects, and cultural implications.

Social history investigates the experiences of ordinary individuals, exploring topics like family structures, gender roles, labor patterns, and education. This viewpoint often intersects with cultural and economic history, as societal norms and values are shaped by economic conditions and cultural practices. Hobsbawm has emphasised the importance of social history in uncovering the experiences of marginalised groups, thereby challenging traditional narratives focused on elites. Similarly, political history examines governance, power relationships, and diplomatic interactions but becomes more insightful when considered within social and economic frameworks. Marwick asserts that political events, such as wars and revolutions, are not standalone occurrences but are significantly influenced by social conditions and economic pressures.

Economic history, another vital dimension, explores production systems, trade, and resource allocation. It offers insights into how economic forces have moulded societies, affected political choices, and propelled cultural changes. While Religious history investigates how belief systems, rituals, and institutions have shaped communities, looking at how religious ideologies intersect with political and cultural forces. Similarly, cultural and intellectual history examines the progression of ideas, artistic expression, literature, and scientific developments, emphasizing their importance in mirroring and shaping societal values.

The ecological and environmental aspect of history, as outlined by Sreedharan, centers on the interaction between humans and their environment. This discipline studies how environmental

elements, such as climate and geography, have influenced historical incidents, as well as how human actions have affected ecosystems throughout time. It offers a long-term perspective on contemporary ecological issues, connecting historical practices to modern environmental challenges.

This multi-faceted nature of history illustrates its dynamic and integrative approach to comprehending the past. By engaging with various dimensions and their intersections, historians can reveal the intricate networks of causality and influence that characterise human experiences. This comprehensive perspective ensures that history remains a lively and pertinent discipline, capable of tackling complex inquiries related to the past and its lasting effects on the present and future.

1.3.3 History as a Dialogue

The concept of history as a dialogue underlines its active and interactive essence, treating it not just as a mere recounting of historical events but as a continuous conversation linking the past with the present. E. H. Carr points out that 'history is formed through a conversation between historians and their sources, as well as through the engagement of past interpretations with present-day viewpoints.' This dialogic approach enables history to adapt, reflecting the emergence of new evidence and the evolving priorities of contemporary societies.' Engaging with history entails questioning, reinterpreting, and at times disputing established narratives, which keeps the discipline dynamic and pertinent.

A vital component of this dialogue is the relationship between historians and their sources. Historians critically analyse primary materials, including documents, artifacts, and oral histories, understanding them within the context of the queries they aim to address. These sources are not simply passive records but active contributors to the historical narrative, providing insights that require validation, contextualisation, and occasionally challenge. History is constructed upon the careful examination of evidence, and this process is intrinsically dialogic, demanding historians to pose questions, identify gaps, and examine various interpretations.' Engaging with the work of fellow historians is also essential to history as a dialogue. Each generation of scholars introduces fresh perspectives influenced by their social, cultural, and intellectual environments. This discussion among historians enables a continual enhancement of historical knowledge, as differing viewpoints and approaches lead to a more complex and nuanced understanding.

The dialogic aspect of history also relates to its connection with the present. Inquiry into history is not merely a separate academic task but a way to tackle current questions and issues. For instance, analysing the economic factors behind past crises can guide contemporary policy choices, while investigating social movements can shed light on today's battles for justice and equality. John Tosh highlights that "history acts as a tool for grasping continuity and change, providing a structure for understanding the intricacies of the present." This dialogic perspective ensures that history remains a vibrant field, able to adapt to new findings and viewpoints while providing lasting insights into the human experience. Through this dynamic exchange, history not only clarifies the past but also enhances and deepens our comprehension of the present and shapes our goals for the future.

1.3.4 History and Social Science

The connection between history and social science is a deeply intertwined and mutually supportive one, as both disciplines strive to examine human societies and their complexities, though they employ different approaches and focal points. This connection has sparked considerable debate and various viewpoints, reflecting its intricate nature. Although both fields investigate human societies, their methodologies, approaches, and objectives frequently differ.

Various critics and supporters from different academic perspectives have offered nuanced insights into how history relates to social sciences, illuminating their supportive and, at times, conflicting aspects.

Annals historians advocate for the integration of history with social sciences. they proposed a concept of "total history" that go beyond the traditional emphasis on events and political figures. 'Total history' accounts, long-standing structures and fundamental social, economic, and environmental influences on human society. This perspective highlights the value of interdisciplinary approaches for understanding larger historical events like trade systems, population shifts, and environmental changes. Braudel provides the concept 'longue durée' (the long-term trends that influence societies) and encouraged historians to integrate ideas and techniques from economics, geography, and sociology to improve their analyses.

Weber offers another perspective, applying his sociological approach to understanding history. He believes it is important to recognise the significance of cultural and religious values, which play a vital role in social change. Weber's analysis of the Protestant ethic and its influence on capitalism highlights how historical stories can be enhanced by sociological perspectives. This method underscores the significance of investigating the interplay between personal agency, cultural norms, and structural factors in influencing historical progress. Weber's methodology accentuates that history is not merely a chronicle of past events but also a tool for grasping how cultural and institutional dynamics shape societal progress.

However, some scholars caution against over-relying on social science theories in historical research. Ranke, advocated for an empirical method that prioritises primary sources and reconstructs events "as they truly occurred." Ranke's perspective represents a more cautious view of integrating social science, reaffirming history's unique role in capturing the individuality and particularity of past experiences. This perspective indicates that the broad generalisations sought by social sciences may inadvertently simplify the intricacies of historical contexts.

Collingwood has suggested that history is fundamentally about re-enacting past thought processes. He contended that comprehending history necessitates an empathetic engagement with the intentions and ideas of historical figures—a process distinct from the analytical approaches of social science. This viewpoint highlights the epistemological distinctions between the two fields: while social sciences commonly aim to explain societal phenomena through theories and causal relationships, history seeks to understand the meanings and intentions behind human actions in their specific contexts.

Social sciences, such as sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics, examine the structures, behaviors, and functions of societies, often emphasising patterns and generalisations. While history is rooted in specific events and contexts, social science seeks to reveal broader theories and principles. Together, they create a holistic framework for understanding human experiences over time and across different spaces. History gains from social science concepts that offer explanatory frameworks for analysing intricate phenomena like economic structures, social classes, or political beliefs. For example, utilising Marxist theory has enabled historians to scrutinise class conflicts, modes of production, and economic determinism in influencing historical change. In turn, social sciences utilise historical evidence to evaluate and refine their theories, ensuring their generalisations are based in real-world situations.

From a postmodernist viewpoint, Foucault have challenged the conventional divides between history and social science. He highlights that both fields are influenced by power dynamics and cultural narratives. Foucault's notion of "genealogy" questions straightforward narratives,

motivating historians to consider how systems of knowledge, institutions, and ideologies develop over time. This perspective blurs the distinctions between history and social science, indicating that both fields are involved in meaning-making and the critique of prevailing paradigms.

The connection between history and social science is abundant with varied viewpoints. While interdisciplinary strategies have enhanced historical research by integrating theoretical perspectives from sociology, economics, and anthropology. The ongoing discussions regarding methodological uniqueness and epistemological objectives continue to influence this dynamic relationship. These differing opinions highlight the importance of acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of each field while promoting fruitful collaborations that enhance our comprehension of human societies and their complexities.

1.4 THE SCOPE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The field of historical research is extensive and continuously growing and covers every dimension of human life and relationships throughout time. It goes beyond simply recording events. Rather it explores the intricacies of social systems, cultural representations, personal and shared experiences, as well as the relationship between people and their surroundings. The wide-ranging nature of historical research illustrates its ability to tackle inquiries about the past while providing understanding of modern challenges and future opportunities.

1.4.1 Dimensions of Historical Research

Historical research operates across multiple dimensions, each offering unique perspectives and methods of inquiry:

Social History

The term 'social history' refers to a subdiscipline of the historical sciences on the one hand and to a general approach to history that focuses on society at large on the other hand. In both manifestations, social history developed from marginal and tentative origins at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, and experienced a triumphant expansion from the 1950s to the 1980s. Social historians sought to uncover the relationships between economic, demographic, and social processes and structures, as well as their impact on social stratification, political institutions, social movements, ideologies, and forms of 'public' and 'private' behavior. For the comprehensive variant of 'social history,' the term 'history of society' has gained currency. Class, social status, standard of living, the family, work, social mobility, inequality, modernization, conflict, race, and gender are central keywords in this historiography. Interdisciplinary contact with sociology, especially historical sociology, economics, demography, political science, and, more recently, anthropology and cultural studies has been intensive. The borrowing of concepts and even the adaptation of 'middle range theories' (R.K. Merton) as tools in historical research and writing is a trademark of social historians as compared to traditional narrative historians. Comparative studies have embodied the interest in the application and testing of theories and have brought social history closest to historical sociology.

Social History emerged as a field in the mid-twentieth century as a reaction to older fields—political history, diplomatic history, the history of great men and great ideas—that, in their focus on elites, failed to address the historical experiences of the vast majority of the human population. Social historians, committed to understanding the lives of ordinary people, have faced particular challenges locating sources. Across time, most non-elites have had little access to the written word; most of the textual sources that do yield information about them were created by those who governed or employed them. Rather than being discouraged by these

challenges, social historians have responded creatively, turning to quantitative data, material and visual culture, the built environment, and oral histories to supplement more traditional archival and printed sources. Grasping the possibilities and constraints faced by people in the past inevitably entails grappling with the dynamics of categorisation, consciousness, and mobilization. The field of social history therefore intersects with the study of families, childhood, gender, race, labor, religion, crime, poverty, health, and disability (to name only a few themes). Parallels in our preoccupations and sources also lead social historians to be in frequent dialogue with scholarship in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, geography and archaeology.

Social history, sometimes described as the 'history of the people', or 'history from below', emerged as an alternative to conventional political history, both in terms of its objects of interest and its belief in deep rooted economic and social factors as agents of historical change. Social and economic history have always overlapped, and in the inter-war years the LSE promoted the growth of both. Following the Second World War the subject expanded greatly, most notably through the work of Edward Thompson, and social and economic history departments proliferated. More recently social history has had to adapt in the face of challenges to its epistemology, especially from postmodernists attacking its continued reliance on class-based forms of analysis.

E.P. Thompson's work was crucial in redirecting historical analysis to the experiences of the working class. Thompson contended that 'history should be viewed from the standpoint of those who experienced it, especially those frequently left out of traditional accounts. For Hobsbawm, 'social history was not just an effort to amplify the voices of the oppressed, but a thorough examination of the economic and political influences that shaped the lives of regular people.'

Foucault examined the mechanisms of power and social control at a micro level. He noted how institutions such as schools, hospitals, and prisons influence both personal and group identities through subtle methods of discipline and regulation. The study of social history also involves investigating daily life and cultural practices, a viewpoint promoted by Annals historians. Duby and Ladurie have concentrated on the long-term societal structures, including family dynamics, rural communities, and popular religion, instead of isolated political occurrences. This cultural shift within social history underscores the importance of the practices, beliefs, and daily lives of ordinary individuals in influencing historical transformations. Burke has expanded his broader understanding by exploring how elements of popular culture (including songs, festivals, and folklore) influenced and reflected societal life. The evolution of social history has also incorporated innovative methods, such as oral history, to illuminate the personal experiences of individuals.

Political History

Political history is a part of history. Political history generally mentions "the formation, the rise, the development, and the fall of states". In other words, political history tells us about the states, their formations, development, "fall", and also political and economic relations between states. That's why, in the West, this discipline is particularly called "History of International Relations", but in Turkey, the term "political history" has been used for about fifty years, so it will be inadequate and difficult to try to change this concept.

Since political history deals with international relations, the researchers who work in this field in the world consider the *French Revolution* (1789) as the starting date and generally start their research from the 19th century. In fact, at first sight, it is logical to consider the French Revolution (1789) as the starting date and to start the research from the 19th century since

political history is the history of relations between states, but if one looks at the other side of the argument, it is impossible to approve of the present applications because "they make political history Euro-centric", as some political historians stated. For that reason, it is advisable to start political history from the ancient times for the values that make Europe superior go back of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is quite important to understand, from the political history point of view, why and how the great civilisations in the Middle East and Asia had collapsed.

It is civil history, which is called "histoire politique" in French; studies the formation of the countries, the changes they had, their development, the conflicts between people, classes, and groups, the history of the world of the countries, and their place and significance in the mosaic of the world states (Sander, 1992:17).

In fact, we can understand the foreign policy graph of a country, by looking at its domestic policy graph. For example, we cannot understand the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, without knowing "*socialism*", or the dynamics of Greek foreign policy, without knowing "*megalo idea*". Otherwise, what we know will be on the surface.

Political history, in application, has been studied in the meaning of both political history and diplomatic history. Diplomacy, which means the art of the management of international relations by means of peaceful ways forms a body with foreign policy. It is impossible to separate the parts of a body from each other (Tuncer, 1995:11). In other words, foreign policy shows the basic way, which a country will follow in international relations. Diplomacy consists of the means for foreign policy, the methods and all the practical precautions.

The formation of the word "diplomacy", however, is new, we can emphasize that its formation as an institute goes back to the beginning of the civilization. The primitive tribes stopped the war among them. Moreover, in order to negotiate and solve the problems, they sent people whose mission was like today's "ambassador". They had the special powers and their job was composed of the problems, such as signing the border agreements, establishing hunting fields, arranging marriages between tribes, and so on (Tuncer, 1995:14).

Political history, mentioning the formation, the change, the development, the fall of countries that arc the actors of the international system and the political and, to some extent, economic relations between countries is one of the basic disciplines of international relations. As mentioned before, that is the reason why, in the West, political history was defined as the history of international relations.

During the first half of the 20th century most historians would have agreed with the maxim attributed to Sir John Seeley that: 'History is past politics; and politics present history'. While he was a keen partisan of late Victorian British imperialism, Seeley's assertion echoed a view, then common among many continental European intellectuals, which emphasised the supreme importance of the nation-state, with which 'politics' was exclusively identified. As the influential German philosopher Georg Hegel argued earlier in the 19th century, the state constituted a moral and spiritual force existing beyond the material interests of its subjects and was consequently the principal agent of historical change. This meant that political history was, to all intents and purposes, history.

The most important challenge to 'traditional' political history came with the 'democratisation' of society, that is, the extension of the franchise to all adults and the creation of the welfare state. This promoted the belief that government should reflect the interests of the people, rather than those of the ruling elite or the state itself. The expansion of higher education also saw previously dispossessed groups enter universities as students and teachers who then criticised established views of the state. Socialists and feminists, enjoying a uniquely loud voice during

the 1960s and 1970s, outlined alternative ways of practising politics, hoping to develop more popular forms of participation in decision-making.

As a field of historical analysis, political history explores the methods, processes, and events associated with power, governance, state formation, and political ideologies. It delves into the actions and decisions taken by political leadership, institutions, and associations. Political history investigates how political power is acquired, maintained, and exercised. Usually, political history is primarily focused on the study of states, rulers, conflicts, and treaties, with a strong emphasis on elite individuals and their impact on historical happenings. However, in recent years, the scope of political history has expanded and included various socio-economic and cultural factors that influence political processes and structures.

Hobsbawm explored the connections between political revolutions and the broader social and economic transformations occurring during that period. To him, political history was inextricably bound to the economic forces that shaped the political environment. He posited that events like the French and Industrial Revolutions were not purely political but were deeply connected to shifts in class relations, economic systems, and social structures. Likewise, Thompson examined how the experiences and struggles of ordinary people influenced political movements, challenging the traditional elite-centered focus of political history.

The scope of political history has also been expanded to include the larger context of state formation, ideologies, and institutions. Key areas of study now encompass the development of modern states, the characteristics of political ideologies, and the function of institutions like the military, bureaucracy, and judiciary. In more contemporary scholarship, political history has increasingly centered on the analysis of political culture, discourse, and the interplay between politics and society. This broader perspective includes studying how political ideas, symbols, and practices are formed, conveyed, and contested within different societies. Gibson and Pocock have contributed to this expansion. Pocock investigated how political thoughts shaping political actions. This shift underlines the growing acknowledgment that politics encompasses not just formal institutions and elite decisions but also the beliefs, values, and ideologies that impact the actions of both leaders and citisens. Historians are now focusing on identity politics, the surge of populism, and the evolving nature of political involvement in the 21st century. Consequently, it remains an evolving and essential area of historical research, providing crucial insights into the dynamics that shape our political landscape.

Economic History

Economic history is concerned with how well mankind, over time, has used resources to create wealth, food and shelter, bread and roses. Nature provides resources and man transforms these resources into goods and services to meet human needs. Some resources remain in fixed supply, such as land, but the fertility of land can and must be restored after harvest. Over thousands of years of agriculture, mankind learned how animal dung, rotation of crops and the introduction of nitrogen-fixing crops could increase the yearly harvest. Natural resources such as coal, oil and iron ore are, however, non-renewable. Other resources are made by mankind. Capital, for example factory buildings and machinery and tools, is therefore renewable. Labour, finally, is a resource whose supply relies on how well mankind uses the other resources at hand. But labour has been in increasing supply since the transition from hunter-gatherer technology to agriculture about ten thousand years ago. The skills of labour, so-called human capital, were primarily based on learning by doing, and it is only since the nineteenth century that formal education has played an important role.

Economic history utilizes historical and quantitative methods to study economic change over long chronologies. Trajectories of economic change vary across space, because of local

conditions such as the quality of natural resources, local institutions, and a number of other factors including labour markets, and the availability of labour, capital, and technologies. Economic change is shaped also by patterns of interaction that occur between localities, nations, and wider world regions. Global economic history operates in these realms of variations and interactions between world regions sometimes adopting the world as a unit of analysis.

From the nineteenth century, when the Western Europe industrialized, inequality between nations started rising rapidly, and world trade also grew at an unprecedented speed. Intellectuals, economists, social reformers, and philosophers became interested in understanding the history of economic change at a global level. One might say that Karl Marx and Max Weber were both global economic historians in this sense. Despite their legacies, however, economic history emerged as a discipline in the first half of the twentieth century and evolved over the following fifty years with a more national than international orientation. In publications of economic historians, the most common mode of analysis was that undertaken at the level of the nation state.

Economic history investigates the connection between economic activities and historical occurrences, concentrating on how historical developments shape economic systems, structures, and behaviors. This discipline analyses the ways economic elements, including trade, production, labor, and technological innovations, have impacted the ascendance and decline of civilizations, the evolution of industries, and the changes within societies. Economic history aims to comprehend the interaction between economic forces and other societal aspects, such as politics, culture, and social frameworks.

Karl Marx is a pivotal figure in the study of economic history. His theories have significantly shaped historians' perspectives on economic systems. In his works 'The Communist Manifesto' and 'Das Kapital,' Marx articulated his materialist view of history, arguing that the economic foundation of society (its methods of production and class dynamics) dictates its political and ideological framework. Marxist methodology investigates how capitalist frameworks exploit labor, centralise wealth, and sustain inequality, with the overarching goal of comprehending how economic systems drive historical transformation. For those adhering to Marxist thought, economic history transcends mere economic functionality to explore the class struggles and societal conflicts arising from inherently unequal economic relationships.

In contrast to Marx's emphasis on class conflict, Braudel and the Annales School prioritised the influence of long-term economic frameworks on historical evolution. Braudel highlights the significance of persistent economic and geographical factors (such as trade routes, climate, and physical terrain) in influencing historical occurrences. Braudel examines that economic structures like trade and agriculture were more decisive in shaping historical events than individual occurrences or prominent figures. His approach has prompted economic historians to consider wider economic trends and the geographical elements that affect economic history.

Moreover, Hobsbawm has highlighted the significant effects of industrialisation and capitalism on modern economies. He explores the 'Industrial Revolution' and the rise of capitalism as critical elements in the historical transformations in Europe, especially during the social and political turmoil of the 18th and 19th centuries. Hobsbawm argues that economic changes are not isolated events but are deeply connected to social dynamics, class struggles, and political beliefs. His viewpoint emphasises the importance of recognising how economic systems influence the wider evolution of societies in conjunction with their political and social structures.

Economic history also examines the dynamics of economic institutions and policies. D. North have argued that economic institutions (such as property rights, legal frameworks, and market systems) are vital in influencing economic performance and growth. North's research emphasises the significance of understanding how historical shifts in institutional arrangements affect economic development and guide the paths of nations and regions. His emphasis on institutions conveys the notion that economic history is not merely about wealth accumulation but also about how societal organisation impacts economic results.

The field of economic history also investigates the link between economic processes and social inequality. Piketty has concentrated on historical trends of wealth distribution and the rising inequality present in capitalist systems. Piketty's exploration of wealth accumulation over the centuries traces the historical developments of inequality and its social and political ramifications. He highlights how economic history is closely linked to issues of class, race, and power, examining how economic structures contribute to wealth concentration among a few and the enduring nature of inequality.

The field of economic history has broadened to incorporate worldwide viewpoints. It has analysed the economic impacts of colonialism, globalisation, and the interconnections among different national economies. Economic history investigates the relationship between international trade and the rise of industries (such as cotton production) in relation to imperialism, slavery, and global capitalism. This global perspective in economic history explores the effects of international trade and imperial systems on local economies, illuminating the interconnectedness of the global economy and its historical evolution.

Overall, economic history is a complex and developing discipline that explores the connections between economic systems and historical occurrences. From Marxist interpretations regarding class conflict to Braudel's examination of long-term economic structures, economic history provides insightful perspectives on how economic forces drive historical transformations. Hobsbawm, North, Piketty, and other economic historians have broadened the horizons of economic history, investigating the significance of institutions, inequality, and globalisation in shaping contemporary economies. By analysing both macroeconomic frameworks and individual economic behaviors, economic history delivers a more profound comprehension of how economic activities and historical events are intricately linked.

Cultural and Intellectual History

Intellectual history is an unusual discipline, eclectic in both method and subject matter and therefore resistant to any single, globalized definition. Practitioners of intellectual history tend to be acutely aware of their own methodological commitments; indeed, a concern with historical method is characteristic of the discipline. Because intellectual historians are likely to disagree about the most fundamental premises of what they do, any one definition of intellectual history is bound to provoke controversy.

What is intellectual history? Broadly speaking, intellectual history is the study of intellectuals, ideas, and intellectual patterns over time. Of course, that is a terrifically large definition, and it admits of a bewildering variety of approaches. One thing to note right off is the distinction between "intellectual history" and "the history of ideas." This can be somewhat confusing, since the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably: "history of ideas" is a rather old-fashioned phrase, and not currently in vogue (though there is an excellent journal for intellectual historians published under the title, The Journal of the History of Ideas). The "history of ideas" is a discipline which looks at large-scale concepts as they appear and transform over the course of history. An historian of ideas will tend to organize the historical narrative around one major idea and will then follow the development or metamorphosis of

that idea as it manifests itself in different contexts and times, rather as a musicologist might trace a theme and all of its variations throughout the length of a symphony.

Intellectual history is often considered to be different from the history of ideas. Intellectual history resists the Platonist expectation that an idea can be defined in the absence of the world, and it tends instead to regard ideas as historically conditioned features of the world which are best understood within some larger context, whether it be the context of social struggle and institutional change, intellectual biography (individual or collective), or some larger context of cultural or linguistic dispositions (now often called "discourses"). To be sure, sometimes the requisite context is simply the context of other, historically conditioned ideas—intellectual history does not necessarily require that concepts be studied within a larger, non-conceptual frame. Admittedly, this last point can be controversial: some intellectual historians do adopt a purely "internalist" approach, i.e., they set thoughts in relation to other thoughts, without reference to some setting outside them. This method is usually most revealing when the relations between ideas helps us to see a previously unacknowledged connection between different realms of intellectual inquiry, e.g., the relation between theological and scientific modes of explanation, or between metaphysical and political concepts of causality. But this method tends to reproduce the Platonism which beset the older-style history of ideas approach. Even today, many intellectual historians remain—stubbornly or covertly— internalist in their method. They may pay lip-service to contextualism, but they are chiefly interested in conceptual contexts only. But because internalist styles of argumentation have in recent decades fallen out of favor amongst historians and humanists more generally, those who write intellectual history in the internalist manner often look rather tweedy and traditionalist to their more "worldly" colleagues both within and beyond of the historical discipline. Indeed, intellectual historians who practice this sort of concept-contextualism will not infrequently meet with accusations of quietism, elitism, or political naiveté. Internalism is nonetheless defensible on methodological grounds, though it is important to acknowledge its risks and its limitations.

Intellectual history can frequently involve a close reconstruction of philosophical arguments as they have been recorded in formal philosophical texts. In this respect intellectual history may bear a noteworthy resemblance to philosophy, and most especially, the history of philosophy. But intellectual history remains importantly distinct from philosophy for a number of reasons. Most importantly, philosophy tends to disregard differences of history or cultural context so as to concentrate almost exclusively upon the internal coherence of philosophical arguments in themselves.

Intellectual history has always been concerned with understanding ideas in their context. But historical 'context' has been defined variously over time and intellectual historians have often used radically different concepts of context, particularly since the 1970s. The cultural history of ideas tends to present itself as the cutting edge of current intellectual practice. The present ascendancy of cultural history has developed not just from changing scholarly fashions, but also from a growing apprehension amongst many historians that the older concepts of context utilised by previous intellectual historians were perhaps too restrictive. The cultural history of ideas has flourished in recent years because it offers a self-consciously capacious understanding of historical contexts.

What is the relationship between intellectual and cultural history? An answer to this question may be found in the area between the two poles of inquiry commonly known as internalist and externalist methods. The first of these deals with old-fashioned `ideas' (in Lovejoy's sense) and the second with social and political context and the sociology and anthropology of knowledge.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the study of cultural and intellectual history was denigrated for its alleged elitist and canonical nature. Today, the situation has changed dramatically. Enriched by the methods and insights of such neighboring domains of inquiry as social history, the history of mentalities, anthropology, linguistics, literary theory, and art history, cultural and intellectual history is experiencing a renewed vitality. Broadly conceived, these two fields now encompass an astonishing range of subjects and themes, including "high" intellectual history, socio-cultural history, cultural politics, psycho-cultural history, class and culture studies, cross-cultural history, consumption and material culture studies, print cultures, culture and collective memory, culture and the body, culture and post colonialism, and postmodernist cultural studies. Indeed, an easy case can be made for viewing cultural history in particular as the most intellectually vibrant and expansive branch of historical study today. It is the historical discipline's avantgarde, its frontier of experimentation and interdisciplinarity.

Cultural and intellectual history investigates the development of ideas, beliefs, values, and cultural practices. It also examines their impact on societies through time. It analyses how intellectual movements, artistic expressions, and cultural standards have influenced human experiences and contributed to larger historical trends. It explores the interaction between culture, thought, and societal transformation and highlights the significance of understanding the context in which ideas and cultural phenomena arise and develop. In contrast to political or economic history, cultural and intellectual history merely concentrates on the intangible elements of human existence (such as ideas, symbols, and cultural practices) to demonstrate their significant effects on the material and social realm.

The cultural history investigates the creation, distribution, and reception of cultural artifacts (such as literature, art, music, and religious traditions). Burke contends that culture should not be viewed solely as an elite sphere but rather as inclusive of the daily lives of regular individuals. He incorporates methods from anthropology, sociology, and literary studies, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of cultural history.

Skinner's method focuses on analysing the intentions and language of historical figures to understand how ideas were applied in specific contexts. Similarly, Pocock has investigated the connection between political thought and historical transformation, especially regarding Renaissance republicanism. Both scholars assert that intellectual history demands a thorough analysis of the social, political, and linguistic contexts surrounding the creation of ideas, challenging the perception of ideas as timeless or universal.

Cultural and intellectual history also intersects with the study of religion and philosophy. Foucault has examined how systems of thought (such as epistemologies and moral frameworks) shape social institutions and individual behaviors. He highlights how intellectual history can find the ways in which ideologies and discourses could manipulate the social realities and reinforce systems of power.

Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch played a crucial role in cultural history by highlighting how mentalities (or shared ways of thinking) influence historical occurrences. Febvre's analysis of religious beliefs demonstrates how cultural and intellectual frameworks influence societal changes. Similarly, Bloch' advocates for a holistic approach to history. He incorporated cultural and intellectual dimensions into the analysis of historical phenomena.

Art and literature have also played a crucial role in the history of culture. Gay has investigated the cultural and intellectual movements that have influenced modernity. He explored how Enlightenment philosophers (such as Voltaire and Rousseau) challenged the established authorities and redefined concepts of reason, individualism, and progress. Historians of the Romantic era have analysed how artistic and literary movements responded to industrialisation,

nationalism, and colonialism, providing insights into the cultural foundations of historical transformation.

In recent years, cultural and intellectual history has incorporated global and non-Western viewpoints. Dipesh Chakrabarty has critiqued the Eurocentric emphasis of conventional intellectual history. He has called for a more inclusive perspective that acknowledges the intellectual contributions of non-western cultures. This worldwide viewpoint has enriched the discipline by showcasing the variety of cultural practices and intellectual traditions across various historical settings. Therefore, cultural and intellectual history serves as an essential framework for comprehending the intricate relationship between concepts, culture, and historical development.

Religious History

Religious history merely studies the development, transformations, practices, institutions, and impact of religious beliefs on human societies over time. It seeks to understand how religion has influenced various societies, their cultures, and political structures. Additionally, it explores how the historical environment has shaped the development of religious ideas and practices. The area of religious history is characterised by its interdisciplinary approach, drawing on aspects of theology, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies to analyse religion as both a personal belief system and a shared social institution. The research investigates significant global religions in addition to indigenous traditions, syncretic practices, and the relationships between religion and various aspects of human existence, such as art, science, and governance.

Mircea Eliade has highlighted the universalities of religious experience and symbols. She posited that "religion is a fundamental aspect of human existence as it imparts meaning and structure to life. She delves into the idea of "sacred time and space." Eliade emphasised how religious myths and rituals foster a sense of continuity and a connection with the divine. Her perspective emphasises the necessity of viewing religion not merely as a belief system but also as a cultural and existential framework that influences human behavior.

The Annales historians have also played a significant role in shaping religious history. Febvre has analysed the cultural and intellectual conditions that facilitated religious skepticism during the Reformation. He stressed the influence of collective mentalities and social structures on shaping religious beliefs, thereby questioning the notion that religion is solely an individual matter. Bloch's research on medieval Europe, especially in The Royal Touch (1924), explores the relationship between religion and politics, illustrating how religious beliefs and rituals were employed to validate political authority.

The Reformation and Counter-Reformation have been key topics in religious history. Cameron analysed their profound impact on European society. He examined the theological arguments and social-political turmoil that transformed Christianity in 16th century Europe. He emphasised that religious reforms were not merely disagreements over doctrine but were also reactions to wider cultural, economic, and political shifts. Similarly, Bossy has examined the transformation of religious practice in post-Reformation Europe. He focuses on the decline of communal religious life and the rise of individual piety.

Non-western perspectives have enhanced the scope of religious history by shedding light on the diversity of religious traditions and practices. Doniger explores the pluralistic and dynamic nature of Hindu religious traditions. He emphasises the importance of myth, narrative, and ritual in understanding Hinduism. He challenged the monolithic interpretations by highlighting the complexity of Indian religious history. Similarly, Richard Eaton has examined the spread of Islam in South Asia. He focused on the cultural and ecological factors that facilitated its acceptance and integration into local societies.

It also investigates the intersections of religion with colonialism, globalisation, and modernity. Asad has analysed the ways in which colonial powers reshaped indigenous religious practices and imposed secular frameworks on their subjugates. Asad has criticised the Western-centric understanding of secularism. He highlighted how religion and modernity are mutually constitutive rather than oppositional. This perspective has stretched the scope of religious history and encouraged scholars to examine how religion adapts to and resists the forces of modernisation and globalisation.

Moving beyond elite theological debates and institutional histories, religious history has increasingly focused on the lived experiences of ordinary believers in recent decades. Davis has explored the role of religion in everyday life. He demonstrated how faith intersects with gender, family, and community dynamics. This micro-historical approach has enriched religious history by providing a more nuanced understanding of how religious beliefs and practices are experienced and negotiated at the individual and local levels.

Ecological and Environmental History

This is an emerging field study which explores the relationship between humans and natural environment. The study focused on the issues like climate change, resource utilisation, and the environmental impact of human activities. The study of ecological and environmental history provides a long-term perspective on ecological challenges. It examines the complex interactions between humans and the natural world over time. It emphasises how environmental factors have influenced human societies, and how human actions have transformed ecosystems. It links history, ecology, geography, and anthropology to provide insights into the ways environmental changes have shaped economies, cultures, and political systems. It explores the resource exploitation, land use, climate change, conservation, and the impact of industrialisation on the environment. By studying these interrelationships, we could understand humanity's place within the broader biosphere and the consequences of human activities on the planet.

Crosby have been instrumental in defining its scope and significance. He highlights the profound ecological changes that followed European exploration and colonisation of the Americas. He introduced the concept of the Columbian Exchange to describe the transfer of plants, animals, diseases, and technologies between the Old and New Worlds. Crosby's analysis underlines how ecological factors, such as the introduction of invasive species or the spread of infectious diseases, played a critical role in shaping historical events, including the decline of indigenous populations in the Americas and the transformation of global agricultural practices.

Similarly, Cronon provides another foundational contribution to environmental history. Cronon examines how Native American and European land use practices differently impacted the ecosystems of New England. He argues that European colonisation brought profound ecological disruptions, including deforestation, soil depletion, and the introduction of livestock, which altered the region's ecological balance. Cronon highlights the role of cultural attitudes toward nature in shaping environmental history. He shows how European notions of land ownership and resource exploitation contrasted with indigenous approaches to land stewardship.

Environmental history has also explored the consequences of industrialisation and technological advancements. Carolyn Merchant critiques the environmental degradation associated with the rise of industrial capitalism and the mechanistic worldview of the Scientific Revolution. Merchant argues that this shift led to the exploitation of nature as a resource to be controlled and dominated, resulting in ecological harm and the marginalisation of holistic,

sustainable approaches to environmental management. Her feminist perspective links environmental degradation to broader societal structures, such as patriarchy and capitalism, offering a critical lens for analysing the intersection of ecological and social histories.

Global perspectives have enriched the field of environmental history, particularly in understanding the environmental impacts of colonialism and globalisation. Historians of this discipline examines how European colonial powers transformed tropical ecosystems and contributed to the early development of conservationist thought. Studies reveals the paradoxical role of colonialism in both degrading and preserving environments, as colonial administrators often initiated conservation efforts in response to ecological crises caused by exploitative practices.

Climate history, a subfield of environmental history, has gained prominence in recent decades, exploring how climate variations have influenced human civilizations. This history examines the Little Ice Age and its widespread socio-political impacts, including crop failures, famines, and conflicts. Parker demonstrates how climatic changes can act as catalysts for historical events, highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental and human histories.

It also addresses contemporary challenges, such as climate change and sustainability. Dipesh Chakrabarty argues for a reconceptualisation of history in the Anthropocene, emphasising humanity's collective responsibility for addressing global environmental crises. Chakrabarty's perspective bridges environmental history with global history. He urged historians to consider the planetary scale of ecological change while acknowledging the unequal distribution of environmental consequences across societies.

1.5 METHODOLOGICAL SCOPE

The scope of historical research is also defined by its methodologies, which combine empirical investigation with interpretive analysis:

Archival Research

Archival research is a cornerstone of historical methodology. It provides direct access to primary sources that serve as the raw materials for historical analysis. Archives house documents, records, manuscripts, photographs, maps, and other artifacts that capture the lived experiences, decisions, and events of the past. This methodological approach involves locating, examining, and interpreting these sources to construct narratives and analyse historical phenomena. The value of archival research lies in its ability to uncover evidence that may challenge prevailing narratives, fill gaps in historical knowledge, and provide nuanced insights into the complexities of the past. Historians have emphasised the critical role of archival research in historical scholarship. Historians highlights the importance of archives as repositories of memory, stressing the need for meticulous and critical examination of sources to ensure historical accuracy. It is historian's responsibility to interrogate the authenticity, context, and biases of archival materials, recognising that sources are often products of their time and may reflect the perspectives or agendas of their creators.

Archival records, such as tax documents and court proceedings, can reveal not only economic and political structures but also cultural and social mentalities. The archival sources have potential to provide insights into the everyday lives of people often overlooked in traditional historical narratives.

Archival research has also been central to postcolonial historiography. Ranajit Guha has utilised colonial archives to uncover the voices and experiences of marginalised groups. Guha critiques the biases inherent in colonial records, emphasising the need to read these sources

"against the grain." This method involves analysing what is omitted or obscured in the records to reconstruct the perspectives of subaltern groups, such as peasants, workers, and indigenous communities, whose voices are often absent from official narratives.

The methodological challenges of archival research include issues of accessibility, preservation, and interpretation. Carolyn Steedman addressed the materiality of archival sources and the subjective experience of the researcher. Steedman stresses the fragmented and incomplete nature of archival collections, arguing that historians must navigate these limitations while constructing coherent analyses. She explores the affective dimensions of archival research, recognizing the emotional connections that historians may develop with their sources.

Recent, technological advancement has not only transformed archival research, but also expanded its scope and accessibility. The digitisation of archival collections and the development of online repositories have democratised access to primary sources that enabled historians to conduct research across geographical locations. However, this shift has also raised questions about the ethics of digital archives in relation to preservation of non-digital materials, and the potential loss of tactile engagement with physical records.

The methodological scope of archival research extends beyond traditional written documents. Oral histories, visual materials, and artifacts are increasingly incorporated into archival collections, reflecting the diversity of historical evidence. For example, Davis combines archival records with cultural and anthropological analysis to reconstruct the social and legal dynamics of 16th-century rural France. Davis's approach demonstrates the potential of interdisciplinary methods to enrich archival research, offering deeper insights into the past.

Oral Histories

Oral histories are a vital methodological approach in historical research, offering insights into the lived experiences, memories, and perspectives of individuals and communities that are often absent from written records. This method involves collecting, recording, and analysing verbal accounts of historical events, traditions, and personal narratives through interviews and storytelling. Oral histories are particularly valuable for studying marginalized or underrepresented groups, as they provide a platform for voices that might otherwise be excluded from official archives and mainstream historical narratives. This approach challenges the dominance of textual sources, emphasizing the importance of memory, subjectivity, and the dynamic interplay between individual and collective experiences in shaping historical understanding.

One of the seminal figures in the field, Alessandro Portelli, highlights the unique attributes of oral history. Portelli argues that oral histories are not merely repositories of factual information but are also rich in symbolic and emotional content. He emphasizes the importance of examining the discrepancies between memory and documented events, as these differences reveal how individuals and communities construct meaning around historical experiences. Portelli's work demonstrates that oral histories provide not only factual accounts but also deeper insights into the values, aspirations, and identities of narrators.

Paul Thompson underscores the democratizing potential of oral history. He argues that this method allows historians to access perspectives from below, capturing the voices of ordinary people whose experiences are often overlooked in traditional historical narratives. Thompson advocates for the careful documentation and interpretation of oral testimonies, emphasizing the need to situate them within broader historical contexts. His work has been instrumental in shaping oral history as a rigorous and respected discipline within the field of historiography.

The methodology of oral history has been particularly significant in postcolonial and subaltern studies. Scholars like Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies collective have employed oral histories to recover the voices of marginalized groups, such as peasants, women, and indigenous communities. In *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Guha utilizes oral accounts to reconstruct the experiences of peasant resistance against colonial rule, highlighting the agency and resilience of subaltern actors. This approach challenges the dominance of elite-centric narratives and underscores the importance of oral traditions in understanding the complexities of colonial and postcolonial histories.

Oral histories have also played a critical role in documenting traumatic and contentious pasts. In the context of the Holocaust, Niewyk provides firsthand accounts of survivors, offering invaluable perspectives on their experiences and resilience. Similarly, Studs Terkel captures the voices of ordinary Americans who lived through the economic crisis, illustrating how oral histories can illuminate the human dimensions of historical events.

However, oral histories also present unique challenges, particularly in terms of reliability and interpretation. Memory is inherently subjective and influenced by individual and collective experiences, cultural norms, and the passage of time. Historian Luisa Passerini explores how memory is shaped by power dynamics and cultural contexts, urging historians to approach oral testimonies critically. Passerini emphasizes the importance of understanding the construction of memory and its relationship to identity and historical consciousness, suggesting that oral histories are as much about the present as they are about the past.

Technological advancements have significantly enhanced the practice of oral history, enabling the recording, preservation, and dissemination of verbal accounts on a global scale. Digital platforms and audio-visual technologies have expanded the reach and accessibility of oral histories, allowing historians to engage with diverse voices across different contexts. These innovations have also facilitated interdisciplinary collaborations, integrating oral histories with fields like anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies.

In conclusion, oral histories represent a powerful and dynamic tool for historical research, offering unique insights into the lived experiences and memories of individuals and communities. Through the contributions of scholars like Portelli, Thompson, and Guha, this methodology has evolved to address the challenges of subjectivity and interpretation while emphasizing the richness and depth of oral accounts. By bridging the gaps between official records and personal narratives, oral histories provide a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the past, fostering a deeper appreciation for the diversity of human experiences.

Interdisciplinary Approaches:

Interdisciplinary approaches in historical research represent a transformative methodology that integrates concepts, theories, and techniques from multiple disciplines to provide a more holistic understanding of the past. This approach acknowledges that history does not exist in isolation but intersects with various fields, such as sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, literature, ecology, and cultural studies. By adopting interdisciplinary methods, historians can analyse historical phenomena through diverse lenses, uncovering connections and patterns that might remain hidden within a single-discipline framework. This approach is especially effective in addressing complex historical questions that involve multifaceted social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions.

The Annales School founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre has emphasized the integration of geography, sociology, and economics into historical analysis. In his manuscript '*The Historian's Craft* (1949), Bloch highlighted the importance of studying not only events but

also structures, mentalities, and long-term social dynamics. While Braudel exemplified this interdisciplinary approach. He employed concepts from geography and economics to examine the interplay between human societies and their environments over centuries. He introduced the concept of the *longue durée* to emphasize the importance of structural and environmental factors in shaping history.

Anthropology has significantly influenced historical methodologies, particularly in the study of cultural history and microhistory. Davis has utilized anthropological perspectives to reconstruct the cultural and social dynamics of early modern France. Her interdisciplinary approach combined archival research with anthropological insights to explore themes of identity, community, and belief systems. Similarly, Carlo Ginzburg drew on anthropological methods to analyse the worldview of an Italian miller in the 16th century, illustrating how interdisciplinary approaches can illuminate the lives of ordinary individuals often excluded from grand historical narratives.

Literary studies also contribute to interdisciplinary historical analysis by offering tools to examine historical texts, narratives, and representations. White has explored the narrative structures and rhetorical strategies employed by historians, arguing that historical writing is inherently shaped by literary forms. This perspective challenges historians to critically analyse the construction of historical narratives and consider the role of language and storytelling in shaping historical understanding.

In economic history, interdisciplinary approaches have been essential in analysing the interplay between economic systems and societal changes. Economic history combined history, sociology, and political science to examine the development of the capitalist world economy. His world-systems theory highlights the interconnectedness of global economic processes and their influence on historical events, providing a macro-historical framework that transcends national boundaries.

Ecological and environmental history, as exemplified by the works of Alfred W. Crosby and William Cronon, integrates insights from ecology and geography to examine the relationship between human societies and their natural environments. Crosby has demonstrated how interdisciplinary approaches can reveal the ecological dimensions of historical processes, such as colonization, industrialization, and environmental change.

Interdisciplinary approaches have also been instrumental in postcolonial and feminist historiography. Dipesh Chakrabarty, in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), draws on philosophy, cultural studies, and history to critique Eurocentric historical narratives and advocate for a pluralistic understanding of the past. Similarly, Carolyn Merchant's in her writing '*The Death of Nature* employs feminist and ecological perspectives to analyse the historical impact of the Scientific Revolution on women and the environment, demonstrating the intersectionality of gender, science, and ecology.

Despite its advantages, interdisciplinary approaches pose methodological challenges, such as the risk of diluting disciplinary rigor or oversimplifying complex theories. Historians must navigate these challenges by maintaining critical engagement with the methodologies and epistemologies of the disciplines they incorporate. E. H. Carr stressed the importance of maintaining historical specificity while engaging with broader theoretical frameworks, emphasizing the need for balance between innovation and methodological rigor.

In conclusion, interdisciplinary approaches enrich historical research by breaking down disciplinary silos and fostering collaboration between fields. Through the contributions of scholars like Braudel, Davis, Wallerstein, and Chakrabarty, these methods have expanded the scope and depth of historical inquiry, enabling historians to address complex and multifaceted

questions. By integrating diverse perspectives and methodologies, interdisciplinary approaches offer a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the past, underscoring the interconnectedness of human experiences across time and space.

Comparative and Global Perspectives

Comparative and global perspectives in historical research represent an essential approach for understanding the interconnectedness of human societies and the diverse trajectories of historical development across regions and cultures. By analysing similarities, differences, and interrelations across time and space, this approach allows historians to transcend parochial and nation-centric frameworks, situating local and regional histories within broader global contexts. Comparative and global perspectives facilitate the identification of patterns, exchanges, and influences that shape historical phenomena, providing a more nuanced understanding of the past and its relevance to contemporary issues.

A foundational advocate of the comparative approach was Marc Bloch, who analysed the similarities and divergences in feudal structures across medieval Europe. Bloch emphasized the value of comparative history in uncovering shared patterns of social organization and governance, arguing that such analysis deepens our understanding of broader historical processes. His work demonstrated how comparative perspectives could illuminate the interplay between regional particularities and overarching structural forces.

Global history, which emerged as a distinct field in the late 20th century, further expanded the scope of historical inquiry by emphasizing transnational and cross-cultural interactions. Braudel exemplifies this approach, tracing the evolution of global trade networks, material culture, and economic systems from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Braudel highlighted the interconnectedness of regional economies and their cumulative impact on global historical processes, offering a framework for understanding globalization's historical roots.

Wallerstein's analyses the development of the capitalist world economy through a global lens. Wallerstein's world-systems theory emphasizes the hierarchical relationships between core, periphery, and semi-periphery regions, illustrating how global economic integration has historically shaped social, political, and cultural dynamics. His work underscores the importance of studying global systems of exchange, labor, and power to understand the unequal development of nations and regions.

The comparative and global approaches have been instrumental in addressing themes such as colonialism, migration, and cultural exchange. Pomeranz provides a comparative analysis of economic development in Europe and China, challenging Eurocentric narratives about the rise of the West. Pomeranz argues that ecological factors, resource availability, and colonial exploitation played critical roles in Europe's industrialization, offering a more balanced understanding of global economic history. Similarly, Sanjay Subrahmanyam's employs a global perspective to examine the cultural and economic exchanges between Asia, Europe, and the Americas, demonstrating the interconnectedness of early modern empires and societies.

Comparative and global perspectives also provide valuable insights into cultural and intellectual history. Jerry H. Bentley advocates for the study of cross-cultural encounters, emphasizing the role of trade, religion, and technology in shaping global connections. Bentley's approach highlights how global interactions have facilitated the diffusion of ideas, practices, and institutions, enriching our understanding of cultural and intellectual developments.

The methodological challenges of comparative and global history include the risk of oversimplification, cultural relativism, and an imbalance in source availability. In his writing

Provincializing Europe, Dipesh Chakrabarty cautioned against the uncritical application of Western theoretical frameworks to non-Western contexts, advocating for a more pluralistic and inclusive approach to global history. Similarly, historians must navigate the limitations of source material, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented in their analyses.

Technological advancements and the digitization of archival resources have significantly enhanced the practice of comparative and global history, enabling historians to access and analyse sources from multiple regions. Collaborative research networks and interdisciplinary methodologies further enrich these perspectives, fostering a more integrative approach to historical scholarship.

In conclusion, comparative and global perspectives offer a powerful framework for understanding the interconnectedness of human histories and the shared challenges of the past. Through the contributions of scholars like Bloch, Braudel, Wallerstein, and Subrahmanyam, these approaches have reshaped historical inquiry, emphasizing the importance of transnational and cross-cultural analysis. By situating local and regional histories within broader global contexts, comparative and global perspectives provide a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of historical processes, fostering a deeper appreciation for the diversity and complexity of the human experience.

1.6 RELEVANCE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The relevance of historical research lies in its ability to provide a nuanced understanding of the past, inform contemporary decision-making, and shape a collective sense of identity and memory. By studying the causes, processes, and consequences of historical events, historians can uncover patterns, analyse change over time, and offer insights into the challenges and opportunities facing societies today. Historical research serves as a bridge between the past and the present, fostering critical thinking and a deeper appreciation of cultural, social, and political contexts.

One of the foundational arguments for the relevance of historical research comes from E. H. Carr has emphasised that history is not merely a record of the past but a dynamic dialogue between the historian and the evidence. Carr argued that history helps societies understand their present circumstances by revealing the complex interplay of structures, institutions, and human agency over time. This understanding is crucial for shaping informed and reflective public policies and social attitudes.

Eric Hobsbawm has highlighted the importance of historical research in understanding contemporary society. He contended that history provides critical perspectives on issues such as inequality, globalization, and cultural identity by contextualizing them within long-term developments. For instance, his analysis of the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath offered valuable insights into the origins of modern economic systems and the social transformations they entail.

Historical research also plays a vital role in preserving collective memory and identity. Bloch underscored the historian's responsibility to investigate the lives, beliefs, and struggles of past generations, thereby fostering a sense of continuity and shared heritage. By documenting diverse experiences and narratives, historical research contributes to a more inclusive understanding of humanity's shared past, challenging exclusionary or homogenised interpretations of history.

In the realm of political history, the relevance of historical research is evident in its capacity to inform democratic governance and public accountability. Marwick argued that understanding historical precedents is essential for evaluating political systems, social movements, and

international relations. For example, the study of the causes and consequences of the World Wars has been instrumental in shaping contemporary debates on peace, security, and international cooperation.

Similarly, economic history offers critical perspectives on the development of modern economies, global trade, and financial systems. Kenneth Pomeranz has demonstrated how historical research challenges simplistic or deterministic explanations of economic development by analysing the interplay of ecological, institutional, and cultural factors. Such studies provide valuable lessons for addressing contemporary issues like sustainability and economic inequality.

The relevance of historical research extends to cultural and intellectual history, where it illuminates the evolution of ideas, beliefs, and artistic expressions. Davis demonstrated how micro historical research enriches our understanding of cultural practices and social norms, offering a more textured and humanized perspective on history. By exploring the intersections of culture, society, and power, historical research fosters empathy and cross-cultural understanding.

Historical research is also indispensable for addressing contentious or traumatic pasts, such as colonialism, slavery, and genocide. Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* and Donald Niewyk's *Survivors: An Oral History of the Holocaust* underscore the importance of documenting and analysing these histories to promote reconciliation, justice, and healing. By uncovering suppressed or marginalized narratives, historical research challenges dominant paradigms and advocates for a more equitable representation of the past.

The interdisciplinary nature of historical research further enhances its relevance. By integrating methodologies from sociology, anthropology, ecology, and other fields, historians can address complex and multifaceted questions that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Braudel exemplifies how interdisciplinary approaches provide deeper insights into the interplay of human and environmental factors in shaping history.

In conclusion, historical research is essential for understanding the complexities of the past, fostering critical engagement with the present, and shaping a more informed and inclusive future. Through the contributions of scholars like Carr, Hobsbawm, and Braudel, history has evolved into a dynamic and interdisciplinary field that addresses the pressing challenges of our time. By illuminating the interconnectedness of human experiences and the lessons of history, this field continues to play a pivotal role in shaping individual and collective understandings of the world.

1.7 SUMMARY

The nature of history is defined by its rigorous methodology, interpretative depth, and multi-faceted approach to understanding the past. It is both an academic discipline and a tool for societal reflection, offering invaluable perspectives on human development and contemporary issues. By recognizing the distinctiveness of history and engaging critically with its methods and frameworks, students and scholars alike can uncover the profound ways in which the past continues to shape the present and inform the future.

The scope of historical research is both comprehensive and dynamic, reflecting the complexity of human existence. By engaging with diverse dimensions and methodologies, historians contribute to a richer understanding of the past and its implications for the present and future. This expansive scope underscores the discipline's relevance and its enduring role in shaping knowledge, identity, and progress.

Keywords:

Historical Research: Systematic collection and objective evaluation of data relating to past events concerning causes, effects or trends of those events to explain present events and predict future events

Historical Inquiry: Historical inquiry is the process of studying the past through evidence to understand how people have lived and changed over time

Evidence: The raw material of history, which can be primary sources, secondary sources, documents, or archaeological evidence

Interpretation: The process of analyzing evidence to understand past events and make generalisations

Context: The historical context of events, which can include social norms, cultural values, and other factors

Perspective: The point of view from which an event is viewed, which can vary depending on the source

Multifaceted: History is a complex discipline that involves many methods and perspectives

Dynamic: History is not static, but rather a study of how people have evolved over time

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LESSON-2

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH: FACTS AND INFERENCE AND EXPLANATION AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

STRUCTURE

2.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

1. Recognize **research methodology** as its own field of study.

2. Understand the **basic principles and methods** of research.

3. Explain **what history is** and **who historians are**.

4. Describe **what historical research** involves and its **importance** in research.

5. Understand the **purposes and benefits** of historical research.

6. Identify **when historical research is appropriate**.

7. Outline the **steps** for conducting historical research.

8. Explore **key issues** such as finding **historical facts**, understanding **context**, explaining **causes**, making **generalizations**, and maintaining **objectivity**.

9. Examine how **power structures** influence the **writing of history**.

10. Define inference and show how it is classified.

11. Explain why inference is important for gaining new knowledge.

12. Explore both Western and Indian approaches to inference, noting their similarities and differences.

13. Look at some common criticisms of inference and consider whether inference really gives us new knowledge

2.1 INTRODUCTION

From the earliest times until now, societies have grown because of the knowledge they gained and used. Their progress depended on how well they understood their surroundings and how they learned to manage them. In the beginning, people learned mostly through observing, experiencing, trial and error, and basic logical thinking. Over time, as a few people discovered how to do research, get useful results, and apply them to solve problems, human societies gradually developed in a material sense.

By the 15th century, science and technology opened new pathways for growth and development in Western Europe, making this region attractive to the rest of the world. With the rise of universities, research became an important activity. Over the years, more and more research has led to the growth of literature about research methods, which has now become its own field of study.

Later on, various institutions and associations were created to tackle development problems through research, supported by government and industry funding.

This chapter aims to explore historical research methodology in a general way. It covers the formal definition of research and historical research, why we need historical research to expand our knowledge, the steps or "contours" of the historical research process, the conceptual framework of research methodology, the characteristics of historical research, research design, and other related topics discussed in this unit.

The goal of this Unit is to show how new knowledge can come from one important source— namely, inference. Although we will not deeply study the details of logical inference, this Unit is very important. It helps explain one source of knowledge, which is central to the theory of knowledge and to the discussion of truth and validity.

2.2 FACTS AND INFERENCE

2.2.1 Definition

"Inference" is part of both epistemology and logic. To understand it better, we need to see how it connects these two main areas of philosophy:

- **Epistemology** is the "science of sure knowledge." It deals with the nature and truth of what we know.

- **Logic** deals with the correct form of an argument—how to draw a conclusion from given premises. However, it does not tell us if the conclusion is actually true or false. Checking if something is true or false belongs to epistemology.

So, even though epistemology and logic both involve knowledge, they focus on different things.

When we talk about **historical facts**, we mean details about the past—events that happened. Historians do not just list events in order; they also try to find out why they happened, what caused them, what effects they had, and how people interpreted them.

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) introduced inference to Western philosophy through **syllogism**, which uses three statements to lead from two premises to a conclusion.

According to the **Dictionary of Philosophy**, inference is the process of drawing a conclusion. It is also called reasoning. Thomas Aquinas explained that to reason means to move from what is already understood to something not yet understood. In other words, we start from known facts and move toward unknown facts.

We observe an event, our mind makes a judgment about it and from our previous judgment, we infer or draw a conclusion. This process of gaining new knowledge is called **inference**.

To understand inference fully, we also need to talk about **arguments**. An argument might seem similar to an inference, but they are different:

- An **inference** is the mental process of moving from one thought to another.

- An **argument** is a structured set of statements (premises) that can correspond to an inference, but it is not the same thing. Only a person can infer, while the premises of a good argument "imply" a conclusion rather than "infer" it.

In other words, **inference** is something people do; **arguments** are the tools we build to reflect that mental process.

Lastly, the word **"fact"** gives us a sense of stability. Historians often talk about "hard facts" or "cold facts," and they like to base their narratives on a "solid foundation of fact." By speaking this way, historical facts begin to seem stable and substantial—almost like physical objects—having a clear shape and lasting outline.

2.2.2 Kinds of Inference and Facts

Inference, or reasoning, comes in two main types: **deductive** and **inductive**. Deductive inference is further divided into **immediate** and **mediate** inferences. Inductive inference has many kinds, which we will discuss later.

Deductive Inference

Aristotle placed a high value on deductive inference. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) even stated in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that Aristotle's theory of logic essentially covers the heart of deductive inference. For Aristotle, true certainty—or getting very close to truth—is only possible through deductive reasoning.

What is Deduction?

Deduction is defined as a **valid inference from necessary premises**. Here, "necessary" means that these premises are self-evident or well-established truths. In a deductive argument, the statement you begin with is called the **major premise**. For example, the statement "All humans are mortal" is considered a necessary premise. From this, we can gain new knowledge:

1. All humans are mortal (major premise).

2. Raja is a human.

3. Therefore, Raja is mortal.

Because the major premise is true, the conclusion **must** be true. In this way, **deduction** goes from a general truth to a more specific conclusion. This is why deductive inference is seen as the best way to arrive at new and **true** knowledge.

Importance of Deductive Inference

1. *Critical thinking:* Deductive inference helps develop critical thinking skills, such as analyzing arguments and evaluating evidence.

2. *Problem-solving*: Deductive inference is useful in problem-solving, as it allows us to draw logical conclusions from available information.

3. *Scientific reasoning*: Deductive inference plays a crucial role in scientific reasoning, where it helps scientists draw conclusions from data and observations.

Important Note

In deduction, if the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true. This guarantee does **not** exist in inductive reasoning.

Types of Deductive Inference

1. **Immediate Inference**
2. **Mediate Inference**

Immediate Inference

In the strict sense, **immediate inference** belongs to the field of logic. We include it here for a complete understanding of inference. Recall that a typical deductive inference has three statements (two premises and a conclusion). **Immediate inference** is a special type of deductive reasoning where **only one premise** is needed to draw a conclusion.

"Immediate inference is a kind of deductive inference in which the conclusion follows from one premise."

Because this is considered deduction, remember that the conclusion **cannot** be more general than the original premise. In other words, it is the process of deriving one new statement from a single given statement.

Immediate inferences come in several types. We will look at four of them, known as **eductions**.

1. **Conversion**
   In conversion, you switch the **subject** and **predicate** of the original statement.

   o Example: From "No dogs are felines," we can infer "No felines are dogs."

   o Another example: From "Some snakes are poisonous animals," the converse is "Some poisonous animals are snakes."

2. **Obversion**
   In obversion, you change the **quality** (affirmative or negative) of the original statement, but the meaning remains the same.

   o Example: The obverse of "All ants are insects" is "No ants are non-insects."

   o Another example: The obverse of "Some musicians are males" is "Some musicians are not non-males."

3. **Contraposition**
   In contraposition, the **subject** of the new statement becomes the **contrary** (or negation) of the original predicate.

   o Example: The contrapositive of "All crows are birds" is "All non-birds are non-crows."

4. **Inversion**
      In inversion, the **subject** of the new statement becomes the **contradictory** (or negation) of the original subject.

      o Example: The inversion of "All men are mortal" is "Some not-men are not-mortal."

These four forms (conversion, obversion, contraposition, and inversion) are called **eductions**. They are simply ways to restate what is **already implied** in a single premise. Because no genuinely new information is added, some scholars question whether immediate inference counts as an "inference." Even so, it can reveal hidden details within a statement, which can feel like new knowledge

Mediate Deductive Inference

By contrast, **mediate deductive inference** uses **more than one premise** to reach a conclusion. A common form of mediate inference is called a **syllogism**.

"The conclusion follows from more than one proposition. Where there are only two premises, and the conclusion follows from them taken jointly."

Syllogism was first systematically explained by Aristotle in *Prior Analytics*. He defines syllogism as:

"An argument in which, certain truths having been assumed, something other than these follows of necessity from their truths, without needing any term outside."

A famous example of a syllogism is:

   1. All men are mortal.

   2. Socrates is a man.

   3. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Here, the conclusion (3) is drawn from the two premises (1) and (2). We move from a general statement ("All men are mortal") to a specific conclusion about a particular man, Socrates.

In everyday life, however, we do not always use the complete, formal structure of a syllogism. Aristotle recognized this and described a shorter form called an **enthymeme**, where one of the premises is left out because it seems obvious. For example:

   • "Socrates was mortal because he was only a man."

The missing premise "All men are mortal" is assumed to be well-known, so it is not stated.

Induction

Historically, many philosophers (starting from Aristotle) accepted deductive inference as valid. However, modern philosophers like **Francis Bacon (1561–1626)** criticized deduction, claiming it does not lead to **new** knowledge because the conclusion cannot exceed the scope of the major premise. They favoured **inductive inference** as a better path to discovery.

Inductive inference goes from **specific** instances to a **general** conclusion. The traditional definition is:

"Induction is an inference in which the mind moves from a limited number of particular cases to a further case or to a general conclusion."

For example, if you observe that Swan A is white, Swan B is white, and so on, you might conclude that **all swans are white**. This is an **inductive leap** from specific observations to a broader claim.

Types of Inductive Inference

1. **Enumerative (Simple) Induction**

   Here, we observe **many** specific cases and generalize from them:

   - From seeing several black ravens, we conclude that **all ravens are black**.

   - The problem is that just because you have not observed any exception yet does not mean one does not exist. For instance, Europeans once thought all swans were white—until they discovered black swans in Australia.

2. **Statistical Inductive Generalization**

   Instead of claiming 100% certainty, some philosophers suggest **probabilistic** conclusions. For example:

   - If 90% of women in Japan are under 5 feet tall (based on observation), you can infer that a new Japanese woman you meet has a **90% chance** of being under 5 feet tall.

3. **Probability Theory**

   Thinkers like **Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970)** and **Richard C. Jeffrey (1926–2002)** argued that induction should be understood as assigning probabilities to hypotheses based on the evidence. Modern probability theory often traces back to **Thomas Bayes (c. 1702–1761)**. This approach, however, also faces paradoxes, such as the **Lottery Paradox** by Henry E. Kyburg (1928–2007), which shows how probability can lead us to accept contradictory statements ("any single ticket can win" vs. "it's highly likely any ticket will lose").

   Importance of Inductive Inference

   1. *Scientific discovery*: Inductive inference plays a crucial role in scientific discovery, where it helps scientists identify patterns and relationships in data.

   2. *Problem-solving*: Inductive inference is useful in problem-solving, as it allows us to make educated guesses or predictions based on past experiences.

   3. *Decision-making*: Inductive inference informs decision-making by providing probabilistic estimates of outcomes based on past data or experiences.

In summary, deductive reasoning (both immediate and mediate) starts from general premises and moves to specific conclusions, providing **certainty** if the premises are true. Inductive reasoning moves from specific instances to general claims, offering **new** but less certain knowledge. Philosophers have debated which approach is more valid or more useful, and this debate continues to shape our understanding of logic, knowledge, and scientific inquiry.

Predictive inference

Inductive Inference

This type of inference focuses on predicting future events based on past observations, often using cause-and-effect or analogy. For example, we infer there is fire when we see smoke, or we expect rain when dark clouds appear. In Indian philosophical thought, different terms are used to describe this kind of inference.

The Principle of Induction

From our discussion, it's clear that many scholars offer different views on **inductive inference** to avoid false knowledge. A key idea here is the **principle of induction**, which states:

"Future events will resemble past events, and unobserved cases will resemble observed cases."

Some thinkers even argue that this principle can be used to transform all inductive arguments into deductive arguments.

2.2.3 Indian Theory of Inference

Indian philosophy, older than the Western tradition, has a deep interest in **the theory of knowledge**. It deals in detail with **sources of knowledge**, called **Pramanas** in Sanskrit. Two primary Pramanas are **perception (Pratyaksa)** and **inference (Anumana)**. Other valid sources like **verbal testimony (Sabda)** and **comparison (Upamana)** are also accepted by some schools. Unlike in Western thought, **logic and epistemology** in Indian philosophy are closely connected. Also, Indian thinkers treat **both deduction and induction** as part of inference.

Meaning of the Term *Anumana*

"Anumana" combines two Sanskrit words: *anu* (after) and *mana* (measurement). So, it literally means "measuring after something." It refers to **knowledge obtained after proof**. Since Anumana uses earlier knowledge (from perception or testimony), it does not give us direct knowledge. Instead, it builds on what we already know to explore further truths.

Not all Indian schools accept all the Pramanas. For example, the **Carvakas**—materialists who believe matter is the only reality—do **not** accept Anumana as a valid source of knowledge.

Structure of *Anumana*

Most major Indian schools accept Anumana as valid, but they explain it differently based on their broader understanding of knowledge. In Indian philosophy, there's a difference between **inference for oneself** (unstructured, for personal certainty) and **inference for others** (well-structured to convince someone else).

We will focus mainly on the **Nyaya** school because of its detailed work in logic. According to Nyaya:

"Inference is a process of reasoning in which we move from noticing a sign (*linga*) to understanding something else, thanks to an invariable relation (*vyapti*) between them."

Different schools have different names for *vyapti* (such as *prasiddhi* in Vaisesika and *pratibandha* in Samkhya). Still, everyone agrees that *vyapti* is essential for making a valid inference.

Nyaya uses a **five-part syllogism**:
  1. **Paksa** (or **Pratijna**): The statement or proposition (e.g., "The hill has fire.")

2. **Hetu**: The reason or ground (e.g., "Because it has smoke.")

3. **Drstanta**: The example or general rule (e.g., "Wherever there is smoke, there is fire, as in a kitchen.")

4. **Upanaya**: Application of the rule to the current case (e.g., "The hill is like that.")

5. **Nigamana**: Conclusion (e.g., "Therefore, the hill has fire.")

In this process, we start with a claim, provide a reason, give a universal example to show the link, apply that link to the specific situation, and finally state the conclusion. When the relationship is **positive** ("Where there is smoke, there is fire"), it's called **anvaya vyapti**.

A Western-style example:

1. Ram is mortal.

2. Because he is a man.

3. All men are mortal (like my grandfather).

4. Ram is also a man.

5. Therefore, Ram is mortal.

Notice how Indian philosophy **combines induction and deduction** in a single syllogism. The **first three** propositions form an **inductive** argument, ending in a general statement: "All men are mortal." This then serves as the **major premise** for the **deductive** part in propositions 3–5.

When the relationship is **negative** ("Where there is no fire, there is no smoke"), it's called **vyatireka vyapti**, such as:

- "The hill has no smoke because there is no fire. Wherever there is no fire, there is no smoke (like a lake). There is no fire on the hill, so the hill has no smoke."

These examples show how the Nyaya school systematically explains inference, blending **both inductive and deductive** reasoning under the umbrella of Anumana.

2.2.4 Classification of Inference

1. Inference Classified by the Nature of *Vyapti*

In Indian logic, **vyapti** refers to the inseparable link or correlation between two facts—one fact pervades the other. For example, wherever there is smoke (*hetu*), there must be fire (*sadhya*), so smoke is said to be "pervaded by" fire.

Vyapti is established by looking at:

1. **Positive instances**: In all cases where smoke is present, fire is also present ("wherever there is smoke, there is fire").

2. **Negative instances**: In all cases where fire is absent, smoke is also absent ("wherever there is no fire, there is no smoke").

Indian philosophers classify inference based on whether the relationship between the reason (hetu) and what is inferred (sadhya) is **causal** or **non-causal**. There are **three main types** of inference:

1. **Puravat Inference**
   - Inferring an **unseen effect** from a **seen cause**.

o Example: From observing dark, heavy clouds, we infer it will **soon rain**.

2. **Sesavat Inference**

o Inferring an **unseen cause** from a **seen effect**.

o Example: Seeing a river with fast, muddy water, we infer there **must have been rain** upstream.

3. **Samanyatodrasta Inference**

o Inferring something based on **uniform experience** rather than direct cause-and-effect.

o Example: From observing the moon at different positions over time, we infer **the moon moves**, even though we never directly see the movement itself.

2.2.5 Critique of Inference

2.2.5.1 Deductive Inference

1. **Truth of the Premises**

o For a **deductive** argument to produce **true** knowledge, both the major and minor premises **must** be true. While we can often check the minor premise easily, sometimes the major premise may be questioned.

2. **No "New" Knowledge**

o One criticism is that deduction doesn't really generate new knowledge; it only makes explicit what was already implicit in the major premise. However, making such implicit knowledge explicit **is** part of understanding.

Hypothetico-Deductive Method

Because it's risky to generalize from past observations (as in induction), philosophers like Karl Popper suggest a **hypothetico-deductive** approach:

1. **Formulate a Hypothesis** (a general statement).

2. **Deduce Predictions** (observation statements) from this hypothesis.

3. **Test** these predictions to see if they confirm or falsify the hypothesis.

Example (from Robert Baum):

1. Hypothesis: "All sea otters use rocks to crack open sea shells."

2. Deduction: "The next sea otter I observe will also use rocks to crack open sea shells."

3. Test: Observe real sea otters; if they consistently use rocks, the hypothesis gains credibility. If not, it's falsified.

Indian Perspective

In Indian philosophy, there is a concept called **arthapatti** ("postulation" or "hypothesis"), which **some** schools (e.g., Mimamsa) regard as a **separate** source of knowledge, distinct from inference.

- **Example of Arthapatti**: A man is never seen eating during the day but is growing fatter. We **postulate** he must be eating at night. There is no strict "invariable

relationship" (vyapti) between "night-eating" and "fatness," so this is not a straightforward inference. Instead, it's a **hypothesis** to explain the situation.

Conclusion on Inference

Despite criticisms, **inference** remains necessary for acquiring knowledge—both in everyday reasoning and formal philosophy. As Immanuel Kant suggested in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, our knowledge arises from:

1. **Receiving impressions** (experience).

2. **Forming concepts** from these impressions (reason).

Inference is part of how we form and connect these concepts, so it remains central to understanding truth—even if it sometimes encounters logical and practical challenges.

2.3 HISTORICAL RESEARCH

2.3.1 Advantages of Historical Research

1. The researcher is **not physically involved** in the original situation (it has already happened).

2. There's **no risk** of experimenter-subject interaction (no direct influence on the events).

3. The researcher **collects documents**, analyses them, and draws conclusions away from the original setting.

4. Historical research is **synthetic** and **eclectic**—it often uses ideas and findings from many disciplines to **interpret** the historical record and test conclusions from other research methods.

2.3.2 Limitations of Historical Research

1. We can only know about the past through the **relics** or evidence that survived; we cannot **re-enact** past events.

2. **Historical subjectivity**: Different historians have different perspectives, frames of reference, and interests, leading to new interpretations over time.

3. **Evidence may be incomplete** or distorted, and a historian's "final truth" might never be fully established. New generations, with new materials, can add or change conclusions.

Conclusion: There is **no absolute final truth** in history. Interpretations evolve as new evidence and viewpoints emerge.

2.3.3 Purposes of Historical Research

1. **To Discover Unknown Past Events**: Historians seek to uncover events from the past that are not yet known or documented.

2. **To Reconstruct the Past**: A historian systematically and objectively rebuilds an account of past events. This leads to **defensible conclusions** about what truly happened.

3. **To Understand the Significance of Events**: Certain events can shape an organization, a movement, or a situation. Historians study them to see how these events influenced outcomes and why they matter.

4. **To Discover the Context of Organizations, Movements, or Situation:** A historian explores the background and circumstances surrounding an organization, movement, or situation in order to explain and understand past events.

5. **To Find Answers to Questions About the Past**: Many questions arise about historical events. Answering these questions can increase our understanding of how and why things happened.

6. **To Study Cause-and-Effect Relationships**: Historians often investigate how one event leads to another and determine the relationship between them.

7. **To Examine the Relationship Between the Past and the Present**: By learning about the past, we gain a better perspective on current events. Understanding this connection can clarify the present.

8. **To Record and Evaluate Accomplishments**: Historians are interested in documenting and assessing the achievements of individuals, institutions, and organizations because these accomplishments can shape the course of history.

9. **To Provide Insight into Current Phenomena**: Looking at historical perspectives helps researchers better understand present-day issues or situations.

2.4 NEED AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Knowledge is a powerful resource that can drive a society's material progress. **New knowledge** arises when we continue to push the boundaries of what we know through **research**.

- In India, especially from the mid-20th century, the focus has been on using science, technology, and societal knowledge to advance socio-economic development.

- **Societal knowledge** involves political, economic, sociological, demographic, occupational, health, regulatory, and environmental information.

- True development combines **physical resources** with building **human resources**; ignoring either can weaken a state's ability to become a welfare state.

Over the past five decades in India, many **research and development (R&D)** centres have been established in sciences, technology, social sciences, and humanities. Various higher educational institutions, advanced study centres, and professional associations have also emerged, supported by libraries, information centres and consultancy organizations. All of these efforts are aimed at **expanding our knowledge base**. Research is crucial in this entire process.

Additionally, **Internet access** has made information widely available, significantly supporting research endeavours. Ultimately, the **need for research** is to build infrastructures that create **new knowledge**, while the **purpose** of applying this knowledge is to foster socio-economic and cultural development that enhances the well-being of society.

2.5 CRITERIA FOR A TOPIC TO BE RELEVANT FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Choosing a research topic can be one of the most difficult stages of a project. The topic must be:

- **Purposeful** for investigation, offering the potential for meaningful and tangible results.

- **Practically and Theoretically Significant**: Researchers have a responsibility to look for real solutions or insights into both practical and theoretical problems.

- **Observable, Interpretable, and Evaluated**: A need for specific information must be recognized, and the phenomena under study should be clearly defined.

A **researcher's qualities** also matter. They need:

- **Deep subject knowledge**, a **research minds -set**, and **practical experience**.
- **Hard work, devotion, and dedication** to systematically gather, record, and accurately retrieve data.

2.6 RESEARCH DESIGN IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Historical research follows a design similar to other research methods. The steps include:

1. **Identifying a Research Topic** and formulating the problem.
2. **Collecting Background or Contextual Information** about the topic.
3. **Formulating Questions or Hypotheses** (if applicable) to explain possible cause-and-effect relationships among historical variables.
4. **Systematically Gathering Evidence** or performing a literature review.
5. **Critically Evaluating Historical Sources** to check their authenticity and the validity of their content.
6. **Interpreting** the findings.
7. **Synthesizing** everything into a cohesive **narrative**.

2.6.1 Identification of Research Topic and Formulation of Research Problem

A historical problem or area of knowledge must be:

- **Significant** enough to warrant deeper investigation.
- **Personally interesting** to the researcher, who should already have a solid understanding of it.
- **Supported by Available Sources**, ensuring enough evidence can be gathered.

2.6.2 Collection of Background (Contextual) Information

After selecting and refining the topic, the next step is to **survey the available literature**. This involves finding, locating, and collecting data relevant to the research questions, including:

- **Secondary Sources** (to see how previous scholars approached similar research and what sources or methods they used).
- **Bibliographies**, **Reference Tools**, **Monographs**, and **Journal Articles**.
- **Reference Works** (encyclopaedias, dictionaries, yearbooks) that can point to additional sources.

With modern technology, there is now a vast range of **electronic sources** (including those found online). Generally, sources are categorized as **primary**, **secondary**, and **tertiary** (published or unpublished, print or non-print).

Primary Sources

A **primary source** is the **original or first-hand** record of an event or topic under investigation. It's closest to the actual occurrence and often includes:

1. **Documents Created by the Event Itself**
   - Archival records (government, institutional, commercial)
   - Internal letters/memos
   - Speeches, meeting minutes, photographs
   - Statistical data, lists of goods or equipment
   - Statements of rules, regulations, or missions

2. **Immediate Records of Events**
   - Chronicles, diaries, and journals
   - News reports and interviews
   - Drawings, photographs, motion picture films, tape or video recordings

3. **Later Supplementary Documents**
   - Oral sources, traditions, folklores, languages
   - Stories, folktales, or fables

4. **Artefacts or Relics**
   - Inscriptions, seals, coins, medals
   - Drawings, pictures, and ruins of monuments

To be considered a primary source, it must present a **first-hand account**, directly tied to the event or person in question. These sources serve as the foundation upon which historical research is built, enabling the historian to come as close as possible to the truth of past events.

Secondary Sources

A **secondary source** relies on primary sources (and sometimes other secondary sources) for its information. It describes events based on data collected indirectly. In other words, it's written by someone who **did not personally witness or participate** in the events being reported. Hence, secondary sources are generally seen as **less reliable** than primary sources.

A secondary source can be **one or more steps** removed from the original event in **time**, **location**, or **authorship**. Whether a source counts as primary or secondary depends on **how close** it is to the actual event being studied.

Examples of Secondary Sources

- Textbooks
- Encyclopaedias
- Monographs
- Journal articles

A **copy** of an original document is considered a secondary source because errors or changes—intentional or unintentional—may occur during the copying process. Editing or interpretation can also modify the original text, reducing its authenticity.

Tertiary Sources

Tertiary sources direct researchers to **primary and secondary** materials. Examples include **bibliographies**, **catalogues**, and **indexes** that help locate relevant sources.

2.6.3 Formulation of Hypotheses

Formulating hypotheses can be very helpful for a historian:

1. **Increases Objectivity**
   - Hypotheses help keep the investigation free from personal bias.

2. **Minimizes Researcher Bias**
   - By guiding the study, hypotheses reduce the risk of cherry-picking data.

3. **Manages Large Amounts of Data**
   - Historians often deal with vast data sets. Hypotheses help determine **which data** is **relevant**, providing a framework for collecting, analysing, and interpreting information.

4. **Identifies Relationships**
   - Hypotheses allow the researcher to see how different factors connect and to **synthesize** them into generalizations or conclusions.

5. **Encourages Rigorous Studies**
   - Having specific hypotheses to test increases the study's focus and rigor.

6. **Central Argument**
   - Hypotheses form the **core** of the research, around which evidence is organized to **prove or disprove** them. The historian should consider **all available data**, not just the data that supports the hypotheses.

With hypotheses in place, researchers can **avoid collecting irrelevant information** and **focus** on what truly matters. If formulating hypotheses is **not** appropriate, then **research questions** may be used instead.

Testing Historical Hypotheses

Testing hypotheses in **historical research** can be more challenging than in other research types because the events:

- **Already occurred** in the past (ex post facto).
- **Cannot be repeated** or **manipulated** by the historian.
- Must be interpreted only through **existing evidence** and records.

Despite these challenges, investigating **cause-and-effect** relationships helps the historian move beyond just describing what happened to explaining **why** certain relationships among variables may exist.

2.6.4 Systematic Collection of Evidence or Data (Literature Review)

When writing history, a historian selects, evaluates, interprets, and synthesizes data into a clear narrative. The main challenge here is collecting **primary-source evidence**—that is, first-hand information.

- **Selection of Sources** is crucial, especially for recent history. The choice of sources depends on the nature of the research problem and the criteria of relevance and significance drawn from the historian's hypotheses.

- While **bibliographic aids** and **secondary works** can help, the historian working on a recent topic must be ready to sift through and analyse large volumes of material, most of which may not appear in the final text.

2.6.5 Rigorous Evaluation of Historical Sources

Historians often refer to the data they use as **evidence**, and because it deals with the past, it can be complex and extensive. A historian spends a lot of time **selecting relevant evidence** and carefully choosing from it. Surprises can arise at every stage of this process.

The **quality** of historical sources can vary significantly, **especially with Internet-based sources**. Therefore, each source must be evaluated for:

1. **Authenticity** (Is it genuine?)
2. **Accuracy** (Is it correct and reliable?)

Various factors can affect a source's reliability—economic, political, ethical, social settings, as well as personal biases. While **published sources** (books, journals) usually undergo filtering (peer review or editing), Internet sources are often **unfiltered**, making them more uncertain.

Before using **any** source—online or otherwise—historians ask:

1. **Is it relevant?** (Does it fit the research scope?)
2. **Is it substantial?** (Is it detailed enough for the researcher's purpose?)
3. **Is it competent?** (Is it genuine, accurate, and trustworthy?)

2.6.6 Data Interpretation and Synthesis into a Narrative Account

Data synthesis involves selecting, organizing, and analysing the collected information around specific themes or central ideas. These ideas are then combined into a coherent narrative that makes sense as a whole.

- **Synthesis of historical data** is often the most difficult step. It requires creating a conceptual framework to arrange facts in a logical order.

- After devising a detailed outline, a historian composes the narrative with an emphasis on a **balanced presentation**, blending general insights with specific examples.

A **good historian** aims to:

1. Present reality as **accurately** as possible.
2. Fill in gaps with reasonable explanations.
3. Resolve inconsistencies in the data.
4. Use **educated guesses** if needed, while clearly stating that they are guesses.
5. Include **footnotes and a bibliography**, citing primary sources and scholarly works that support the conclusions.

When writing for an audience of **knowledgeable critics and scholars**, the historian should ensure:

- **Clear communication** of evidence and conclusions.

- Intelligent, imaginative use of **detective-like** inquiry to create a narrative that flows logically.

- A **readable yet scholarly style**, focusing on clarity and continuity of thought.

- Comprehensive coverage of **all aspects** of the topic or problem.

- Accurate portrayal of the past using **historical evidence**, smoothly integrated into the account.

- Minimization of **bias**—even though historical research can be somewhat subjective.

- Proper **analysis and interpretation** of evidence to support hypotheses and conclusions.

- Presentation of conclusions and supporting evidence in **straightforward, unambiguous prose**.

- Clear explanations of **complex ideas** without oversimplification.

- An acceptance that **conclusions are never final**—they remain open to revision if new data emerges. A measure of **healthy scepticism** is often helpful.

- Presentation of **facts and interpretations** alongside documented evidence.

- Demonstration of **intellectual honesty** at all times.

2.7 SUMMARY

True historical research applies **scientific methods** at every step of the research process—from formulating and testing hypotheses to collecting, analysing, interpreting, and synthesizing data, and finally writing the narrative. The keyword here is **systematic** at each stage. Because of this systematic approach, the historian's conclusions can achieve a level of **logical validity** comparable to other social sciences. However, true historical research must be **distinguished** from simple **chronology** (listing events in order) or **pure description** of events—those are only **parts** of the research process, not the entire process. It is **the use of scientific research methods** that sets genuine historical research apart from mere chronology or basic descriptions of events.

A good historian strives to apply a scientific approach as effectively as possible. That said, historical research does have certain **limitations**:

- It is **ex post facto**, meaning the historian works from existing evidence backward in time.

- The events studied are often **complex**, with many factors or variables at play.

- **Causality** can be difficult to establish when so many elements interact.

- It is **impossible to replicate past events**.

- Historical research is also partly a **subjective art**; total objectivity is never fully possible. There is always a risk of **researcher bias**, which may distort or omit facts to suit preconceived ideas, making it hard to achieve fully confident conclusions.

A historian's task can be quite **demanding**:

- There may be **few primary sources**, forcing reliance on **secondary sources**.

- Some research problems are **very broad**, involving a complex environment with numerous factors or variables.
- The historian may gather **large amounts of data**, requiring significant effort to decide what is or isn't relevant. This sorting can be **tiring** and challenging.

2.8 KEYWORDS

1. **Historical Research**: Systematic collection and objective evaluation of data about past events to understand their causes, effects, or trends—thereby explaining present events and predicting future ones.

2. **Syllogism**: A form of **mediate deductive inference** where a conclusion follows from two premises taken together. It generally has **three propositions**.

3. **Enthymeme**: A syllogism in which **some propositions are omitted**. For example, stating "Socrates is mortal because he is a man" leaves out the major premise "All men are mortal," making it an **incomplete syllogism**.

4. **Vyapti**: Indicates a **correlation** between two facts, one of which is "pervaded" by the other. For instance, **smoke is pervaded by fire**, and **fire pervades smoke**. Vyapti is established by noting that **where there is smoke, there is fire**, and **where there is no fire, there is no smoke**.

2.9 OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

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2.10 DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

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2.11 ESSENTIAL/RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Carr, E.H. (1991). What is History. Penguin. Reprint. (Ch.1, "The Historian and His Facts", Ch.3, "History, Science and Morality", and Ch.4, "Causation in History").

- Marwick, Arthur (1989). The Nature of History. Third edition, Hampshire and London: MacMillan. (Ch.6, "The Historian at Work: The Writing of History," pp. 242-254).

- Tucker, Aviezer (ed.) (2009), A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell Publishing (Ch.7, "Causation in History").

- Sreedharan, E. (2007). A Manual of Historical Research Methodology, Trivandrum: Centre for South Indian Studies. (Ch.3, "The Critical Philosophy of History-Part I" and Ch.4, "The Critical Philosophy of History-Part II").

- Stephens, Lester D. (1977), Probing the Past: A Guide to the Study and Teaching of History, Boston, London & Sydney: Allyn and Bacon Inc. (Ch.3, "The Historian and His Work," and Ch.4, "Explanation and History").

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History. Boston: Beacon Press. (Ch.1, Ch.3 and Ch.5).

- Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1998). On History, UK: Abacus (Ch.10, "Partisanship").

LESSON-3

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH: OBJECTIVITY AND HISTORY WRITING AND RELATIONS OF POWER

STRUCTURE

3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand what **objectivity** means in history writing.

- Discuss how certain groups are **left out** of mainstream history.

- Explain how a person's **gender, race, caste, and class** affect their historical experiences.

- Compare different **versions of history** based on the experiences of various communities.

- Learn and apply **key feminist research methods** in historical studies.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In modern social sciences and humanities, **gender** is now seen as an important way to analyse society. This idea has the power to bring major changes. It helps us understand how people's lives are shaped by their gender and also challenges old assumptions in different academic fields.

Feminist thinkers, as part of their fight for **gender equality**, have questioned why women's experiences and knowledge are often missing from established theories. They argue that this exclusion is not accidental—it is a result of **power structures** that prioritize men and keep women in a lower position. Feminists also try to understand the causes of women's **subordination** and why history often ignores them. This has led to the search for **new research methods** that highlight both women's struggles and their ability to act and make decisions.

Feminist historians, in particular, have asked why women have been left out of history and why traditional historical sources fail to capture their experiences. By challenging the way knowledge is created, they aim to expand our understanding of the past.

This unit first explains **historiography** (the study of how history is written) and then explores how women and other **marginalized communities** have opposed mainstream historical accounts. Since the 1960s, these groups have fought for **equal representation** in history. Feminist historians have also introduced **new sources**—such as oral stories, folk songs, and personal writings—to recover women's histories that were previously ignored.

For a long time, **objectivity** (the idea that history should be based only on facts) has been the core principle of **Western historiography** (history writing). Historians believed that their accounts of the past were true and unbiased. However, many philosophers and thinkers have challenged this belief, arguing that complete objectivity is **impossible**.

American historian **Peter Novick**, a strong critic of objectivity, called it **"the rock"** on which history was built. Historians often disagreed with each other, but they still believed their own accounts were more objective than others'. For centuries, historical debates were based on the idea of objectivity.

However, since the **1970s**, this belief has faced serious criticism. Many scholars now doubt whether history can ever be truly objective. Some even question if objectivity is something historians should aim for at all. This debate has become intense, yet most historians still believe they can present a **true** account of the past.

This unit will introduce you to different viewpoints in this debate.

3.2 WHAT IS OBJECTIVITY?

Objectivity has been the core principle of **Western history writing** since ancient times. From the days of **Herodotus**, historians have believed that the past can be studied separately from personal opinions. They thought that the historian (the **knower**) and history itself (the **known**) are completely different, and that history can be recovered as it actually happened.

Historian **Peter Novick**, who criticized this idea, explained objectivity as follows:

- The past is **real**, and truth means correctly representing that reality.

- There is a **clear separation** between the historian and historical events, between facts and opinions, and between history and fiction.

- **Facts exist before interpretations**—meaning a historian must first gather facts and then explain them. If new facts prove an interpretation wrong, it should be rejected.

- Truth is **one single reality**, not based on different perspectives.
- Historians may see events differently over time, but the **actual meaning** of past events does not change.

To achieve this, a historian must be **neutral** and **impartial**, without taking sides. Their personal beliefs should not influence their work—they should rely **only on evidence**. Novick also stated that an **objective historian** should act like a **fair judge**, not as an **advocate** (someone arguing for one side) or, worse, as a **propagandist** (someone distorting facts to promote a particular view).

A historian's conclusions should be **balanced and fair**, free from political or social pressures. Historians should not let their personal **loyalties or biases** affect their work. Their main duty is to **seek the truth** and work with other historians to expand our understanding of the past.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION OBJECTIVIT

The Idea of Objectivity in History

Historians in the Western world have long believed that history should be objective, meaning it should represent the past as it really happened. This idea dates back to the time of Herodotus, who is often called the "Father of History." Historians following this tradition assumed that past events were real, that they could be accurately recorded, and that historical truth could be separated from personal opinions or biases.

Scientific Influence on History

With the rise of modern science, this belief in objective history became even stronger. In the 19th century, a movement called Positivism, led by Auguste Comte, argued that history should be studied using the same scientific methods as physics or chemistry. Comte believed that all human societies developed through three stages:

1. **The Theological Stage** – Early societies explained natural events as acts of gods or supernatural forces.
2. **The Metaphysical Stage** – People still relied on abstract ideas to explain events, though they moved away from religious explanations.
3. **The Positive Stage** – Humans reached a mature understanding of the world based on observation, reasoning, and experimentation.

Positivists claimed that universal laws governed human societies and that historians could discover these laws by studying historical evidence carefully.

The Rise of Professional History

In the 19th century, German historians like Niebuhr and Ranke helped shape modern history writing. Ranke, in particular, argued that history should be based only on original documents, known as **primary sources**. He insisted that historians should carefully analyse these sources to remove errors and biases. If a document was proven to be authentic, historians could trust it to reconstruct the past accurately.

Historians of this era believed that if they remained neutral, followed a proper scientific method, and ignored personal opinions, they could write an **ultimate history**—one that perfectly described the past and would never need revision. This belief was famously expressed by Lord Acton, who hoped that one day, historians would uncover all sources and solve all historical problems.

Challenges to Objectivity

Despite these ideals, doubts about complete objectivity in history arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Archaeological discoveries revealed more about ancient societies, showing that history was more complex than previously thought. Historians also began to focus on social, economic, and cultural history instead of just politics and famous leaders. New approaches, such as **Marxist history** and the **Annales school**, shifted attention to ordinary people and broader societal trends rather than just kings and wars.

Historians also realized that even Ranke, who emphasized objectivity, sometimes relied on biased sources and included personal interpretations. This made scholars question whether true objectivity was even possible.

History in the 20th Century

World events further complicated the idea of objective history. During World War I, World War II, and the Cold War, governments manipulated historical facts to serve political agendas. Some historians became biased in favour of their country, while others avoided controversial topics to protect themselves.

Despite these challenges, many historians continued to believe that objective history was achievable. From Ranke in the 1820s to Robert Fogel in the 1970s, historians argued that if they followed strict scientific methods, they could get close to the truth. They also maintained that history should remain separate from literature and fiction.

Conclusion

The idea of objectivity in history has shaped the way historians work for centuries. While early historians believed they could fully capture the past, later scholars recognized that history is influenced by perspectives, sources, and interpretations. Even today, historians strive for objectivity, but they acknowledge that complete neutrality is difficult to achieve.

3.4 CRITIQUES OF OBJECTIVITY

By the late 20th century, people started to question whether history could truly be objective and scientific. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss challenged the idea that modern Western civilization, which values reason and science, was superior to older or so-called "primitive" societies. He argued that these societies had their own ways of successfully managing life.

At the same time, some historians and scholars began to believe that history was more like literature than science. This idea became even stronger with new theories about language, starting with linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. He suggested that language does not just describe reality—it actually shapes it. In other words, the world we experience through language is not the "real" world but a version created by words. Applying this to history, scholars argued that historical accounts do not represent the actual past but instead reflect how historians interpret and imagine it.

Louis Mink, an American philosopher of history, supported this idea. He famously said, *"Stories are not lived but told."* He believed that real life does not follow a neat pattern with clear beginnings, middles, and endings. These structures exist only in stories—including history. This means that history, rather than being a neutral account of past events, is actually a kind of storytelling shaped by the historian's perspective.

There are three main criticisms of the idea that history can be completely objective:

1. **Limits of Evidence and Personal Bias** – Historians rely on available evidence, which is always incomplete. Their personal beliefs and background also influence how they interpret the past.

2. **Cultural Relativism** – Different cultures understand the past in different ways, so there is no single "correct" version of history.

3. **Postmodern and Linguistic Theories** – These ideas argue that history is shaped by language and cannot be separated from the way it is told.

In short, many scholars started to believe that history is not just about discovering facts but about how those facts are presented and understood.

3.4.1 Constraints of Evidence and Individual Bias

The Nature of History: Can It Be Truly Objective?

Many philosophers and historians have questioned whether history can be understood in the same way as science. One of the earliest ideas that challenged this belief came from Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher influenced by the Enlightenment. Kant argued that there is always a gap between reality and the person trying to understand it. This idea led to the belief that we cannot completely reconstruct the past as it actually happened, and that history cannot follow the same rules as science.

Later thinkers, such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Benedetto Croce, and R.G. Collingwood, expanded on this idea. Dilthey, a German philosopher, made a clear distinction between scientific knowledge and historical knowledge. In science, a researcher observes nature from the outside, but a historian is part of the reality they study. This means that history is always shaped by the historian's perspective and cannot be completely objective.

Benedetto Croce, an Italian historian, also believed that history and science are fundamentally different. He argued that the past only exists in the mind of the historian. His famous statement, *"All history is contemporary history,"* means that historians interpret the past based on their present-day concerns and understanding.

R.G. Collingwood, a British historian, took this idea further. He believed that the past, by itself, is unknowable. Instead of discovering the "real" past, historians create their own version based on the evidence they have. He argued that every historian sees the past differently, depending on their background and time-period. For example, early Christian historian St. Augustine, 17th-century French historian Tillamont, 18th-century English historian Edward Gibbon, and 19th-century German historian Theodor Mommsen all wrote about history from different perspectives. Collingwood saw this as natural and necessary—each historian can only see history through their own lens.

He also argued that historians are not simply uncovering facts; they are interpreting them. He believed that since the past no longer exists on its own, a historian's real goal should be to understand the present. In his view, all history is a history of thought, shaped by the historian's ideas about the past rather than the past itself.

E.H. Carr, another historian, supported these ideas. He emphasized that historians are products of their own time. Their political and social beliefs influence how they view the past. Even the historical evidence they collect is not neutral historians choose what to include based on their present concerns. Furthermore, the records left by people in the past were also selective. The people who recorded history often decided what was important based on their own

perspectives, which means that history has already been filtered before historians even study it.

Carr famously said, *"The facts of history never come to us pure."* This means that historical facts are always shaped by the person who recorded them. No document from the past can tell us the complete truth—it only reflects what the writer thought or wanted others to believe.

In the end, history is a process of selection at two levels: first by the people in the past who recorded events, and second by historians who choose what to study and present. Because of this, history is not a perfect reflection of the past but rather a reconstruction shaped by those who write it.

3.4.2 Cultural Relativism

How Culture Shapes History

Some modern historians, inspired by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, argue that history is shaped by the ideas, beliefs, and language of the society in which the historian lives. This means that historical accounts are not purely objective but are influenced by cultural biases and social concerns. Different cultures understand the world in different ways, so describing another society—or even the past—will always be shaped by the historian's own cultural perspective.

For example, if a historian from one culture writes about a solar eclipse, they might describe it scientifically, while another culture might see it as a supernatural event. Similarly, if a king dies, one society might attribute it to illness, another to a curse, and yet another to political conspiracy. The way history is written depends on the concepts and beliefs of the historian's culture.

Philosopher Paul A. Roth supports this idea, arguing that there is no fixed past waiting to be uncovered by research. He believes that past events only exist in the way historians describe them, and there is no single, absolute historical truth. In other words, history is not an objective account of what happened but rather a version of events shaped by human perception and categorization.

Geertz expands on this idea using new linguistic theories. He views culture as a system of symbols and signs that people interpret to make sense of their world. According to him, society is like a collection of texts, and understanding a culture means decoding its symbols, much like reading a book. He even goes so far as to say that "the real is as imagined as the imaginary," meaning that what we consider reality is shaped by human imagination just as much as fictional stories are.

This perspective challenges the traditional idea of history as a factual record of the past. If history is shaped by the historian's culture, then it is not simply a collection of facts but an interpretation of events influenced by personal and societal perspectives.

Gabrielle Spiegel, a historian of medieval Europe, takes this argument even further. She suggests that if there is no clear distinction between what is real and what is imagined, then it becomes impossible to separate history from literature, life from thought, or facts from meaning. This idea blurs the line between history and storytelling, making it difficult to claim that any historical account is completely objective or truthful.

In this view, history is not a neutral description of the past but a narrative shaped by cultural beliefs, language, and social concerns. It is created through interpretation rather than

discovered as an absolute truth. Thus, history is less about uncovering a fixed past and more about how we, as societies, choose to remember and explain it.

3.4.3 Linguistic and Postmodern Turn

The Challenge of Writing True History

Some scholars believe that history is not an objective record of the past but rather a creation shaped by language and interpretation. This idea comes from the work of linguists and philosophers who argue that language itself, not reality, determines human understanding.

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure first introduced this idea through his theory of structural linguistics. He argued that words do not directly refer to real things in the world. Instead, they are part of a closed system where words (signifiers) refer to ideas or concepts (signified), not actual objects. This means that language does not reflect reality; rather, it creates meaning on its own.

French thinker Roland Barthes took this argument further. He claimed that historians do not actually write about the past but instead create a version of it using language. According to him, history is not a factual record but rather a "parade of signifiers," meaning that what we call history is simply a collection of words pretending to represent the past. He believed that historians use writing techniques—such as direct quotes, references, and footnotes—not to uncover truth, but to make their version of history seem real.

The most radical attack on history-writing came from Jacques Derrida, who developed the theory of deconstruction. Derrida argued that humans cannot understand reality outside of language because language is a self-contained system with no direct connection to the real world. He believed that words have no fixed meaning, and even the author of a text cannot fully control what it means. Since language is full of contradictions, a text can have many different interpretations, none of which are more valid than others.

Derrida described language as an endless chain of meanings, where every word refers to another word rather than to something real. In his view, there is no solid truth behind history, just an infinite loop of texts referring to other texts. Historian Gabrielle Spiegel explained this idea in simpler terms, saying that we are trapped in a "prison house of language" with no way to directly access reality.

If words cannot describe reality, and if texts contain multiple meanings, how can history be written objectively? This is the key question that deconstructionists raise. Richard Evans, a historian, points out that if all meanings are equally valid, then every historian's version of history is simply a new interpretation rather than a true account of the past. This means history is not discovered but created each time differently, by different historians.

Many historians worry that this approach makes it impossible to separate history from fiction. Lawrence Stone argued that if there is nothing outside the text, then history collapses, and we can no longer distinguish fact from storytelling. Spiegel also warned that if historical documents do not reflect reality but only other texts, then studying history becomes no different from studying literature.

Philosopher Louis Mink highlighted a major problem in history-writing: historians claim to represent real events, but their narratives are imaginative constructions. Similarly, historian Hayden White went even further, arguing that history is no different from fiction. He believed that historical narratives are "verbal fictions" that are just as much invented as they are based on facts.

Postmodernists add another layer to this critique by claiming that modern history-writing is influenced by Western imperialism. They argue that history has often been used to justify the superiority of Europe over other cultures. Because of this, history's claim to being objective and unbiased is questionable.

In summary, these thinkers challenge the idea that history can present an objective truth. Instead, they argue that history is shaped by language, interpretation, and cultural perspectives. This raises deep questions about whether we can ever truly know the past or if history is simply a story we tell ourselves.

3.5 HISTORIAN'S CONCERN

In recent times, many historians have expressed concern about the idea that history cannot be objective. Lawrence Stone, a well-known historian, pointed out that the field of history is going through a crisis. He explained that historians are questioning the nature of historical events, changes over time, and even the purpose of history itself. This crisis is particularly evident in France and America, where historians are struggling to define what they do and how they do it.

Stone identified three major sources of this challenge. First, the theory of deconstruction by Jacques Derrida, which argues that language shapes meaning rather than reality. Second, cultural anthropology, as introduced by Clifford Geertz, which emphasizes that culture determines human behaviour. Third, the New Historicism, which suggests that history is shaped by literature, language, and power structures rather than objective facts. These ideas make it difficult for historians to claim that their work presents an accurate and truthful account of the past.

Another historian, Gabrielle Spiegel, also raised concerns about these developments. She observed that the methods historians have used since the 19th century are now being questioned. Many scholars no longer believe that it is possible to objectively study the past and uncover its true meaning. This debate has challenged key concepts in history, such as causality (how events are connected), human agency (the role of individuals in shaping history), and social determination (how societies influence events). Spiegel believes that postmodernism is shifting focus away from reality and toward language, making history more about interpretation than facts.

Postmodernists themselves acknowledge that their ideas could lead to the decline of history as a discipline. Keith Jenkins, a postmodern thinker, declared that history no longer has a solid foundation and is just one of many ways to interpret the world. Similarly, historian Peter Novick argued that history, as a unified academic field with common goals and methods, no longer exists. Patrick Joyce went even further, suggesting that history is coming to an end because modern historians do not simply describe the world but create it according to their own political and intellectual views.

This debate is also affecting the study of Indian history. Some historians, such as Sumit Sarkar, Rosalind O'Hanlon, C.A. Bayly, Ranajit Das Gupta, and David Washbrook, have criticized the influence of postmodernism on Indian historiography. They argue that a strong focus on culture and relativism (the idea that all perspectives are equally valid) has weakened historical studies. These scholars believe that while postmodern ideas have introduced important critiques, they should not completely replace traditional historical methods.

In conclusion, postmodernism has deeply impacted the way history is studied. It has challenged long-standing ideas about truth, objectivity, and historical interpretation. While some believe these changes have enriched historiography, others worry that they undermine the very purpose

of history. The debate continues, shaping how we understand the past and its relevance to the present.

3.6 POSSIBILITY OF OBJECTIVITY

Many historians question whether it is even possible to be objective when studying the past. Critics argue that history is always influenced by our current beliefs, cultural background, and personal perspectives. This means that historical sources are often biased, and even when historians try their best to analyse them critically, they cannot remove all forms of bias. Since history is based on various sources with multiple interpretations, claiming to fully represent the past might be unrealistic.

However, rejecting objectivity entirely is also an extreme view. Just because perfect objectivity is impossible does not mean that history is entirely subjective or meaningless. Even if we cannot know every single truth about the past, we can still uncover some truths.

Noel Carroll, a scholar who challenges extreme relativism, explains that historical narratives are created by historians, but this does not mean they are fictional. He clarifies that history is a form of representation, meaning that while it is "invented" in a certain sense, it can still provide real and accurate knowledge about the past. Historical narratives track important aspects such as causes and effects, background conditions, social context, and human actions.

Carroll criticizes thinkers like Hayden White, who argue that unless history presents a perfect, mirror-like image of the past, it is no different from fiction. This view suggests that history is either a perfect reflection of reality or just storytelling. However, many historians disagree with this idea. They argue that there is a middle ground—history is neither completely objective nor entirely fictional.

Brian Fay calls for a "dialectical middle ground" that balances different perspectives. This approach acknowledges the limits of objectivity but still values historical research as a way to understand the past as accurately as possible. Instead of rejecting history as unreliable or insisting on absolute truth, historians should aim for careful analysis that preserves valuable insights while minimizing biases.

In short, while history can never be completely free from bias, it is still a valuable discipline. By critically examining sources, historians can piece together a meaningful and truthful account of the past, even if it is not a perfect one.

3.7 WRITING OF HISTORY

Before we discuss the methodological challenges of feminist historiography, we need to examine what is history and what are the sources of history.

1.   History

The word "history" comes from the Greek word *istoria*, which means inquiry, research, or exploration. In simple terms, history is the study of how human societies have developed over time. It is a way to record and understand past events, even though we can never fully bring them back to life.

History is shaped by how humans interact with their environment and with each other. Throughout history, people have had basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, and social organization. They have also sought knowledge, expressed themselves through art and culture, and developed religious and philosophical beliefs. These aspects together form what we call "culture." When a group of people shares similar traditions, customs, and institutions, they are said to have the same culture.

Cultures are not fixed; they change over time and influence one another. This interaction happens both in times of peace and during conflicts. When a society develops a complex way of life, with advanced knowledge, technology, and social structures, it is considered a "civilization." Civilization, in all its different forms, is what history aims to study. From this perspective, history can be seen as the story of human civilization.

History is like a living record of humanity's past. Over centuries, people have tried to reconstruct and interpret their past to better understand their present and future. In modern times, history has become a more structured and scientific field. Historians follow specific methods to verify facts, analyse sources, and interpret evidence. This approach became widely accepted in the 19th century, especially with historians like Niebuhr and Ranke, who emphasized accuracy and scholarly research.

In short, history helps us learn from the past, understand how societies have evolved, and see the connections between different cultures and civilizations. It is not just about memorizing dates and events but about discovering how humans have shaped the world over time.

2.   Historiography

Understanding Historiography in Simple Terms

Historiography is the study of how history has been written over time. It looks at the different ways historians have recorded and interpreted the past. In simple words, historiography is the history of history itself—the study of how historical writing has evolved. It examines the methods, ideas, and perspectives that historians have used throughout different periods.

History has been written differently in different times and cultures. The way people record history often reflects their society, beliefs, and way of life. For example, ancient Greek and Roman historians wrote history with a different purpose compared to Christian historians in the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, writers like Machiavelli rejected religious influence in history writing. This change in approach continued during the Enlightenment, with historians such as Voltaire, Gibbon, Hume, and Robertson focusing on reason and critical thinking rather than religious explanations. Over time, historical writing has become more detailed and influenced by many different ideas. Historiography studies these changes in how history is written.

While history itself is the study of past events, historiography is about how historians have interpreted and explained those events over time. According to historian Arthur Marwick, historiography is not just about the practice of writing history but also about understanding the evolution of historical thought.

In ancient times, early historians like the Greeks and Chinese recorded events without a clear system of chronology (dates) or proper methods to check accuracy. This made historical writing uncertain and sometimes unreliable. However, over the centuries, history writing has developed into a more organized and complex discipline, with modern historians using advanced research methods to verify facts and analyse sources critically.

Historiography is especially useful for historians and researchers. By studying how history has been written in the past, historians can improve their own research and writing. It helps them understand different perspectives and approaches to interpreting historical events. For professional historians, historiography serves as a guide, showing how historical writing has changed over time and helping them develop better research techniques. Thus, historians analyze and interpret evidence, draw conclusions, develop theories, and present their research in written form. To reconstruct the past, historians must address various questions, including:

- How and why particular actions, events or ideas came to be (causes).

- The outcomes of particular actions, events or ideas (effects or consequences).

- The contributions made by different people, groups and ideas (actions).

- The relative importance or impact of different people, groups or ideas (significance).

- Things that altered and things that stayed the same over a period of time (change and continuity).

For general readers, historiography may not always seem important, as it is more focused on the study of historical methods rather than events themselves. However, it plays a crucial role in shaping the way we understand history today. It reminds us that history is not just a collection of facts but also a subject influenced by different viewpoints, methods, and interpretations.

3 Preconditions of Historiography

3.1 Records

Understanding History in Simple Terms

History is the way historians reconstruct and understand the past. To do this, they rely on various records and physical remains left behind over time. These serve as evidence to help historians determine what actually happened.

There are many types of historical records, including buildings, inscriptions, medals, coins, edicts, chronicles, travel journals, official decrees, treaties, government documents, private letters, and personal diaries. By carefully studying these sources, historians can piece together past events and understand how societies functioned.

Since history is based on evidence, the saying **"No records, no history"** highlights its importance. Without reliable sources, it is impossible to accurately reconstruct the past.

3.2 Critical Method

How Historians Verify the Past

Since history is based on evidence, historians must be very careful when using records from the past. Not all sources are completely reliable or genuine. Instead of trusting them blindly, historians should assume that all information is doubtful until proven otherwise. There have been cases where fake documents, like the *Donation of Constantine*, were believed to be real for centuries.

The goal of a historian is to present the most accurate picture of the past. To achieve this, they follow a process called the historical method, which helps verify the truth of past events. This method involves two main types of analysis:

1. External Criticism – This checks the basic details of a document, such as its author, place, and time of origin. Knowing where and when a source was created helps determine its reliability.

2. Internal Criticism – This examines whether the content of the document is true. It looks for inconsistencies, exaggerations, or biases in the information.

By combining these two methods, historians can judge whether a source is authentic and accurate.

In the 19th century, German historians like Niebuhr and Ranke refined these techniques, reducing errors in historical research. The historian J.B. Bury even called history a science, emphasizing its systematic approach. However, because history involves interpretation, complete objectivity is difficult to achieve. Despite this, historians strive to uncover the most truthful account of the past.

3.3 Historical Sense

Understanding Historical Sense and Interpretation

The awareness of history, or historical sense, has not always been equally present across different societies or time periods. Ancient Greece, Rome, Judaism, and Christianity have all contributed to a strong sense of history in European traditions. Similarly, historical writing was an important part of Chinese and medieval Muslim civilizations. In contrast, ancient and medieval Hindu societies showed little interest in recording history.

However, historical sense is more than just being aware of the past. Other social sciences—such as sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics—also study human societies and change over time. But historian Arthur Marwick highlights a key difference: while social scientists look for patterns and common factors in human society, historians focus on how societies change and develop over time.

Because historians study change through time, it is essential for them to determine when events happened. Without knowing the order of events, they cannot analyse or interpret history accurately.

History as Interpretation, Not Just Facts

History is not just a list of past events; it involves interpretation. Historians reveal their perspectives through their work, influenced by their beliefs, ideologies, and ethical views. This idea challenges the approach of Leopold Von Ranke, the father of modern historiography, who argued that history should be written in a purely scientific and objective way, showing "how it really was" through careful study of documents.

However, many modern historians question the idea of complete objectivity in history writing. Historians make choices—they decide which facts are important, which sources to use, and how to present their findings. These decisions shape the way history is told.

Changing Approaches to History

Ideas about history have changed over time. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, some historians focused only on collecting and presenting historical facts without offering interpretations. Their works remain valuable sources of historical information. However, modern historians believe that simply listing facts is not enough. Instead, they strive to understand the larger context behind historical events and explain their significance.

Thus, historiography is more than just recording the past—it is about analysing and interpreting history to understand how societies have evolved.

3.8 THE POLITICS OF INDIAN HISTORY

The way modern Indian history has been written is deeply influenced by British colonial rule. In the 19th century, British historians like James Mill, Collin Mackenzie, and Alexander Dow created a version of Indian history that suited their colonial agenda. They portrayed India's past as unchanging and divided, emphasizing religious conflicts and categorizing history based on ruling dynasties. This helped justify British rule as an "enlightening mission."

Orientalist scholars like Max Müller reinforced this idea, glorifying the Vedic Aryan civilization and suggesting that Indian civilization began with the Aryan migration. These historical narratives selectively highlighted certain events while ignoring others, shaping how Indians saw their own past.

Colonial Control Through Knowledge

British colonialism did not just rely on military strength but also on controlling knowledge about India. Historian Bernard Cohn argues that the British controlled India as much through cultural and intellectual dominance as through direct force. Colonial rulers decided what counted as "official history," often focusing on political events and dynasties while ignoring social history.

For example, discussions about Indian society were limited to caste and village communities, reinforcing the idea that Indian society was backward and unchanging. Economic history was framed in a way that supported the British view that India had always been ruled by "oriental despots." This served as a justification for British rule, which was presented as a force of modernization.

Nationalist History as a Response

In response to negative colonial portrayals, Indian nationalists began writing their own version of history. Their goal was to counter British narratives and prove that Indian culture had a glorious past before foreign invasions.

Nationalist historians argued that social evils like sati (widow burning), child marriage, and strict widowhood were not part of ancient Indian traditions but had developed later due to foreign invasions. This version of history helped justify the fight for India's independence, by showing that British rule had disrupted India's natural progress.

However, this romanticized view of ancient India also borrowed from Orientalist ideas that glorified India's past, creating a simplified and idealized version of history. Even today, mainstream Indian history is influenced by this nationalist perspective.

Religious Divisions in Historical Narratives

One of the major effects of both colonial and nationalist histories was the creation of religious divisions. By blaming the medieval period for all social problems, nationalist historians reinforced Hindu-Muslim conflict in history.

For example, the destruction of the Somanath temple by Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century is often portrayed by conservative historians as a defining moment in Indian history. However, historian Romila Thapar (2004) argues that this event has been selectively interpreted. Many Persian sources tell different versions of the story, but nationalist historians chose only those accounts that emphasized religious conflict.

Conclusion

The writing of Indian history has been shaped by both colonial rule and nationalist responses. Colonial historians emphasized division and backwardness, while nationalist historians glorified the past to support the freedom movement. Both approaches selectively used history to serve political ends, which continues to influence how history is taught and understood in India today.

3.9 SUBALTERN CHALLENGES TO DOMINANT HISTORIOGRAPHY

Rewriting History: Voices from the Margins

So far, we have explored what history is, its sources, and how Indian history has been shaped by politics. Now, we turn to another important aspect—how certain communities and groups have been ignored in historical records. Many social groups, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, were left out of mainstream history. The process of including their perspectives gained momentum in the 1960s, as political movements challenged the way history had been written.

This movement, known as subaltern historiography, emerged as a way to give a voice to the marginalized and rethink history from their perspective. Until then, Indian history was largely written from the viewpoint of the elite and powerful classes. The dominant version of history focused on political events and rulers, often ignoring the everyday lives and struggles of ordinary people

A New Way of Understanding History

Subaltern historians challenged the idea that history was objective. They argued that mainstream history was shaped by those in power and served their interests. This approach not only excluded the voices of common people but also reinforced social hierarchies. Writing history from below meant shifting the focus from kings, rulers, and wars to the experiences of ordinary people, including farmers, workers, women, Dalits, and tribal communities.

This new way of writing history had two main goals:

1. Expanding historical knowledge to include diverse perspectives.
2. Empowering marginalized communities by recognizing their role in history.

By doing so, subaltern historians challenged the idea that history is one single, fixed story. Instead, they showed that history is complex, shaped by many different people and events.

New Sources for a More Inclusive History

To rewrite history from the perspective of marginalized groups, historians had to look beyond traditional sources. Earlier, history relied mostly on official documents, royal decrees, and religious texts. However, these sources were often written by the elite, reflecting only their worldview.

Subaltern historians began using alternative sources to uncover forgotten histories. These included:

- Oral traditions: Folk songs, proverbs, and oral histories passed down through generations.
- Autobiographies and letters: Personal writings of common people, which provided insight into their lives.
- Diaries and fiction: Literary works that captured the experiences of ordinary individuals.

This approach was not entirely new. Historian D.D. Kosambi had already argued that ancient Indian history could not be fully understood just by studying religious texts like the Dharmashastras. Instead, he suggested looking at archaeological evidence, economic data, and local traditions to get a fuller picture of the past.

Conclusion

The rewriting of history from the perspective of marginalized groups has made history more inclusive and interdisciplinary. Instead of viewing historical events as having a single cause,

historians now recognize that multiple factors shape history. The inclusion of new sources has helped uncover forgotten voices and challenged the elite-driven narrative of the past.

By reconstructing history in this way, scholars are not only expanding our understanding of the past but also helping marginalized communities reclaim their place in history.

3.10 THE GROWTH OF FEMINIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

Feminist Historiography: Rewriting History with Women's Voices

When subaltern history emerged, it focused on caste, class, and race but did not fully include gender as a key factor. This gap led to the rise of feminist historiography, which aimed to highlight women's experiences in history.

At first, feminist scholars supported subaltern studies because it challenged elitist views of history. However, they soon realized that women's voices were still missing. It was only when Gayatri Spivak joined the movement that gender became a topic of discussion. In her famous essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* she argued that colonized women faced multiple layers of oppression—from colonialism, patriarchy, and even Western scholarship itself

Why Feminist Historiography Matters

Feminist history grew out of the women's movement of the late 1960s, which fought for gender justice. Historians in this field aimed to recover women's histories and challenge the belief that women's absence in mainstream history was accidental.

The exclusion of women from historical narratives served a political purpose—it reinforced the idea that women's subordination was natural and unchangeable. By rewriting history from women's perspectives, feminist scholars exposed this false assumption and emphasized that women have always played crucial roles in society.

Feminist historiography argues that if women do not actively claim their right to shape history, their lived experiences will continue to be ignored or trivialized. Recognizing women's contributions in history is not just about the past—it is essential for ensuring equality in the present and future.

The Role of Feminist Historiography

Feminist historiography highlights the socio-political, economic, and cultural factors that kept women from participating in public life. It also reveals how patriarchy silenced women's contributions to history. By doing this, feminist historiography plays an important role in restoring women to history and recovering their forgotten stories.

Feminist scholars argue that women's absence in historical accounts was not just a mistake, but part of a larger system that ignored their roles. This system denied women access to important public and historical spaces, which made their contributions invisible.

Broadening History's Scope

Feminist historiography also expanded the field of history. History was no longer only about political events or important leaders. Instead, it began to include questions about economy, society, and culture.

As historian Romila Thapar explains, gender history became essential when historians stopped focusing only on individuals and started looking at institutions and structures that shape societies. She notes that gender history can examine how women were both shaped by and influenced these structures, even within systems of power that often excluded them.

In this way, feminist historiography gives us a deeper understanding of how women participated in and shaped society, and it challenges the traditional focus on men's roles in history. It helps us see women not only as victims of societal norms but also as active agents within those systems.

3.11 REVISIONING THE PAST THROUGH FEMINIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

Feminist historiography involves recovering women's history and uncovering the voices of early feminists who fought against women's mistreatment but were silenced by patriarchal systems. This process includes rediscovering the writings and biographies of women like Pandita Ramabai, Tarabai Shinde, and Lakshmibai Tilak, whose works showed a long history of women resisting patriarchy. By examining their stories, feminist historiography highlights the unbroken tradition of women's resistance to male-dominated systems.

This effort also led to a critical re-reading of history, challenging how historical knowledge is created. For example, feminist historians have questioned nationalist claims about the high status of women during the Vedic period. In her study *Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi*, Uma Chakravarti critiques how nationalist historians like Altekar and R.K. Mukherjee used weak evidence to argue that women had a high status in Ancient India. These historians ignored opposing evidence in the same texts, showing more loyalty to nationalism than to objective history.

These efforts to recover women's voices have changed how we view the past. They have redefined how we think about:

- **Periods in history** (periodization)
- **Social structures** (categories of social analysis)
- **How societies change** (theories of social change)

At the heart of this new understanding is the idea that gender roles are socially constructed, not naturally fixed. This challenges traditional views on gender and has revolutionized our thinking about history in many ways.

Periodisation

Feminist historians argue that we should look at key moments in history and assess whether they helped **liberate women** or **subordinate** them. For example**, Joan Kelly** (1986) suggests that events like the **Renaissance** and the **French Revolution**, often seen as times of great **human liberation**, were actually periods of **male liberation**. These events didn't necessarily benefit women; in fact, they often placed more **restrictions** on their lives.

By asking these questions, feminist history challenges the way we usually judge historical periods. It shows that the experiences of **women** in history are **different** from those of **men**. In the case of **Indian history**, for example, we might question whether the **Gupta period**, which is often called the **Golden Age** because of its achievements in art and literature, was truly a time of **freedom** for women. During that time, practices like **seclusion of women** were still common, suggesting that it may not have been a period of progress for women at all.

Categories of Social Analysis

Feminist history argues that women's absence in traditional history isn't because of their nature, but because history has mostly focused on the **public domain**. By asking questions about **family life**, the **control over women's bodies**, and their role in the **workforce**, we can change

how we understand the past. This means that the most important periods in history may not be the ones where art and literature flourished, but the ones where **patriarchal controls** over women were the least. (Kelly, 1986)

Theories of Social Change

This suggests that the periods in history that restricted women's lives also helped create the separation between the **public** and **private** spheres. Before colonial rule, the economy was mainly based in the **household**, and women played an important role in it. However, with the arrival of **industrial capitalism** during colonial rule, the connection between the household and the economy was broken. This separation pushed women into the **private sphere** and contributed to the creation of gender inequality in society. (Kelly, 1986)

3.12 METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF FEMINIST HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Feminist historical consciousness raises important questions about how we interpret historical events and the tools used for this purpose. Historians typically begin by examining sources, which can include **documentary** and **material** evidence like **architecture, artefacts, and coins**. There are two types of documentary sources:

- **Primary documents**, created during or near the event.
- **Secondary sources**, written by later authors.

Historians usually prefer **narrative documents**, such as memoirs, government records, wills, letters, and court documents, to understand the past (Arnold, 2000).

However, reconstructing women's history is challenging because many of the documents that have been preserved don't focus on women's lives. To write feminist history, historians must search for new evidence and reinterpret existing historical documents. The first step in recovering women's history is finding and studying relevant documents (Forbes, 2004).

Since **women** are not a single group, gender history needs to recognize how women's identities differ based on their access to **power**, **resources**, and **beliefs** (Thapar, 2005).

Feminist historians have expanded their search beyond traditional documentary sources. They look at biographies, autobiographies, fiction, letters, diaries, photographs, household records, and non-conventional sources like oral histories, myths, and legends. The period being studied will determine which sources are available. For example, studying ancient or medieval women's histories is more difficult due to a lack of written records.

A good example of how feminist historians critically read existing texts is Thapar's work on Shakuntala. She explores how gender roles have changed over time by analysing different versions of the Shakuntala story, showing how culture, history, and gender are interconnected.

In modern times, recovering women's history may also involve **anthropological records**, **oral histories**, and **life writings**. This approach centres women's experiences and aims to empower them by focusing on their personal perspectives. It doesn't seek an objective truth but acknowledges that truth is subjective, shaped by the researcher's and the subjects' social, cultural, and political contexts.

3.13 TOOLS TO RECONSTRUCT WOMEN'S HISTORIES

To construct women's histories, we need tools and methods that go beyond traditional approaches. In this section, we explore some of the non-conventional sources feminist historians use to recover women's histories.

3.13.1 Textual Sources

The first step in writing women's histories is to recover **documentary sources**. However, this is challenging because the existing documents in archives often do not reflect women's lived experiences. Archives are organized repositories of information, usually maintained by men, and the documents that reveal women's lives are scarce. Despite this, feminist historians have been able to recover women's histories by searching private family papers and libraries.

A notable example of this effort is the collection of **Women's Writings in India: 600 B.C. to the Early 20th Century**, edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha (1993). This volume shows that women in India have a long history of writing, which often challenged patriarchal norms. Their resistance may have been expressed through poetry or metaphysical themes.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen (2001) also discusses how **text** can help reconstruct gender history. In her work on the **Ramayana**, she examines women's versions of the story, highlighting their empathy for Sita's experiences as a daughter, wife, and mother. These alternative narratives reflect women's perspectives and their resistance to societal norms

3.13.2 Folklore

Folklore includes myths, tales, legends, proverbs, and songs. It reflects the social conditions and perceptions of the time. Some scholars believe folklore is a form of **social history**, though it's hard to place it in a specific time period. Folklore analysis shows that men and women use these traditions differently. Women's oral traditions have often been dismissed as powerless, but they can reveal internal divisions within communities based on **class**, **caste**, and **gender**.

Thapar (2005) notes that myths are valuable for historians because they reveal hidden societal assumptions. Myths don't just tell stories; they also show how societies hide rule-breaking behaviours.

Examples of using folklore to recover histories include **Narayan's work on Dalit assertion in North India** (2006), which blends colonial ethnography with oral narratives to explain how marginalized groups resist the social order. Similarly, **Chowdhry's study of rural women in Haryana** (1994) uses folk songs, oral traditions, and interviews to reconstruct women's histories. She also raises important questions about the legitimacy of different sources in historical writing, such as why some oral traditions are dismissed while others, like epigraphic inscriptions, are considered valid historical records.

3.13.3 Oral Histories and Life History

To highlight the role of women in history, feminist historians have turned to **oral histories** and **life history methods** to reconstruct their stories.

Oral History

Oral history is a method of collecting information by recording people's personal stories. This approach is especially helpful for uncovering the voices of those who have been overlooked in history, particularly those from marginalized groups. Oral history allows the researcher to capture the social and economic context of people's lives. It requires building a good relationship with the person sharing their story, and often multiple interviews are needed to gather all the details. The setting and timing of the interview can affect how the story is told. For example, stories might be different in a formal interview compared to a more relaxed, informal setting. Personal and cultural factors, such as family honour, may also cause people to omit or downplay certain events in their lives.

Life History

The **life history method** is closely related to oral history. It combines history with biography to study how social structures affect individuals and how people create culture. This method gives detailed accounts of an individual's life, placing it in the broader historical context. Life histories are often based on both spoken and written documents, using in-depth interviews and historical records to understand someone's life over time (Sheridan and Salaff, 1984).

Writing Oral and Life Histories

When writing oral or life histories, the researcher needs to understand the language, cultural context, and social meanings in the relationships being studied. Life stories often aren't told in a strict chronological order, and some important details might be taken for granted or left out. Writing these histories requires careful judgment to decide what to include. There is also no single way to present a person's life. Decisions must be made about how to tell the story—whether in the first person or third person. Writing these stories can also lead the researcher to reflect on their own life and experiences.

Some examples of oral/life histories include:

1. **Sumitra Bhave (1988)** - *Pan on Fire: Eight Dalit Women Tell Their Story*

2. **Kannabiran Vasantha (1989)** - *That Magic Time: Women in the Telangana People's Struggle*

3. **Urvashi Butalia (1998)** - *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*

Speech and Silence

In oral history, **silence** is just as important as what is spoken. Silence doesn't just mean the absence of sound; it represents things left unsaid, experiences and thoughts that aren't put into words. The unsaid elements are often just as meaningful as the spoken words. To understand oral history, researchers need to consider the silence in the conversation. For instance, pain, suffering, and happiness change over time, and the meaning of past events may shift in later interviews. What seemed oppressive at one time may be understood differently later. The key to understanding oral history is knowing how people's memories, experiences, and emotions are shaped by their whole life story. A researcher needs to recognize which events, people, and feelings are central or marginal in a person's life (C.S. Lakshmi, 1988).

3.14 SUMMARY

The idea of **objectivity** has been central to history writing in the Western world since ancient times. Historians believed that a real past existed beyond human opinion, and they tried to recover it as accurately as possible. In the early 19th century, German historian **Wilhelm Ranke** laid the foundation for objective and fact-based historical writing. Many historians followed his approach, and this tradition remains influential today.

However, objectivity in history has faced strong criticism. One common critique is that historians cannot completely remove their personal or cultural biases. Even historical sources themselves may be biased, making it impossible to fully reconstruct the past. Another criticism argues that our knowledge of the world comes only through language—how we describe and interpret events. If everything is shaped by language, then absolute objectivity is impossible. Some critics even question the very idea of history as a factual discipline. Despite these debates, most historians take a middle path, balancing the need for factual accuracy with an awareness of bias.

A major challenge to traditional history came from **feminist historiography**, which emerged in the 1960s as part of broader struggles for representation by marginalized groups. **Subaltern**

and feminist historians shifted the focus from just narrating major events to studying the lived experiences of people who had been ignored in history. This approach raised important questions about how history is interpreted and what methods are considered valid.

These historians also challenge the **"official" versions of history**, which are often written from the perspective of those in power. They argue that such histories make the voices of ordinary people, especially women and marginalized groups, invisible. Without historical recognition, these groups are denied political and social agency. By reconstructing their histories, scholars not only expand historical knowledge but also empower these communities.

Feminist historians, in particular, have questioned why women have been left out of history. They argue that this exclusion creates an image of women as passive, which reinforces male dominance and justifies gender inequality. Feminist historiography asks new questions, such as:

- How was family life organized in different historical periods?
- How were gender roles and identities shaped by social and economic conditions?

It highlights that women's experiences are diverse and shaped by their access to power, resources, and social structures. Women are not a single, uniform group; their identities are influenced by class, culture, and personal circumstances.

To uncover these overlooked histories, feminist and subaltern scholars use alternative sources like **oral histories, folk songs, proverbs, autobiographies, personal letters, and diaries**, borrowing methods from **anthropology and sociology**. By doing so, they challenge the traditional, one-sided view of history and offer a more inclusive and diverse understanding of the past.

3.15 KEY WORDS

1. **Objectivity** – The ideal of maintaining neutrality and impartiality in historical research and writing, free from personal bias or ideological influence.

2. **Historiography** – The study of historical writing and the different perspectives, methods, and interpretations historians use over time.

3. **Bias** – A preference or inclination that affects the way historical events are interpreted, often influenced by cultural, political, or personal perspectives.

4. **Primary Sources** – Original documents, artefacts, or first-hand accounts from the period being studied, such as letters, diaries, official records, and photographs.

5. **Secondary Sources** – Works produced after the fact by historians or scholars analysing primary sources, including books, articles, and documentaries.

6. **Revisionism** – The re-examination of historical events and narratives, often challenging traditional interpretations based on new evidence or perspectives.

7. **Historical Determinism** – The idea that historical events are shaped by inevitable forces such as economics, class struggle, or geography, limiting individual agency.

8. **Relativism** – The belief that historical truth is subjective and shaped by the historian's perspective, cultural background, and social context.

9. **Narrative Construction** – The process of shaping historical facts into a coherent story, influenced by the historian's choices in emphasis, inclusion, and omission.

10. **Power Dynamics** – The ways in which power structures influence historical research, including political, institutional, and ideological forces that shape historical narratives.

11. **Silencing of Histories** – The exclusion or marginalization of certain groups, perspectives, or events in dominant historical narratives, often due to power imbalances.

12. **Colonial Historiography** – A historical perspective shaped by colonial rulers, often distorting indigenous experiences and justifying imperial control.

13. **Postmodernism** – A theoretical approach questioning absolute historical truths and emphasizing the subjective nature of historical interpretation.

14. **Oral History** – The collection and study of historical information through interviews with people who experienced past events, offering alternative perspectives to written records.

15. **Censorship in History** – The suppression or alteration of historical facts to serve political, ideological, or nationalistic interests.

3.16 ESSENTIAL/RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Carr, E.H. (1991). What is History. Penguin. Reprint. (Ch.1, "The Historian and His Facts", Ch.3, "History, Science and Morality", and Ch.4, "Causation in History").

- Marwick, Arthur (1989). The Nature of History. Third edition, Hampshire and London: MacMillan. (Ch.6, "The Historian at Work: The Writing of History," pp. 242-254).

- Tucker, Aviezer (ed.) (2009), A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell Publishing (Ch.7, "Causation in History").

- Sreedharan, E. (2007). A Manual of Historical Research Methodology, Trivandrum: Centre for South Indian Studies. (Ch.3, "The Critical Philosophy of History-Part I" and Ch.4, "The Critical Philosophy of History-Part II").

- Stephens, Lester D. (1977), Probing the Past: A Guide to the Study and Teaching of History, Boston, London & Sydney: Allyn and Bacon Inc. (Ch.3, "The Historian and His Work," and Ch.4, "Explanation and History").

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History. Boston: Beacon Press. (Ch.1, Ch.3 and Ch.5).

- Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1998). On History, UK: Abacus (Ch.10, "Partisanship").

LESSON-4

HISTORICAL RESEARCH: SOURCES AND INTERPRETATIONS

STRUCTURE

4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By learning this lesson students be able to identify and analyse different types of historical sources (primary and secondary), evaluating their reliability and bias, understanding the concept of historical interpretation, constructing a historical argument using evidence from sources, and critically examining how historians interpret past events based on their perspectives and available information.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Historical research is the process of investigating and studying past events, people, and societies using a variety of sources and methods. This type of research aims to reconstruct and interpret the past based on the available evidence. Today, history stands virtually alone among social science disciplines in its ability to analyse particular episodes, or empirical cases, and to explain broad-gauged patterns of social, cultural, political, economic, and intellectual activity. In exploring change, historical research questions actually emphasize complexity rather than simplicity, and it is this characteristic that marks history's most distinctive break with methodologies employed in other social sciences and humanities. (Smith & Lux, 1993, p. 595)

A methodology is a body of practices, procedures, and rules used by researchers to offer insight into the workings of the world. They are central to the scientific enterprise, as they allow researchers to gather empirical and measurable evidence and to analyse the evidence in an effort to expand knowledge. According to Mann (1981), there is only one methodology within the social sciences. It involves eight steps: (1) formulate a problem, (2) conceptualize variables, (3) make hypotheses, (4) establish a sample, (5) operationalize concepts, (6) gather data, (7) analyse data to test hypotheses, and (8) make a conclusion. He suggests that the only methodological differences in the social sciences are the techniques used to analyse data—something commonly referred to as a method. Because particular techniques commonly require particular types of data, methods are also linked to different strategies of data collection.

4.2 TYPES OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Types of Historical Research:

1. **Bibliographic:** Important thing about the bibliographic research was to determine and present the different facts which were reliable, valid and true related to the life of persons or achievements which are important to teacher is equator or characters of the person. From Indian point of view the contributions of famous personality such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi ji, Netaji subhas Chandra Bose and other they are impact on the present scenario on the educational and social practice of our country people.

2. **Legal:** For the administrators who were working in different organizations, for their point of you and interest legal research plays vital role at the time. The basic concepts of an educational institution were working on different caste and religions with affiliation from state and Central governments with respect to education as well as teacher and students' legal status. The administration from different types of school such as public, private, aided or unaided, financing of school students' participation in the administration such as universities legal research required special training about the large legal things and their implications components and so on were included in the legal research.

3. **Studying the history of ideas:** Different ideas or theories which were developed in the past were studied from their origin and stages of development in this research. The purpose of this type of study is to trace the thought which were popular attitude at the particular time. The evaluations in the present scenario such as problem-solving method, team teaching, learning through masteries provides helpful topic.

4. **Studying the organizations:** After the independence of India there are different institutions working in the field of education and social work. From the seven decades these institutions grow according to the needs of the society. The changes occurred as expected from the people of the country and these different things can be studied in the

Historical method of research. For example, Delhi University started before the independence but it's still doing a model role in the education and social work in the country.

4.3 HISTORICAL EVENT RESEARCH

Historians examine the past so that we may have an excellent understanding of the content of past events and the context in which they took place. In a limited sense, therefore histories are confined to such past events as have been recorded or remembered or as can be inferred or recognized on the basis of partial records and memories (Gallie:1964). In the broader sense, history means knowing the past with a view to understanding the present so as to envision and anticipate the future. _The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present and can understand the present only in the light of the past '(Carr: 1969).

4.4 ANALYTICAL RESEARCH

Analytical research is a methodical investigation approach that delves deep into complex subjects through data analysis. It aids in understanding, problem-solving, and informed decision-making in diverse fields. Analytical research is a systematic and organized investigation or study that seeks to understand, explain, and dissect complex phenomena by examining their components and relationships. It involves critically analysing data, facts, or information to draw meaningful conclusions, identify patterns, and gain insights. This often employs various techniques, such as statistical analysis, data modelling, and experimentation, to uncover underlying principles and make informed decisions. It is commonly used in scientific, academic, business, and policy contexts to solve problems, improve processes, and enhance understanding through rigorous examination and interpretation of data and evidence.

Analytical research methods are also used in historical research to help uncover patterns, trends, and relationships in historical data. This can help researchers to explore causes and effects and understand the meanings of historical events and phenomena, which aims to explain why events, people, or cultures occurred in a certain way. It uses evidence and logic to create new interpretations, theories, and narratives. It involves analyzing data to identify patterns, causes, and effects, and making interpretations based on this analysis.

It assists in enabling researchers to gain a better understanding of complex concepts, social interactions or cultural phenomena. This type of research is useful in the exploration of how or why things have occurred, interpreting events and describing actions.

4.5 EFFECT OF ANALYTICAL STUDIES ON EDUCATION TRAILS

Students, and research scholars, take the help of analytical research for taking out important information for their research studies. It helps in adding new concepts and ideas to the already produced material. Various kinds of analytical research designs are used to add value to the study material. It is conducted using various methods such as literary research, public opinion, meta-analysis, scientific trials, etc.

When you come across a question of what analytical research is, you can define it as a tool that is used to add reliability to the work. This is generally conducted to provide support to an idea or hypothesis. It employs critical thinking to extract the small details. This helps in building big assumptions about the subject matter or the material of the study. It emphasises comprehending the cause-effect relationship between variables.

4.6 ANALYTICAL RESEARCH DESIGNS

Analytical Research includes critical assessment and critical thinking and hence, it is important. It creates new ideas about the data and proves or disproves the hypothesis. If the question comes of what analytical research is used for, it can be said that it is used to create an association between exposure and the outcome. This association is based on two types of analytical research design.

4.6.1 Methods of Conducting Analytical Research

Analytical Research saves time, money, and lives and helps in achieving objectives effectively. It can be conducted using the following methods:

Literary Research

Literary Research is one of the methods of conducting analytical research. It means finding new ideas and concepts from already existing literary work. It requires you to invent something new, a new way of interpreting the already available information to discuss it. It is the backbone of various research studies. Its function is to find out all the literary information, preserve them with different methodologies and analyse them. It provides hypotheses in the already existing research and also helps in analysing modern-day research. It helps in analysing unsolved or doubtful theories.

Meta-Analysis Research

Meta-Analysis is an epidemiological, formal, and quantitative research design that helps in the systematic assessment of previous research results to develop a conclusion about the body of research. It is a subset of systematic reviews. It analyses the strength of the evidence. It helps in examining the variability or heterogeneity. It includes a quantitative review of the body of literature. It is PRISMA and its aim is to identify the existence of effects, finding the negative and positive kinds of effects. Its results can improve the accuracy of the estimates of effects.

Scientific Trials

Scientific Trials research is conducted on people. It is of two types, observational studies and the second is clinical traits. It finds new possibilities for clinical traits. It aims to find out medical strategies. It also helps in determining whether medical treatment and devices are safe or not. It searches for a better way of treating, diagnosing, screening, and treatment of the disease. It is a scientific study that involves 4 stages. It is conducted to find if a new treatment method is safe, effective, and efficient in people or not.

It aims to examine or analyse surgical, medical, and behavioural interventions. There are different types of scientific trials such as cohort studies, case-control studies, treatment trials, cross-sectional studies, screening trials, pilot trials, prevention trials, etc.

4.6.2 Analytical research involves:

- Analysing existing data to make critical evaluations
- In-depth study and evaluation of available information
- Hypothesis testing and interpreting relationships between variables

Therefore, analytical research is that kind of research that utilises the already available data for extracting information. Its main aim is to divide a topic or a concept into smaller pieces to understand it in a better way and then assemble those parts in a way that is understandable by

you. You can conduct analytical research by using the methods discussed in the article. It involves ex-ante research. It means analysing the phenomenon.

It is of different types such as historical research, philosophical research, research synthesis, and reviews. Also, it intends to comprehend the causal relation between phenomena. It works within the limited variables and involves in-depth research and analysis of the available data.

Therefore, it is crucial for any data because it adds relevance to it and makes it authentic. It supports and validates a hypothesis. It helps companies in making quick and effective decision-making about the product and services provided by them.

4.7 DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

Descriptive research describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, the practices that prevail, the beliefs or attitudes that are held, the processes that are going on; effects that are being felt or trends that are developments. The approach is directed towards identifying various characteristics of research problems and to create observations conducive to further research. Descriptive research describes characteristics of an existing phenomenon. Descriptive research provides a broad picture of a phenomenon you might be interested in exploring. Current employment rates, census of any country, number of working single parents are examples of descriptive research.

In descriptive type of research, the researcher has only to present the things which are happening. Thus, it is based on surveys and fact-finding enquiries of various types. For this purpose, researcher has to arrange the enquiries for achieving the exact things that he has to determines. This method studies the description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. Descriptive method is a method of research or investigation which is based on survey. Young defines it, as the systematic method of discovering new facts or of verifying old through sequence, inter-relation, casual explanation, and the natural laws that cover them. (Young, 1973).

This type of historical research focuses on describing events, people, or cultures in detail. It can involve examining artifacts, documents, or other sources of information to create a detailed account of what happened or existed.

4.8 COMPARATIVE RESEARCH

This type of historical research involves comparing two or more events, people, or cultures to identify similarities and differences. This can help researchers understand the unique characteristics of each and how they interacted with each other. Comparison is inherent in all science, including the social sciences, where comparative research has played a most prominent role in their development as scientific disciplines. Comparative historical research is a method of social science that examines historical events in order to create explanations that are valid beyond a particular time and place, either by direct comparison to other historical events, theory building, or reference to present day. At a very general level, comparatives are involved in identifying the similarities and differences among macro social units. This knowledge provides the key to understanding, interpreting and explaining diverse historical outcomes and processed and their significance for current institutional arrangements.

Comparative Methods: Comparative-historical methods are linked to a long-standing research tradition. This tradition was previously referred to as comparative historical sociology, but Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003) refer to it as comparative-historical analysis in recognition of the tradition's growing multidisciplinary character. In addition to sociology, comparative-historical analysis is quite prominent in political science and is present—albeit

much more marginally—in history, economics, and anthropology. Comparative-historical analysis has four main defining elements. Two are methodological, as works within the research tradition employ both within-case methods and comparative methods. Comparative-historical analysis is also defined by epistemology. Specifically, comparative-historical works pursue social scientific insight and therefore accept the possibility of gaining insight through comparative-historical and other methods.

Since the rise of the social sciences, researchers have used comparative historical methods to expand insight into diverse social phenomena and, in so doing, have made great contributions to our understanding of the social world. Indeed, any list of the most influential social scientists of all time inevitably includes a large number of scholars who used comparative-historical methods: Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Barrington Moore, Charles Tilly, and Theda Skocpol, are a few examples. Demonstrating the continued contributions of the methodological tradition, books using comparative-historical methods won one-quarter of the American Sociological Association's award for best book of the year between 1986 and 2010, despite a much smaller fraction of sociologists using comparative-historical methods.

Comparative-historical methods allow social scientists to analyse and offer important insight into perplexing and pertinent social issues. Most notably, social change has been the pivotal social issue over the past half millennium, and social scientists have used comparative historical methods to offer insight into this enormous and important topic. State building, nationalism, capitalist development and industrialization, technological development, warfare and revolutions, social movements, democratization, imperialism, secularization, and globalization are central processes that need to be analysed in order to understand both the dynamics of the contemporary world and the processes that created it; and many—if not most—of the best books on these topics have used comparative-historical methods.

Indeed, the works and issues analysed by scholars using comparative-historical methods have dominated the social sciences since their emergence, so an understanding of comparative-historical methods helps improve our understanding of the entire social scientific enterprise. Moreover, comparative-historical methods—as their name implies—are mixed and offer an important example of how to combine diverse methods. Given inherent problems with social scientific analysis, combining methods is vital to optimize insight, but competition and conflict between different methodological camps limit methodological pluralism. Comparative-historical methods, therefore, offer all social scientists an important template for how to gain insight by combining multiple methods.

Comparative-historical methods also offer an example of how to deal with another dilemma facing the social sciences: balancing the particular with the general. The complexity of the social world commonly prevents law-like generalizations, but science—given the dominance of the natural sciences—privileges general causal explanations. The social sciences are therefore divided between researchers who offer general nomothetic explanations and researchers who offer particular ideographic explanations. Comparative-historical analysis, however, combines both comparative and within-case methods and thereby helps to overcome this tension, and to balance ideographic and nomothetic explanations.

All works within comparative-historical analysis use at least one comparative method to gain insight into the research question. By insight, I mean evidence contributing to an understanding of a case or set of cases. Within-case methods pursue insight into the determinants of a particular phenomenon. The most common within-case method is causal narrative, which describes processes and explores causal determinants. Narrative analysis usually takes the form of a detective-style analysis which seeks to highlight the causal impact of particular factors

within particular cases. Within-case analysis can also take the form of process tracing, a more focused type of causal narrative that investigates mechanisms linking two related phenomena. Finally, comparative historical researchers sometimes use pattern matching as a technique for within-case analysis. Different from both causal narrative and process tracing, pattern matching does not necessarily explore causal processes; rather, it uses within-case analysis to test theories.

Within-case methods constitute the "historical" in comparative historical analysis—that is, they are temporal and analyse processes over time. Moreover, they commonly analyse historical cases. This historical element has been a commonality unifying works within the comparative historical research tradition to such an extent that works using within-case methods that do not analyse historical/temporal processes should not be considered part of the research tradition.

In addition to methods, comparative-historical analysis is also defined epistemologically. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that considers the scope and possibility of knowledge. Over the past few decades, there has been growing interest in postmodern epistemological views that deny the possibility of social scientific knowledge. They take issue with positivism, which suggests that social scientists can gain knowledge about social relations by using social scientific methods. Instead, the postmodern view suggests it is impossible to decipher any social laws because of the sheer complexity of social relations. These works go beyond Max Weber's claims that social scientists should pursue verstehen— or understanding—instead of social laws, suggesting that even a limited understanding is impossible. Verstehen is impossible, according to this view, because discourses impede the scientific study of human relations. Most basically, our social environments shape human values and cognitions in ways that severely bias our analysis of social relations and—in combination with extreme social complexity—prevent any insight into the determinants of social relations.

It is not my intention to discuss the merits and demerits of postmodern epistemological views, but such a position necessarily prevents a work from being an example of comparative-historical analysis. In particular, when a researcher denies the ability of social scientific methods to provide causal insight, they are inherently anti-methodological. Further, because methodology is the primary defining element of comparative historical analysis and because comparative-historical analysis is focused on causal analysis, postmodern works are epistemologically distinct from comparative-historical analysis and should be considered separate from the research tradition.

The final definitional element of comparative-historical analysis concerns the unit of analysis. Traditionally, all works that are considered examples of comparative-historical analysis have taken a structural view and explore meso- and macro-level processes—that is, processes involving multiple individuals and producing patterns of social relations. Along these lines, Tilly (1984) described comparative-historical analysis as analysing big structures and large processes and making huge comparisons. As such, states, social movements, classes, economies, religions, and other macro-sociological concepts have been the focus of comparative-historical analysis. This focus does not prevent comparative-historical researchers from recognizing the causal importance of individuals. For example, Max Weber was a founding figure of comparative-historical analysis and paid considerable attention to individuals. More contemporary social scientists using comparative-historical methods also employ individual level frameworks that consider individual-level action. Both Kalyvas (2006) and Petersen (2002), for example, analyse the causes of violence and focus on individual-level mechanisms. However, in doing so, Weber, Kalyvas, and Petersen all analyse how the structural and institutional environments shape individual actions and, thereby, the actions of

large numbers of people. Even when analysing individual-level processes, therefore, comparative-historical researchers retain a structural focus and consider the interrelations between individual and structure.

4.8.1 Cross-Sectional Comparative Research

Cross-sectional Comparative Research is a one-point prevalence measurement for multiple risk factors associated with a particular condition. It also called prevalence studies. Two or more social setting or groups are comparing at one particular point in time. They are also used to document comparisons among the various attributes of a group.

4.9 INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH

This type of historical research focuses on interpreting the meaning of past events, people, or cultures. It can involve analyzing cultural symbols, beliefs, and practices to understand their significance in a particular historical context.

The term "interpretive research" is often used loosely and synonymously with "qualitative research", although the two concepts are quite different. Interpretive research is a research paradigm that is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology) and is therefore best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology). Because interpretive researchers view social reality as being embedded within and impossible to abstract from their social settings, they "interpret" the reality though a "sense-making" process rather than a hypothesis testing process. This is in contrast to the positivist or functionalist paradigm that assumes that the reality is relatively independent of the context, can be abstracted from their contexts, and studied in a decomposable functional manner using objective techniques such as standardized measures. Whether a researcher should pursue interpretive, or positivist research depends on paradigmatic considerations about the nature of the phenomenon under consideration and the best way to study it.

Although interpretive research tends to rely heavily on qualitative data, quantitative data may add more precision and clearer understanding of the phenomenon of interest than qualitative data. For example, Eisenhardt (1989), in her interpretive study of decision making n high-velocity firms (discussed in the previous chapter on case research), collected numeric data on how long it took each firm to make certain strategic decisions (which ranged from 1.5 months to 18 months), how many decision alternatives were considered for each decision, and surveyed her respondents to capture their perceptions of organizational conflict. Such numeric data helped her clearly distinguish the high-speed decision-making firms from the low-speed decision makers, without relying on respondents' subjective perceptions, which then allowed her to examine the number of decision alternatives considered by and the extent of conflict in high-speed versus low-speed firms. Interpretive research should attempt to collect both qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to their phenomenon of interest, and so should positivist research as well. Joint use of qualitative and quantitative data, often called "mixed-mode designs", may lead to unique insights and are highly prized in the scientific community.

Interpretive research has its roots in anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics, and semiotics, and has been available since the early 19th century, long before positivist techniques were developed. Many positivist researchers view interpretive research as erroneous and biased, given the subjective nature of the qualitative data collection and interpretation process employed in such research. However, the failure of many positivist techniques to generate interesting insights or new knowledge have resulted in a resurgence of interest in interpretive

research since the 1970's, albeit with exacting methods and stringent criteria to ensure the reliability and validity of interpretive inferences.

4.9.1 Distinctions from Positivist Research

In addition to fundamental paradigmatic differences in ontological and epistemological assumptions discussed above, interpretive and positivist research differ in several other ways. First, interpretive research employs a theoretical sampling strategy, where study sites, respondents, or cases are selected based on theoretical considerations such as whether they fit the phenomenon being studied (e.g., sustainable practices can only be studied in organizations that have implemented sustainable practices), whether they possess certain characteristics that make them uniquely suited for the study (e.g., a study of the drivers of firm innovations should include some firms that are high innovators and some that are low innovators, in order to draw contrast between these firms), and so forth. In contrast, positivist research employs random sampling (or a variation of this technique), where cases are chosen randomly from a population, for purposes of generalizability. Hence, convenience samples and small samples are considered acceptable in interpretive research as long as they fit the nature and purpose of the study, but not in positivist research.

Second, the role of the researcher receives critical attention in interpretive research. In some methods such as ethnography, action research, and participant observation, the researcher is considered part of the social phenomenon, and her specific role and involvement in the research process must be made clear during data analysis. In other methods, such as case research, the researcher must take a "neutral" or unbiased stance during the data collection and analysis processes and ensure that her personal biases or preconceptions does not taint the nature of subjective inferences derived from interpretive research. In positivist research, however, the researcher is considered to be external to and independent of the research context and is not presumed to bias the data collection and analytic procedures.

Third, interpretive analysis is holistic and contextual, rather than being reductionist and isolationist. Interpretive interpretations tend to focus on language, signs, and meanings from the perspective of the participants involved in the social phenomenon, in contrast to statistical techniques that are employed heavily in positivist research. Rigor in interpretive research is viewed in terms of systematic and transparent approaches for data collection and analysis rather than statistical benchmarks for construct validity or significance testing.

Lastly, data collection and analysis can proceed simultaneously and iteratively in interpretive research. For instance, the researcher may conduct an interview and code it before proceeding to the next interview. Simultaneous analysis helps the researcher correct potential flaws in the interview protocol or adjust it to capture the phenomenon of interest better. The researcher may even change her original research question if she realizes that her original research questions are unlikely to generate new or useful insights. This is a valuable but often understated benefit of interpretive research, and is not available in positivist research, where the research project cannot be modified or changed once the data collection has started without redoing the entire project from the start.

4.9.2 Benefits and Challenges of Interpretive Research

Interpretive research has several unique advantages. First, they are well-suited for exploring hidden reasons behind complex, interrelated, or multifaceted social processes, such as inter-firm relationships or inter-office politics, where quantitative evidence may be biased, inaccurate, or otherwise difficult to obtain. Second, they are often helpful for theory construction in areas with no or insufficient priori theory. Third, they are also appropriate for studying context-specific, unique, or idiosyncratic events or processes. Fourth, interpretive

research can also help uncover interesting and relevant research questions and issues for follow-up research.

At the same time, interpretive research also has its own set of challenges. First, this type of research tends to be more time and resource intensive than positivist research in data collection and analytic efforts. Too little data can lead to false or premature assumptions, while too much data may not be effectively processed by the researcher. Second, interpretive research requires well-trained researchers who are capable of seeing and interpreting complex social phenomenon from the perspectives of the embedded participants and reconciling the diverse perspectives of these participants, without injecting their personal biases or preconceptions into their inferences. Third, all participants or data sources may not be equally credible, unbiased, or knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest, or may have undisclosed political agendas, which may lead to misleading or false impressions. Inadequate trust between participants and researchers may hinder full and honest self-representation by participants, and such trust building takes time. It is the job of the interpretive researcher to "see through the smoke" (hidden or biased agendas) and understand the true nature of the problem. Fourth, given the heavily contextualized nature of inferences drawn from interpretive research, such inferences do not lend themselves well to replicability or generalizability. Finally, interpretive research may sometimes fail to answer the research questions of interest or predict future behaviors.

4.9.3 Characteristics of Interpretive Research

All interpretive research must adhere to a common set of principles, as described below.

Naturalistic inquiry: Social phenomena must be studied within their natural setting. Because interpretive research assumes that social phenomena are situated within and cannot be isolated from their social context, interpretations of such phenomena must be grounded within their socio-historical context. This implies that contextual variables should be observed and considered in seeking explanations of a phenomenon of interest, even though context sensitivity may limit the generalizability of inferences.

Researcher as Instrument: Researchers are often embedded within the social context that they are studying and are considered part of the data collection instrument in that they must use their observational skills, their trust with the participants, and their ability to extract the correct information. Further, their personal insights, knowledge, and experiences of the social context is critical to accurately interpreting the phenomenon of interest. At the same time, researchers must be fully aware of their personal biases and preconceptions, and not let such biases interfere with their ability to present a fair and accurate portrayal of the phenomenon.

Interpretive Analysis: Observations must be interpreted through the eyes of the participants embedded in the social context. Interpretation must occur at two levels. The first level involves viewing or experiencing the phenomenon from the subjective perspectives of the social participants. The second level is to understand the meaning of the participants' experiences in order to provide a "thick description" or a rich narrative story of the phenomenon of interest that can communicate why participants acted the way they did.

Use of Expressive Language: Documenting the verbal and non-verbal language of participants and the analysis of such language are integral components of interpretive analysis. The study must ensure that the story is viewed through the eyes of a person, and not a machine, and must depict the emotions and experiences of that person, so that readers can understand and relate to that person. Use of imageries, metaphors, sarcasm, and other figures of speech is very common in interpretive analysis.

Temporal nature: Interpretive research is often not concerned with searching for specific answers, but with understanding or "making sense of" a dynamic social process as it unfolds over time. Hence, such research requires an immersive involvement of the researcher at the study site for an extended period of time in order to capture the entire evolution of the phenomenon of interest.

Hermeneutic circle: Interpretive interpretation is an iterative process of moving back and forth from pieces of observations (text) to the entirety of the social phenomenon (context) to reconcile their apparent discord and to construct a theory that is consistent with the diverse subjective viewpoints and experiences of the embedded participants. Such iterations between the understanding/meaning of a phenomenon and observations must continue until "theoretical saturation" is reached, whereby any additional iteration does not yield any more insight into the phenomenon of interest.

4.9.4 Interpretive Data Collection

Data is collected in interpretive research using a variety of techniques. The most frequently used technique is interviews (face-to-face, telephone, or focus groups). Interview types and strategies are discussed in detail in a previous chapter on survey research. A second technique is observation. Observational techniques include direct observation, where the researcher is a neutral and passive external observer and is not involved in the phenomenon of interest (as in case research), and participant observation, where the researcher is an active participant in the phenomenon and her inputs or mere presence influence the phenomenon being studied (as in action research). A third technique is documentation, where external and internal documents, such as memos, electronic mails, annual reports, financial statements, newspaper articles, websites, may be used to cast further insight into the phenomenon of interest or to corroborate other forms of evidence.

4.9.5 Interpretive Research Designs

Case Research: As discussed in the previous chapter, case research is an intensive longitudinal study of a phenomenon at one or more research sites for the purpose of deriving detailed, contextualized inferences and understanding the dynamic process underlying a phenomenon of interest. Case research is a unique research design in that it can be used in an interpretive manner to build theories or in a positivist manner to test theories. The previous chapter on case research discusses both techniques in depth and provides illustrative exemplars. Furthermore, the case researcher is a neutral observer (direct observation) in the social setting rather than an active participant (participant observation). As with any other interpretive approach, drawing meaningful inferences from case research depends heavily on the observational skills and integrative abilities of the researcher.

Action Research: Action research is a qualitative, but positivist research design aimed at theory testing rather than theory building (discussed in this chapter due to lack of a proper space). This is an interactive design that assumes that complex social phenomena are best understood by introducing changes, interventions, or "actions" into those phenomena and observing the outcomes of such actions on the phenomena of interest. In this method, the researcher is usually a consultant, or an organizational member embedded into a social context (such as an organization), who initiates an action in response to a social problem and examines how her action influences the phenomenon while also learning and generating insights about the relationship between the action and the phenomenon. Examples of actions may include organizational change programs, such as the introduction of new organizational processes, procedures, people, or technology or replacement of old ones, initiated with the goal of improving an organization's performance or profitability in its business environment. The

researcher's choice of actions must be based on theory, which should explain why and how such actions may bring forth the desired social change. The theory is validated by the extent to which the chosen action is successful in remedying the targeted problem. Simultaneous problem solving and insight generation is the central feature that distinguishes action research from other research methods (which may not involve problem solving) and from consulting (which may not involve insight generation). Hence, action research is an excellent method for bridging research and practice.

There are several variations of the action research method. The most popular method of this method is participatory action research, designed by Susman and Evered (1978).

This method follows an action research cycle consisting of five phases: (1) diagnosing, (2) action planning, (3) action taking, (4) evaluating, and (5) learning. Diagnosing involves identifying and defining a problem in its social context. Action planning involves identifying and evaluating alternative solutions to the problem and deciding on a future course of action (based on theoretical rationale). Action taking is the implementation of the planned course of action. The evaluation stage examines the extent to which the initiated action is successful in resolving the original problem, i.e., whether theorized effects are indeed realized in practice. In the learning phase, the experiences and feedback from action evaluation are used to generate insights about the problem and suggest future modifications or improvements to the action. Based on action evaluation and learning, the action may be modified or adjusted to address the problem better, and the action research cycle is repeated with the modified action sequence. It is suggested that the entire action research cycle be traversed at least twice so that learning from the first cycle can be implemented in the second cycle. The primary mode of data collection is participant observation, although other techniques such as interviews and documentary evidence may be used to corroborate the researcher's observations.

4.10 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

This type of historical research involves using statistical methods to analyze historical data. It can involve examining demographic information, economic indicators, or other quantitative data to identify patterns and trends.

4.11 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This type of historical research involves examining non-numerical data such as personal accounts, letters, or diaries. It can provide insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals during a particular historical period.

Historical research relies on a wide variety of sources, both primary & secondary including unpublished material.

4.12 SOURCES OF THE DATA

There are different sources of historical data. The data is defined as the information collected for the purpose of analysis and used as bass for the conclusion. The historical data are classified into two major groups primary and secondary sources.

4.12.1. Primary Sources

A primary source is a document that contains the original statement on the topic being investigated by the researcher. These contain evidence that is closest to the event under investigation as recounted by observers and participants. Primary sources represent "the data which lie closest to the historical event. They are considered to include the testimony of eyewitnesses, or observations made with one or the other senses or by some mechanical device.

In most cases, primary sources are the written record of what the writer actually observed or the first-hand expression of his or her thoughts" (Powell, 1991, p. 139). Thus, it is the direct outcome of the event or the record of eyewitnesses. It bears direct involvement with the event being studied, such as diaries, letters, speeches, and an interview with the person who personally experienced the event, original map, etc. It is not a copy, a repackage or summery of the original. The basic criteria to identify a particular source as a primary document is, just ask, "Is it a firsthand account?" Eyewitness accounts of events, Can be oral or written testimony, Found in public records & legal documents, minutes of meetings, corporate records, recordings, letters, diaries, journals, drawings. Located in university archives, libraries or privately run collections such as local historical society.

These include the following:

- Documents generated by the events themselves such as archival records (governmental, institutional, commercial, ecclesiastical, etc), internal letters and memoranda (memos), speeches, summaries or minutes of conferences and meetings, photographs of people, buildings and equipment, statistical information (such as tally sheets and surveys), lists of holdings (goods, equipment, etc), and reports and statements (mission statements, employees guidelines, rules and regulations etc);

- Documents produced to record events immediately such as chronicles, diaries, reports produced by journalists and interviews conducted by them, drawings and photographs, motion picture films, tape recordings and video recordings.

- Documents in supplementary forms produced much later in the form of oral sources, oral traditions and folklores, languages themselves, say fables, folktales, folklore etc are a good source; and

- Artifacts or realia such as inscriptions, seals, coins, medals, drawings, pictures, ruins of monument

The record available in the primary sources can be examined by the researcher personally. He or she can handle, collect, view, describe and interpreted the evidence. The researcher also studies the previous conclusions drawn by the past researchers or educationist.

1. **Personal Records**: The records such as diaries, affidavits, certificates of various types, autobiographic, wills, letters, original drafts of speeches, deeds, contracts, books, articles and pamphlet's and so on are the different types of personal records.

2. **Official Records**: Judicial, executive, legislative documents were prepared by state or central bodies, panchayats samite, municipalities and other bodies at village or tahsil such as laws, court recordings, charters and different decisions. Also, some meetings proceedings or minutes of the events of the governing bodies or local administrations, private and public organizations such as schools, colleges, various boards and their committees-maintained records are considered as an official record.

3. **Oral testimony of traditions and events**: folk tales, myths, witness related to the events the spoken about event, family program and celebrations, teachers, students, educationist, parents and administrators of the schools etc. are included in the oral testimony.

4. **Pictorial records**: Movies, drawings, photographs, microfilms, coins, paintings, sculpture, etc., were added in the pictorial records.

5. **Mechanical records**: The records which include such as tape recorder, events photography, speeches, meetings, etc.

6. **Remains or relics**: Fossils, weapons, clothing's, buildings, art objects, question papers sample, student's different types of work sample, skeletons, tools, furniture's, utensils, etc.

The Use of Primary Sources

Primary sources allow use of data based on testimony of eyewitnesses, or observations made with human senses or by a mechanical device. Thus, these are original sources representing firsthand account. These contain the original statement on the topic being investigated by the researcher. These are sources that first reported the event being studied.

• Strengthens the reliability of the study.

• Provides a solid base for arriving at valid conclusions.

• Provides historical data that serves as raw material for historical interpretation.

• Ensures the integrity of the study

Experience shows that most often, a historian cannot base his research entirely on primary sources. According to Powell, "In fact, secondary sources may provide important information and conceptual development not available elsewhere. But as secondary sources do not represent "eyewitness" accounts, the researcher should keep in mind their limitations and avoid an overreliance on such materials. Secondary sources are perhaps best used for rounding out the setting or filling in the gaps between primary sources of information" (Powell, 1991, p.140).

A secondary source may be one or more steps removed from the primary source in terms of place, time or authorship. Just possible, a secondary source (a copy produced from an original document) may not be an authentic one. In copying from the original documents, certain errors can creep in through omission or commission. The original may have been modified, through editing or interpretation.

4.12.2 Secondary Resources of Data

A secondary source is the one derived or created from a primary source (that first reported the event being studied). It reports events based on use of primary and other secondary sources as bases of data collection. It contains information reported by a person who did not directly observe the event, object, or condition (Key, 1997, p.1). Thus, these report events by a person other than a direct observer or a participant in the events. These are considered less useful than primary sources.

A secondary source may be one or more steps removed from the primary source in terms of time, place or authorship. A source becomes a primary or secondary source depending upon its proximity to the actual event under investigation (Powell, 1991, p.140).

Secondary sources include copies of the objects and the information given by the other person and information's includes description given by historical you want by any other person who is not present when such events were happened would be considered as secondary sources. In the secondary sources includes textbooks, newspapers, encyclopedia, periodicals as well as review of related literature and other references. The secondary sources include documents such as records and reports from the government of Central as well as state departments, different minutes of meeting held in school boards, surveys, charters Deeds, wills, bulletins,

attendance role, files, different certificates, diaries and memos. Beside of these interviews, types audio- video presentations also included in the secondary sources.

The person who has in contact with the person who actually present at the events and the discussion done between them. This type of sources is an inherent distortion as well as inaccurate of danger. So that researcher must be dependents on the primary data and secondary data should be used as link between the two types of data. It is not possible for the researcher to obtain the primary data for their research work and use it, so that he or she should rely on secondary data.

Sometimes it is very difficult to find out the accurate primary data which is useful for the research work because researcher did not know about the organizations or nature of the data of the events. The personal diaries, or any such records having wide gap with the researcher to link with the secondary data. If the sources were used carefully then it's a satisfying the objectives the research work practicable and possible answers of the classifications were rigid in the secondary sources. Sometimes sources of data may be used as a primary in one research work, but it is a secondary source in another. Examples of secondary sources are given below:

•   Textbooks

•   Encyclopaedias

•   Monographs

•   Articles in magazines.

A copy of an original document is a secondary source as it may not be an authentic one. In copying from the original document, certain errors or omissions can occur intentionally or unintentionally. The original might get modified at the stage of copying through editing or interpretation.

4.12.3. Tertiary Sources

These sources include bibliographies, catalogues and indexes that guide a researcher to primary and secondary sources. Researchers consider primary sources more useful than secondary and tertiary sources and they prefer to use these.

4.13 VARIETIES OF APPROACHES TO SOURCES AND METHODS

Historical research involves studying past people, societies, and events using various sources and methods. The goal is to interpret and reconstruct the past based on the available evidence. Historians use a variety of sources, including primary sources, secondary sources, and material evidence from archaeology. There are several approaches and methods used in historical research, including:

Source Criticism: As a general principle, all primary information in the form of records – other than those that you make through your own observations – should be treated with caution during evaluating the validity, reliability, and relevance of data. A 'health warning' is necessary.

You should always ask yourself:

1.   who prepared the record?

2.   why?

3.   for whom was it prepared?

4.   for whom was it intended?

5.   for what purpose was it made?

6.   who would have 'corrected' or otherwise altered the record before it was finalised?

4.14 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA OR SOURCES

'The extent to which a measure, indicator or method of data collection possesses the quality of being sound or true as far as can be judged. … in the social sciences generally, the relationship between indicators and measures and the underlying concepts they are taken to measure is often contested' (Jary & Jary, 1995: 714).

Reliability and validity are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a method, technique. or test measures something. Reliability is about the consistency of a measure, and validity is about the accuracy of a measure. It's important to consider reliability and validity when you are creating your research design, planning your methods, and writing up your results, especially in quantitative research. Failing to do so can lead to several types of research bias and seriously affect your work.

In effect, the validity of information is its relevance and appropriateness to your research question and the directness and strength of its association with the concepts under scrutiny. Often you will have to use best available information whose validity may be weak. For example, to what extent, if any, does the decline in 'sectarian violence' in N. Ireland post-2001 reflect a lessening of antagonisms between conflicting groups? Does the election of an opposition party reflect popular support for its manifesto or criticism of the outgoing government? Do declining rates of party membership reflect a lessening of interest in health and education? One measure that intrigues Politics researchers is the counterfactual – events that don't happen – as evidence of hegemonic domination. But how can researchers be confident that the absence of an event can be attributed to the omnipresence of another? One solution to this particular problem of problematic validity is for you to adopt a wider range of measures to reduce dependence on anyone.

Reliability refers to how consistently a method measures something. If the same result can be consistently achieved by using the same methods under the same circumstances, the measurement is considered reliable. Reliability is, literally, the extent to which we can rely on the source of the data and, therefore, the data itself. Reliable data is dependable, trustworthy, unfailing, sure, authentic, genuine, reputable. Consistency is the main measure of reliability. So, in literary accounts, the reputation of the source is critical. Indicators of reliability will include proximity to events, (whether the writer was a participant or observer,) likely impartiality, and whether, as the police say, the record was really contemporaneous or an eventide reflection on the day's events. If you measure the temperature of a liquid sample several times under identical conditions. The thermometer displays the same temperature every time, so the results are reliable.

4.15 HISTORICAL TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

Time series analysis is a method of analysing a series of data points collected over a period of time. In time series analysis, data points are recorded at regular intervals over a set period of time, rather than intermittently or at random. One of the main research areas in quantitative economic history concerns the analysis of the determinants of long-term economic growth. Why do growth rates differ over time and across countries? Why are the rich countries rich, and the poor countries poor? Special attention is paid to the transition to modernity. To what extent is it justified to distinguish pre-modern from modern economic growth? And if this

distinction is valid, then which factors have been responsible for the transition of (western) economies to modernity?

Time series analysis typically does not belong to the tool kit of economic historians. The standard textbook of Feinstein and Thomas only discusses some basic aspects. We begin with concepts from univariate time series analysis, i.e. the analysis of a single series. Thereafter we discuss topics in multivariate time series analysis, involving more than one series.

4.15.1 Univariate Time Series Analysis

Classical time series analysis assumes that an observed time series can be decomposed into

Observed series = trend + cycle + season + irregular component,

where the trend represents the long-run development in the series, the cycle the cyclical component arising from business cycle fluctuations, the season the seasonal pattern which repeats itself more or less every year, and the irregular component reflects non-systematic movements in the series. After an observed series is filtered for irregular components (and the season, if appropriate), advanced techniques are available to filter the trend and to carry out business cycle research. The third application in section three below presents an example.

4.15.2 Multivariate time series analysis

The statistical concept of Granger (non-)causality is often used to provide empirical evidence on the question of causality between variables. The basic principle of Granger (non-)causality analysis is to test whether or not lagged values of one variable help to improve the explanation of another variable from its own past. This interpretation of causality or antecedence should be intuitively appealing to historians, because they are aware of time as an explanatory variable. Nevertheless, the term `causes' in Granger-causality should be interpreted with caution. Granger-causality has nothing to say about contemporaneous causality between variables, so we cannot use the technique to determine for example whether a variable in a system is exogenous or endogenous.

One of the main research areas in quantitative economic history concerns the analysis of the determinants of long-term economic growth. Why do growth rates differ over time and across countries? Why are the rich countries rich, and the poor countries poor? Special attention is paid to the transition to modernity. To what extent is it justified to distinguish pre-modern from modern economic growth? And if this distinction is valid, then which factors have been responsible for the transition of (western) economies to modernity?

In order to find answers to these `big questions', economic historians devote much time and energy to constructing databases on long-run economic growth and structural change. Especially important in this respect is the work on historical national accounting. This framework serves as an important and powerful tool for historians, as historical data are often scattered; the model of historical national accounts with its system of checks and balances, i.e. by means of a comparison of income, output and expenditure estimates, can shed light on the reliability and plausibility of such estimates. The construction of such datasets is extremely time-consuming, however due to huge research investments of several generations we now have reasonable accurate historical national accounts for the majority of western countries.

Of course, economic historians do not confine themselves to building time series. Also, due attention has been paid to interpreting the new data series in the light of the 'big questions' raised above. However, more often than not this research has been rather descriptive by nature. Good examples of seminal studies in the tradition of descriptive, empirical economics concern the growth accounting studies of Denison1 and Maddison, as well the study of Broadberry into

the interpretation of productivity differentials of the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth century, and the textbook on the economic development of the Netherlands by Van Zanden and Van Riel.

4.16 COUNTERFACTUAL ANALYSIS

Counterfactual analysis is a method in historical study that considers 'what if' scenarios by exploring alternative outcomes to historical events, asking how things might have been different if certain key factors had changed. This approach helps historians understand causation and the importance of specific events, as well as interpret the implications of decisions made in the past. By examining these hypothetical scenarios, scholars can better grasp the complexities of history and the interconnectedness of various factors. Counterfactual analysis encourages critical thinking by prompting historians to challenge existing narratives and assumptions about historical events. This method can be useful in evaluating the significance of key individuals, events, or decisions in shaping history. While it can provide valuable insights, counterfactual analysis is often debated among historians due to its speculative nature and reliance on hypothetical scenarios. Counterfactual scenarios can reveal underlying patterns and connections between events that may not be immediately apparent in linear historical accounts. The technique is often used in political history to explore alternative political outcomes, such as what might have happened if major battles had been won or lost.

Palaeography: Palaeography ('old writing') is the study of pre-modern manuscripts: hand-written books, rolls, scrolls and single-sheet documents. The contents of these manuscripts are a focus of study for several disciplines of the humanities, but palaeography is the discipline that examines texts in the particular material form in which they circulated. It strips away the filters that exist between the modern printed or online copy and how that text was actually encountered by pre-modern societies, recognising that the visual presentation of a written text contributes to its meaning.

Palaeography encompasses the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of the use and development of handwriting to communicate information and ideas in periods before the widespread adoption of printing in movable type.

- 'what' comprises the identification of the graphic symbols that represent words (whether alphabetic, syllabic or pictographic) and their classification in order to distinguish different traditions of script and trace their development.

- 'how' uses the evidence of script and other visual and physical characteristics of manuscripts to place them within their proper historical context, ie when, where and by whom they were produced and encountered.

- 'why' combines this evidence to interpret the wider social and cultural significance of the uses of writing and to explain its various manifestations in different societies at different times.

Manuscripts were produced in many pre-modern societies in far greater quantity than is generally assumed, despite the fact that literate skills were usually restricted to certain privileged groups. A very great deal has been lost, and the randomness of survival has made that loss uneven. Nevertheless, it is possible to gain an impression of the scale of what once existed from the hundreds of thousands of manuscript books and millions of charters and other documents that survive from medieval Europe and the hundreds of thousands of late-medieval manuscripts from the private libraries of Timbuktu. Just how diverse written materials could be in any one place is clear from the extraordinary range of written artefacts among the 250,000-odd fragments deposited according to rabbinic law in the Cairo Genizah from at least

the 11th century onwards, and the remarkable number of languages and script-systems represented in the many thousands of manuscripts sealed around AD 1000 within the Buddhist cave library near Dunhuang, on the edge of the Gobi desert.

Palaeographers usually specialise in the system (or systems) of script used by a particular society. Latin palaeography (my own specialism), for example, is the study of manuscript books and documents in the Roman alphabet. In their teaching, Latin palaeographers usually span the entire Middle Ages, providing students across the field of medieval studies with the technical skills they need to decipher literary and documentary texts in their original manuscript contexts and to introduce them to the methods required to date, localise and interpret the significance of these manuscripts. The same breadth characterises the work of palaeographers holding posts as curators in libraries and archives. In their own research, however, palaeographers develop special areas of expertise: prolonged experience with manuscripts from a more restricted geographical and chronological range may enable them to distinguish the handwriting of individual scribes, make more informed judgements about dating and localisation, account for changes in scribal practice and recognise forgeries.

Even before the term 'palaeography' was coined by Bernard de Montfaucon for the title of his *Palaeographia Graeca* (1708), the use of new technologies was going hand-in-hand with the study of manuscripts. Jean Mabillon, in his *De re diplomatica* (1681), illustrated his outline of the history of Latin script with numerous engravings of medieval script, including full-page pull-out reproductions of early medieval charters. In the late 19th century new methods of photographic reproduction were exploited to produce entire volumes of facsimiles of medieval manuscripts and documents, which became the bed-rock of the teaching of palaeography in the 20th century. Now, once again, technological advances offer fresh opportunities to facilitate the study of the 'old' technology. Digitisation projects are making images of medieval manuscripts and documents accessible on a hitherto unparalleled scale. The challenge for palaeographers is how best to make these new resources intelligible and meaningful to students, scholars and the wider public.

Diplomatics: Diplomatic has a long and rich history harking back to seventeenth-century France and was established by the French Benedictine Monk Dom Jean Mabillon (1632-1707) in his book *De re diplomatica libri VI*, which he wrote in 1681. Mabillon is the father of the science of diplomatics and created a methodology from which forgeries could be identified. It is in fact from the French term *diplomatique*, used in Mabillon's work that the term diplomatic came into being. For Mabillon, diplomatic was governed by the:

> *proper evaluation of the character, content, and authenticity of a given document [that] must take account of internal as well as external criteria; of the changing fashions of composition, handwriting, and style ... and of the history, personnel and usages of chanceries, notarial offices and scriptoria from place to place and period to period. (1)*

At its core, diplomatic is about evaluating the authenticity and reliability of the record that you are dealing with. It's also a great way to recognise the characteristics of the record before you. This means that you can learn about the form of the record from the paper used, the wax seals attached to it, and even signatures present. We can of course date documents using our palaeographical skills but diplomatic can also inform us about the provenance of the records we research.

The types of records found in an archive have diversified and increased over time. The application of diplomatic is indeed universal and does not have to be confined to one's own specialism. Rather than apply diplomatic to just a type of document, it is of more use to see

diplomatic as a 'coherent science' that can be employed when determining the authenticity of all types of archival records.

Why is Diplomatic Important for Medievalists?

The impact that diplomatics has had allows for both archivists and historians alike to understand and interpret documents fully. Identifying forgeries and establishing records' legitimacy allows for the historian and archivist to maintain accuracy and authenticity in their own work.

Chaplais was spot on in arguing that understanding the form of medieval records was vital if we are to truly appreciate the nature of the documentation that survives.

Chronology: Chronology is defined as "simply the setting down of events in the order of their occurrence, a process similar to the older concept of historical research" (Powell, 1991, p. 137). Chronology of events is merely a first step in the process of historical research, providing data or material for latter steps. Any method used to order time and to place events in the sequence in which they occurred. The systems of chronology used to record human history, which are closely related to calendar systems, vary in scope, accuracy, and method according to the purpose, degree of sophistication, and skills of the peoples using them.

Epigraphy: The word *epigraphy* is derived from two Greek words viz., *epi* meaning on or upon and *graphie* meaning to write. And hence, epigraphy is the study of writings engraved on stone, metal and other materials lie wood, shell etc., known as 'inscriptions' or 'epigraphs'. Though engraving is the chief characteristic of an epigraphy, there are some exceptions where old writings in ink on rocks, boulders etc., are also accepted as epigraphs. A person who is engaged in the decipherment and interpretation of the epigraphs is called an *epigraphist.*

The Epigraphy Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India came into existence in the year 1886 at Bangalore. The British who were the first to realize the importance of inscriptions for the reconstruction of our countryÏs history, opened a separate branch under their administration for the collection of inscriptions. Since then, this branch has not only collected thousands of inscriptions, but also edited and published them. After some years this branch was shifted to Ootacamund in 1903 and functioned there till 1966 and thereafter, it was shifted to Mysore where it continues to function. Dr. E.Hultzsch, a renowned German Indologist who was equally well-versed in Dravidian and Sanskritic epigraphy was the first **Government Epigraphist** for Indian. It was he who laid a solid foundation for the epigraphical studies in our country. He and his able successor V.Venkayya rescued South Indian Epigraphy from the oblivion to which it was consigned prior to the organization of epigraphical department. Venkayya was succeeded by Sten Know, the latter by F.W.Thomas and he in turn by the erudite epigraphist H. Krishna Sastri who was succeeded by the great Indologist from Punjab, Hirananda Sastry. These erudite scholars made great contribution for the growth and development of epigraphical studies. Among the epigraphists who succeeded them and figure prominently are Sri N.L.Rao, Dr. B.Ch.Chhabra, Dr. D.C.Sircar and Dr. G.S.Gai.

Nature of Epigraphy

Inscriptions are broadly divided into two categories viz, stone inscriptions and copper-plate grants. Majority of stone inscriptions are donative in character, while some are secular in nature.

Inscriptions found on walls of the temple are valuable in as much as they furnish information about the ruling king and his administrative setup, the donor, the builder of the temple and its date and the circumstances under which it was built.

The copper-plate inscriptions mostly record land-grants made to learned Brahmanas and educational institutions. Aśoka's inscriptions called 'edicts', heralding dharma (piety), form a separate class by themselves.

The word sasana means a raja-śāsana or a royal charter and tamra-sasana is a royal charter engraved on a plate or plates of copper. Raja-śāsanas are classified under three heads viz.,

1. dana-śāsana - recording gifts,

2. prasada-śāsana - recording various kinds of favour and

3. jaya-patra declaring victory of one of the parties in a dispute. Inscriptions, from the point of view of their contents, have been classified into many types - yupa-sasana (engraved on a sacrificial post) stambha-sasana (engraved on a pillar, either architectural or commemorative), pratima- sasana (image inscription), kraya-sasana (sale deed), vijaya-sasana (victory edict), viragal (hero-stone, which may be merely commemorative or even donative), mahāsati stones (inscriptions recording cases of self- immolation by the deceased heroes' wives) and so on.

Epigraphy as a Source of History

India is singularly rich in epigraphical wealth. It is estimated that so far more than one lakh inscriptions have been discovered from the length and breadth of the country, and still a large number of inscriptions have to be brought to light by conducting an intensive and systematic survey of our vast sub- continent.

Epigraphy forms one of the very important sources for understanding the history and culture of the Indian people from the time of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (3rd century BC) to the late medieval period. It is only from a patient and painstaking study of a large number of connected inscriptions that a reconstruction of not only the political and dynastic history, but also the social, religious, administrative and economic history of a particular period or reign or region could be undertaken.

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4.17 IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Current global politics has its roots in the past. Historical research offers an essential context for understanding our modern society. It can inform global concepts, such as foreign policy development or international relations. The study of historical events can help leaders make informed decisions that impact society, culture, and the economy.

Take, for example, the Industrial Revolution. Studying the history of the rise of industry in the West helps to put the current world order in perspective. The recorded events of that age reveal that the first designers of the systems of industry, including the United States, dominated the global landscape in the following decades and centuries. Similarly, the digital revolution is creating massive shifts in international politics and society. Historians play a pivotal role in

using historical research methods to record and analyze information about these trends to provide future generations with insightful historical perspectives.

In addition to creating meaningful knowledge of global and economic affairs, studying history highlights the perspectives of people and groups who triumphed over adversity. For example, the historical fights for freedom and equality, such as the struggle for women's voting rights or ending the Jim Crow era in the South, offer relevant context for current events, such as efforts at criminal justice reform.

History also is the story of the collective identity of people and regions. Historical research can help promote a sense of community and highlight the vibrancy of different cultures, creating opportunities for people to become more culturally aware and empowered

4.18 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Advantages:

·   The main advantage of historical research is that it permits the investigation of topics that could be studied in no other way.

·   It is the only research method that can study evidence from the past.

·   The historical method is well suited for trend analysis.

Disadvantages:

·   Cannot control for threats to internal validity

·   Limitations are imposed due to the content analysis

·   Researchers cannot ensure representation of the sample.

·   Bias in interpreting historical sources.

·   Interpreting sources is very time consuming.

·   Sources of historical materials may be problematic

4.19 LIMITATIONS

The human past is the subject matter of historical research. It is to be noted that the past can only be known through the relics that become available to the researcher. Thus, the past can no longer be examined directly by him. A researcher cannot re-enact the past but can only interpret it unlike experimental research.

"Since history contains an inherent element of subjectivity, the final truth on any important subject can never be written. Later historians will work with different frames of reference, new interests, and new conjectures. They will ask new questions and often discover new source material. Finally, because of the defects of the sources themselves, the total truth of an important event can never be completely established. New generations and other nationalities will always be ready to offer new insights and new interpretations of the past" (Daniels, 1996, p. 229). In ultimate analysis, one may conclude that there is no possibility of final truth to be written.

4.20 KEY WORDS

Primary Sources: Original materials created during the time period being studied, like diaries, letters, photographs, government documents, or newspaper articles.

Secondary Sources: Interpretations of primary sources, like books, articles, or documentaries written by historians analyzing past events.

Bias: A perspective or prejudice that can influence the interpretation of historical events, present in both primary and secondary sources.

Chronology: The order in which historical events occurred.

Context: The social, political, and economic environment surrounding a historical event.

Historiography: The study of how historians have interpreted and written about the past, including different schools of thought.

Interpretation: The process of assigning meaning to historical evidence and constructing a narrative about the past.

Viewpoint: The perspective of the person creating a historical source, which can influence their account.

Evidence: The information used to support historical claims, including primary sources and material culture.

Artifacts: Physical objects from the past that can provide insight into history, like tools, clothing, or pottery.

Documents: Written records like letters, official reports, or legal documents.

Diaries: Personal journals recording daily experiences.

Memoirs: Personal accounts of significant events written by someone who experienced them.

4.21 ESSENTIAL/SUGGESTED READINGS

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- Howell, Martha and Walter Prevenier (2001). From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. (Ch.2, "Technical Analysis of Sources," Ch.3, "Historical Interpretation: The Traditional Basics," and Ch.4, "New Interpretative Approaches").

- Munslow, Alun (2000), The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies, second edition, London: Routledge [Relevant entries – concepts & names of historians are listed alphabetically just like a dictionary / encyclopedia].

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- Tucker, Aviezer (ed.) (2009), A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell Publishing (Ch.6, "Historiographic Evidence and Confirmation", Ch.10, "Explanation in Historiography" and Ch.14, "Historiographic Objectivity").

LESSON-5

CONDUCTING HISTORICAL RESEARCH

STRUCTURE

5.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to equip students with the knowledge and skills required to conduct historical research effectively. Students will learn how to identify a focused research topic, gather and analyse evidence, and construct a meaningful narrative. They will also develop the ability to critically evaluate sources, present arguments based on evidence, and write scholarly research papers that are clear, concise, and engaging.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Historical research is more than just compiling facts; it is an analytical process that seeks to interpret the past by asking informed questions and examining evidence. This lesson outlines the essential steps and best practices for conducting historical research, including identifying the audience, defining a topic, formulating an argument, and using primary and secondary sources effectively. Students will also explore the historian's mindset, emphasizing critical thinking, questioning sources, and considering multiple perspectives. By mastering these skills, students will learn how to present well-supported conclusions and craft compelling historical narratives.

In addition to being a scholarly investigation, research is a social activity intended to create new knowledge. Historical research is your informed response to the questions that you ask while examining the record of human experience. These questions may concern such elements as looking at an event or topic, examining events that lead to the event in question, social influences, key players, and other contextual information. Historical research is the process of examining and interpreting evidence to understand the past. It involves identifying a topic, gathering sources, and analysing the evidence to develop a narrative.

5.2 IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

All writing assignments are intended to be read, and the intended audience should always determine what is written. History is no different. An entry on Napoleon in World Book Encyclopedia is written for a general audience, while an article on Napoleon's Waterloo

Campaign in the Journal of Military History is written for a scholarly audience. Unless otherwise instructed by your professor, you should always approach research papers in history courses as though you were writing an article for readers who have an interest in a particular subject but who may not be specialists in the field. Define important terms and give enough information to provide a context for your paper, but do not get bogged down in general information.

5.2.1 Have a Sharply Focused and Limited Topic

You must limit your topic in order to study the sources carefully, to think about them thoroughly, and to write about them meaningfully. If you try to do too much, you will not do anything.

Present An Argument: A common misconception about historical research papers is that they should simply compile the facts. Nothing is further from the truth. The purpose of writing a historical research paper is to interpret the past. Do not simply provide what one would find in an encyclopedia entry, whose purpose is, in the words of Sergeant Joe Friday, "to state the facts, and nothing but the facts." Find a problem and try to solve it. Ask a question and seek to answer it. There must be a thesis or theses to develop.

Base your paper on primary sources and a thorough reading of secondary sources. Whenever possible trace your research back to the primary sources. Primary sources are the texts nearest to any subject of investigation; secondary sources are always written about primary sources.

The most common primary sources are written documents. But primary sources can also include photographs, paintings, sculpture, architecture, oral interviews, statistical tables, and even geography. A thorough reading of secondary sources will provide you a sense of interpretation. Never rely upon one secondary source! Always incorporate the views of as many secondary sources as possible!

Build your paper step by step on evidence: You must give readers reasons to believe your story. Nobody is interested in your opinion if it is not clear that you know something. Do not make generalisations, unless they can be immediately supported by quoting, summarizing, or otherwise alluding to a source. Writing a history paper is similar to presenting a case in a court of law. The reader is your judge and jury, and you must present evidence to support your case. Evidence is not always clear; it must be analysed, evaluated, and pieced together before it can be used.

Provide a good title for your paper: A good title not only captures the interest of the reader but also helps the writer stay focused on the main point.

Get to the point quickly and stick to it: A good paper sets the scene quickly, reveals a problem to be solved, and sets out in the direction of a solution. The best writers have something important to say and start saying it quickly. Within two paragraphs of the beginning, the reader should understand why you have written your paper; otherwise, the reader will lose interest before you get to the point. Stick to the point. Be sure everything in your paper serves your main purpose and be sure your readers understand how everything included in the paper relates to the main purpose.

Tell a Good Story. Capture the readers' imagination by writing descriptively, while at the same time writing analytically. Good historical writing should take the reader along a journey through time that explores important issues and arrives at a climax, where everything comes together.

Document Your Sources. You will not be taken seriously for your own work unless you demonstrate that you are familiar with primary sources and the work of others who have studied the same material. To avoid the cardinal sin of plagiarism, you must document the sources used for facts, ideas, and interpretations presented in your paper, unless they are common knowledge.

Write Dispassionately. Do not interject your emotions into your prose. Be careful in passing judgments. People in the past must be judged by the standards of their own time, not ours. Allow people's actions or words to speak for themselves. Readers do not need coercive comments and often resent them. If you have presented the details, trust your readers to have the right reactions.

Reach Independent Conclusions. A good paper demonstrates both thorough research and independent analysis. Never simply tie a series of block quotes together and try to pass it off as a research paper! Present your own conclusions and interpretations based upon thorough research.

Consider Counter-Evidence. There is always more than one side to every issue. You must take counter-evidence into account. Never research and write toward a preconceived idea. Let your research be your guide. Always consider opposing information and interpretations in writing a paper; the reader will have more confidence in your conclusions if it is clear that you have weighed every side of an issue carefully before reaching a conclusion.

Use standard language and observe the common conventions of writing: A paper may be based upon thorough research of both primary and secondary sources, but it will be worthless if it is poorly written. The reader not only will be unable to understand the point the writer is trying to convey, but will not take him\her seriously. If the reader has to read a sentence more than once, odds are that something is wrong with the sentence.

Let your first and last paragraphs mirror each other: Although your beginning and ending should not be mechanical recitations of "what I am going to write about" and "what I have written about," they should reflect some of the same words and ideas. The introduction sets out the problem, the body points toward the solution, and the conclusion ties it all together.

5.2.2 The Historian's Mindset

1. **Questioning Your Sources**: Our knowledge of the past is limited to the sources available about the past. Just as the journalist asks questions to arrive at an understanding of the present, a historian must ask questions of his\her sources to arrive at an understanding of the past.

2. Who questions not only seek to provide biographical information but also make us think of character. Who was Martin Luther? What kind of person was he? What did people who knew him say about him? Who questions raise the issue of responsibility. Who was most responsible for the First World War? Who questions make us think of those affected by various events. Who was most likely to die during the Black Death? Who was most likely to vote for Jackson in the Election of 1828?

3. What questions seek to understand what really happened. Like a detective, you might have to piece together evidence from a variety of sources to find the answer. In some cases it might be difficult to determine because the evidence is either lacking or is contradictory. What really happened during the duel between Hamilton and Burr? What questions also seek to understand what something means. Certain words, such as liberal have a far different meaning in a nineteenth century context than a twentieth-century context.

4. When questions help place historical events in their proper time frame. When questions also provide important answers to problems in history when asked in relation to something else. What did Nixon know and when did he know it? When did LBJ make the decision to commit U.S. forces in Vietnam? Before or after Tokin? During the Election of 1964?

5. Where questions seek to place events in a geographical context. Where were the best Union forces placed at Gettysburg? Answering a where question can also help answer other questions. Where did crops fail in France during the summer of 1789? Where were the most violent upheavels in the countryside? Answer: the same areas, which tells us that economic distress had more of an impact on the masses that the ideas of the Enlightenment.

6. Why questions are what make history fascinating and worth writing about. Knowing what happened is not enough. The historian seeks to discover why it happened and why it had the influence that it did.

    a. Always distinguish between the precipitating cause and the background causes of a great event. The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand precipitated the First World War; it did not by itself cause the First World War. Precipitating causes make good research topics because they have a natural focus and because "What happened?", "Why it happened?", and "Why did it had the impact that it did?" merge together.

    b. Remember that historical causation is complex. Seldom does one thing cause another. Always examine events in their proper context by weighing the relative importance of various causes. Avoid taking a backward view of history; historical events flow forward. Just because one event preceded another does not mean that they were connected. Do not forget the masses when examining the actions of great leaders? Did the leader shape public opinion, or what he shaped by it?

    c. Be cautious in your judgments, especially when dealing with motivations. Why did Constantine legalize Christianity? Be sure to examine every side of the issue.

7. **The Use of Inference**. Sometimes the available sources do not tell us precisely what we need to know. That does not mean that we have to give up. A historian uses inference to fit everything into a plausable whole. The laws of a society often infer far more than they actually state.

8. **The Use of Statistics**. Statistical information has become a major source for writing history. The United States Census provides a wealth of information. The use of statistical information is possible whenever we can reduce evidence to numbers. Statistics help put complex matters into terms that are easier to understand. One out of every two Frenchmen who were between the ages of 18 and 32 died during the First World War. During 1916 the British causality rate was one every forty-five seconds.

But the interpretation of statistics requires a high level of skill. Just because the counties of East Tennessee voted to remain in the Union in 1861 does not mean that the inhabitants favoured abolishing slavery and extending equal rights to blacks. Statistics also cannot measure the intensity of beliefs. A majority of Americans favoured the Vietnam War, but not with the same intensity that a minority opposed it.

5.2.3 Modes of Historical Writing

1. There are four common modes of writing that historians use--description, narration, exposition, and argument. You do not have to limit yourself to one or another; the best papers will use all four. For example, a paper on the Battle of the Somme might use all four. A narrative paragraphy paper may tell how British soldiers huddled in their trenches for days as a preliminary barrage pounded the German frontlines and then climbed out and advanced across no-man's land. A descriptive paragraph might give details of no-man's land--the huge crater holes, the barren landscape, the sea of mud. A brief exposition might consider how demoralized British infantry became when they bogged down in mud and could not bring heavy equipment forward. A writer might then argue that the lengthy preliminary barrage served only to give the Germans ample notice that an attack was coming and to make it impossible for troops to advance, therefore leading to the deadliest battle in history-1.2 million casualties. The British army lost almost 60,000 men on the first day alone (almost 20,000 of them dead), or one casualty per yard of front.

2. **Description**: Description presents an account of sensory experience--the way things look, feel, taste, sound, and smell. A good history paper uses vivid descriptions to describe people and places. Never try to describe everything, or you will get bogged down in details. Simply try to captivate the readers's imagination. Never make things up, however. Base descriptions on evidence.

3. Narratives tell stores, and narratives are the bedrock of history because they tell us what happened. As is the case in description, you need to decide what to include and what to exclude. You must also put things in their proper order. Never twist events out of context in order to tell a better story. Recognize that there are contradictions in evidence and indicate either in your text or in the endnotes. A good narrative is not simply a recitation of facts in chronological order. It builds toward a climax. If you cannot find a climatic point, reorganize your story, shift focus. It is sometimes effective to beginning your paper by describing a climatic event, then going back and build a narrative that leads up to it.

Consider the following in writing a narrative:

1. Why am I telling this story?

2. Where do I want to begin?

3. What happened?

4. When did it happen?

5. Who or what causes those things to happen?

6. What were the most important events that happened, the least important?

7. Who were the main characters in the drama?

8. What is the climax of the story?

9. Where do I want to end?

10. What does the story mean?

11. What details help me tell the story more effectively?

12. What details get in the way of the story?

4. **Exposition**: Expositions explain--ideas, causes of events, the significance of actions, the motives of participants, the working of an organization, the ideology of a party. Exposition usually coexists with other modes. For example, a narrative on the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand should explain why it happened.

5. **Argument**: Historians use argument to take a position on a controversial subject. Every paper should contain an argument, simply because the paper should have a thesis that the author wants us to believe. Arguments differ from an exposition in that they not only seek to explain the writer's point of view, but also seek to prove that other points of view are wrong. An author of a paper on Germany's role in the Outbreak of the First World War may assert that Russia was more responsible, to be convincing he will need to explain why others who have concluded Germany was responsible were wrong.

Consider the following rules in making an argument in historical writing:

1. Always state your own argument quickly and concisely, as early as possible in your paper. Get to the point in the first paragraph if possible. Be quick to deal with contradictory sources and stress why your evidence is more reliable.

2. When you make an assertion central to your case, provide some examples as evidence. Otherwise, you will not be taken seriously.

3. Always give the fairest possible treatment to other viewpoints. Never distort someone's work. A diatribe against someone will get you into trouble every time.

4. Always admit weaknesses in your argument or at least acknowledge questions that someone might raise about your work. This does not mean that you cannot be assertive; it simply means to be honest and do not be dogmatic.

5. Stay on the subject throughout your essay. Once you stray off the path of your argument, the reader might never get back on it.

6. Avoid common fallacies. "Fallacies are illogical arguments that pose as logical statements. For example, do not set up "straw men" in order to prove a point. Prove it on the basis of evidence. Do not assume that because one thing happened after something else that the first caused the second. Avoid the bandwagon.

5.3 RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC

5.3.1. Choosing a Topic

Finding a topic to write on is often an ordeal, but there are some steps that every writer can take that should make the process easier.

1. **Start with something that interests you**. You must be curious about the people, events, documents, problems, or issues you are writing about in order to ask the questions that will enable you to write a good research paper.

2. **Ask questions that need to be answered**. Why did Johnson get the United States involved in Vietnam? Should Affirmative Action continue? How should Welfare be reformed? Do not be afraid of issues that received a lot of attention. A good history paper might simply examine how various historians have interpreted an issue. How have historians interpreted the War Guilt Question of World War One?

3. **Read and write down your thoughts**. Some of your best ideas for a topic will come from reading your textbook, a newspaper, or a magazine. You will see an issue that strikes your interest. Carry a notebook with you at all times to jot down ideas. As you

do more reading, ask questions about your preliminary topic and then try to answer them. You may be able to start shaping the argument that you will be making in your paper.

4. **Limit your Topic**. By far the greatest flaw in most research papers is that students attempt to write on topics that are so broad that their paper lacks focus and originality. Your topic must be defined narrowly if you are to write an interesting, informative paper. You cannot write an interesting and original paper on topics such as "Martin Luther" or "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" or "The Causes of the Civil War" or "The Second World War." The most that you could do would be to write a summary of a person's life or of an event; you would not be able to write a thoughtful paper that tries to make a special point. You must write on something that you can study in depth and write about within the space you have available. Your topic must be defined according to the sources available.

5.3.2. Starting Your Research

1. Start your research in the reference room of your library. Begin by reading several encyclopedia articles related to the topic that you are interested in so that you will have a good foundation for further research. If your knowledge of Maximilien Robespierre is limited, you will not know what to focus on unless you do some preliminary reading. After reading articles in general encyclopedias, such as Encyclopedia Britainica, move on to more specialized encyclopedias, such as A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution.

    The Cambridge Ancient History

    The Cambridge Medieval History

    The New Cambridge Modern History

    The Dictionary of National Biography (Britain)

    The Dictionary of American Biography

2. Always compile a bibliography while you are doing research by jotting authors and titles down on index cards or in a notebook. Check both the bibliographic references and recommendations for further reading in the bibliographies appended to articles in the encyclopedias you first read.

3. Always try to go as far back to the original as possible. As you examine secondary sources, look for references to primary sources.

5.3.3. Primary Sources

1. Look for editions of the written works of the various people who may enter your paper. Primary sources will give your work more authority. The best editions of collected or selected works are generally the latest. The best editions are those of the complete works, such as the complete papers of Woodrow Wilson edited by Arthur Link. Do not overlook autobiographies of associates. If you are doing a paper on Wilson's Role in the Paris Peace Conference, Lloyd George's autobiography published after the war would be a valuable source of how Wilson's partners in peace viewed him. Go through the indexes of collected works to find references to the particular aspect you are examining.

2. Editions of correspondence are an important source because they belong to certain time and place. Letters freeze what a person thinks at a given moment based on the context of that moment. People often say things in their personal correspondence that they would never say in public. Diaries are also good sources, but sometimes you must be careful if it appears that the person was writing for posterity. This is especially the case with memoirs and autobiographies.

3. There are some collections of primary sources that relate to a general topic that have been published. One of the most famous is The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Any student writing a paper on a Civil War battle must use this source.

4. Do not overlook unpublished materials. Many libraries include oral history collections, tapes, and records of individuals. Interviews are also valuable for studies of recent events (last fifty years). To prepare for an interview, learn all you can about the person and write out questions beforehand. Explore each question thoroughly. Ask for clarification or for details.

5.3.4 Secondary Sources

1. The bibliographies in the articles you read in reference works will give you a start toward both the primary sources for your study and the secondary sources. The secondary sources will broaden your understanding and help you see the problems and opportunities in the sources as other writers have seen them. The card catalog in the library will list books by titles, author, and subject. Since most researchers tend to specialize, the odds are that if you find a reference to a book on Wilson by Arthur S. Link, he has written several. Once you find a book on the shelves, browse along the stacks in that section. The footnotes or endnotes of books will lead you to other books and to articles.

2. Scholarly journals are sources that students too often overlook, simply because articles are harder to find than books. It takes more digging, but the deeper you go the more gold nuggets you will find. The Reference Library will have Bibliographic Guides on Special Subjects that will lead you to articles. Books will cite articles in footnotes and bibliographies. Specialized journals generally publish an annual index that lists the articles for the previous year.

5.3.4 Evaluate Sources

Determine if the sources are authentic and accurate. Evaluating the accuracy of historical sources is a critical skill that enables historians, researchers, and students to decide how much they can believe the information offered by a source.

Since all historical sources are written people who have a particular perspective and bias, some of the information provided by them can be manipulated by them.

This is why it is so important to determine how accurate an individual source of information is. Accuracy is a source evaluation skill where you are asked to form a judgment about the correctness of the information provided by a source.

What is historical 'accuracy'?

Since it is almost impossible to be 100% certain of a source's accuracy, your answer needs to talk in terms of the 'degree of potential accuracy':

For example: Extremely - Very – Somewhat – Rarely – Not very

To assess the accuracy of a source, ask questions like:

- Is the information corroborated by other reliable sources?

- Are there clues of bias in the source that may suggest it may be inaccurate?

- Is the information offered in the source plausible?

How do you determine a source's accuracy?

The easiest way to argue in favour of a source being accurate is to show that the information provided by the source is corroborated by a different source.

However, there are other ways you can also argue that a source is potentially accurate:

- The creator is writing to an audience who would have been fully aware of the information stated.

- The source was written with the explicit purpose of recording unbiased information.

- The information is corroborated by a separate, more reliable source.

What if a source is inaccurate?

Finding out that a source has provided inaccurate information is not a bad thing for your assessment tasks. It shows a great deal of maturity if you can engage with inaccurate sources. Being able to talk about why a source is inaccurate can actually earn you more marks, so don't shy away from discussing inaccuracies in sources.

How to prove inaccuracy?

The easiest way to argue in favour of a source being inaccurate is to show that the information provided by the source is contradicted by a different source.

However, there are other ways you can also argue that a source is potentially inaccurate:

- The information is contradicted by a separate, more reliable source.

- There is obvious bias in the source and that it fails to deal fairly with both perspectives on an event or person.

For example,

Demonstrating source accuracy in your writing: Herodotus' account may sound fanciful, but the archaeological findings have proved that he accurately described the weapons and armour of the Persian soldiers.

Demonstrating source inaccuracy in your writing: Hitler's claim that Jewish soldiers undermined the German army during the First World War is clearly contradicted by the large number of Jewish combatants that received military awards for bravery during the conflict.

Sophisticated evaluation: values and limitations

While evaluating historical sources, it's important to recognize that they can often contain a mix of accurate and inaccurate information. This can arise from various factors, such as the author's limited knowledge, biases, or the passage of time leading to distortions or misinterpretations. For instance, a diary entry may provide a firsthand account of an event, offering valuable insights, but it might also reflect the writer's personal prejudices or misunderstandings.

Similarly, a historical text could accurately describe one aspect of a period while misconstruing another. Therefore, when assessing a source, it's crucial to critically analyze each piece of information within its broader context, cross-referencing with other sources to separate fact from fiction and build a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the past.

5.3.5 Analyse the sources

Interpret the sources to understand the significance of the topic in history. When you analyse a primary source, you are undertaking the most important job of the historian. There is no better way to understand events in the past than by examining the sources — whether journals, newspaper articles, letters, court case records, novels, artworks, music or autobiographies — that people from that period left behind.

Each historian, including you, will approach a source with a different set of experiences and skills, and will therefore interpret the document differently. Remember that there is no one right interpretation. However, if you do not do a careful and thorough job, you might arrive at a wrong interpretation.

In order to analyse a primary source you need information about two things: the document itself, and the era from which it comes. You can base your information about the time period on the readings you do in class and on lectures. On your own you need to think about the document itself. The following questions may be helpful to you as you begin to analyse the sources:

1. Look at the physical nature of your source. This is particularly important and powerful if you are dealing with an original source (i.e., an actual old letter, rather than a transcribed and published version of the same letter). What can you learn from the form of the source? (Was it written on fancy paper in elegant handwriting, or on scrap-paper, scribbled in pencil?) What does this tell you?

2. Think about the purpose of the source. What was the author's message or argument? What was he/she trying to get across? Is the message explicit, or are there implicit messages as well?

3. How does the author try to get the message across? What methods does he/she use?

4. What do you know about the author? Race, sex, class, occupation, religion, age, region, political beliefs? Does any of this matter? How?

5. Who constituted the intended audience? Was this source meant for one person's eyes, or for the public? How does that affect the source?

6. What can a careful reading of the text (even if it is an object) tell you? How does the language work? What are the important metaphors or symbols? What can the author's choice of words tell you? What about the silences — what does the author choose NOT to talk about?

Now you can evaluate the source as historical evidence.

1. Is it prescriptive — telling you what people thought should happen — or descriptive — telling you what people thought did happen?

2. Does it describe ideology and/or behaviour?

3. Does it tell you about the beliefs/actions of the elite, or of "ordinary" people? From whose perspective?

4. What historical questions can you answer using this source? What are the benefits of using this kind of source?

5. What questions can this source NOT help you answer? What are the limitations of this type of source?

6. If we have read other historians' interpretations of this source or sources like this one, how does your analysis fit with theirs? In your opinion, does this source support or challenge their argument?

Remember, you cannot address each and every one of these questions in your presentation or in your paper, you need to be selective.

5.3.6 Develop a Narrative

Create a written account of your findings. The Common Core's addition of narrative writing is likely to challenge many History/Social Science researchers that are unfamiliar with this type of writing. Students are now expected to write narratives that develop real or imagined experiences, and/or events using well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Begin a paper with general introductory comments that establish your topic, timeframe, major players, and other relevant basic information. From here (either in the same, or in a second paragraph immediately following) transition into your thesis, which establishes the precise question your paper will engage, and offers a general, preliminary answer.

The main body of your paper should systematically set out to answer, in detail now, the question or issue articulated in the thesis. In order to provide such an answer, you may need to offer significantly more background information than you did in your introduction. Now is the time to establish a broader context. As there may be multiple angles from which you wish to approach the issue identified in your thesis, provide context on each variable you plan to explore in the paper to follow.

Consider the outline we created for our topic of "The Austrian Catholic Church and the Anschluss," to which you will find a link at the bottom of this page. You will notice that, following the introduction/thesis, two full sections of the outlined paper are dedicated to establishing a broader context, each illuminating a different relevant aspect of the larger topic:

1. Establishes the Anschluss itself: what happened, when, who were the various players, what was the timeline of the key events, etc.;

2. Examines a related yet distinct issue of equal relevance to our larger topic: what was the general relationship between Catholicism and fascism, and how did that relationship play out in the specific Austrian scenario of the Anschluss?

It is generally only *after* having established necessary context that a paper moves into specifics. Indeed, this dynamic of moving from the broad to the specific is one that begins in a paper's opening paragraph (general introductory comments, followed by specific thesis), and continues as the paper establishes a broader context before engaging the specific evidence that will help prove its general claim in the thesis.

5.4 FORMULATING A CONCLUSION

A conclusion offers the final word on a paper: the insight you hope to have imparted to your reader, your paper's moral or lesson. As such, it is important that your conclusion do more than merely summarize the contents of your paper. Too often, a student begins the last paragraph of

a paper with the words, "In conclusion...," then re-caps the contents of the entire essay, point for point, and simply leaves it at that.

A real conclusion, however, does more. Revisiting the main points of your paper in your final paragraph is a good idea, yes. But then, take things to the next level. Remember the question or claim you articulated in your thesis, whose resolution has been the main objective of your paper? That question now needs to be re-invoked and, this time, *definitively* answered. More still, you need to leave your reader with a higher level of insight into your topic, and an understanding of how your specific topic illuminates' larger issues in history. If you can articulate what it is that has made you topic worthy of historical inquiry in the first place, and what its larger lessons are - *then* you have a strong conclusion indeed.

5.4.1 Basic Issues While Writing on History

Cause and Effect: The study of cause and effect requires a strong grasp of historical chronology - constitutes one of the basic approaches to the discipline of history. The underlying principle is one adapted from physics: for every action there is an equivalent reaction; every cause results in an effect. In historical terms, every event has a cause, and is itself the cause of subsequent events, which may therefore be considered its effect(s), or consequences. For various reasons, three of which are listed below, this view of history has become less popular in recent times. However, thinking in terms of cause and effect remains a valuable skill you should master.

Some of the problems with the cause-and-effect approach to history include:

- **its risk of reducing complex historical issues to overly simplistic explanations**. For example, "in 1914, Austrian Crown Prince Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Bosnian Serb ['the cause']. In retaliation, Austria declared war on Serbia, launching the sequence of events that culminated in World War I ['the effect']." In fact, both the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and even Austria's declaration of war against Serbia are but two relatively minor variables within the far larger set of complex issues that contributed to the many causes of World War I. While Franz Ferdinand's assassination may have been the immediate catalyst of the war, it was certainly not the cause.

- **its implicit reliance on the negative logic-argument**. Part of the way in which physicists (and some philosophers, too) have applied the cause-and-effect model to their subject matter is by way of negative logic. Not only did A cause B, but (here's the negative logic) B would not have happened, had it not been for A. In history, however, things do not work out as neatly. Take the above World War I example. Following the negative logic argument, if Franz Ferdinand hadn't been assassinated (the catalyst for World War I, remember?), the war itself would never have begun. This claim is highly doubtful: most historians agree that the rivalry between the major European empires, the power blocs that had been established among them, and the complex set of alliances that existed within each bloc had made war all but inevitable long before 1914. In fact, if Franz Ferdinand had not been assassinated, and even if Austria had not declared war on Serbia, a major military confrontation involving all European powers would most likely still have occurred.

- **its inability to anticipate the unreliability principle**. Another concept from physics, the unreliability (or Heisenberg) principle, articulated in 1927, severely complicated physicists' earlier faith in simple causal relationships with its discovery that, no matter how clearly a cause seems poised to have a certain effect, unexpected

variables may impact upon the outcome in unanticipated ways. The same is true of history. For example, the European power blocs of the pre-World War I period and the complex sets of internal non-aggression and mutual aid agreements that existed within them made war inevitable, as outlined above. Following World War II, however, a similar set of circumstances (the U.S.-led NATO alliance vs. the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact, each of which was also internally organized around the principles of mutual aid and non-aggression) did not lead to a direct confrontation between the two blocs. In fact, contrary to popular wisdom, history does *not* necessarily repeat itself.

Despite the above-listed reservations, you still need to develop an understanding of cause and effect, for two reasons:

- an awareness of cause and effect, simplistic as it may be, does help you recognize causal relationships between historical events; this is an important skill

- you will frequently find your history professor assigning essay questions that ask you to "explain the cause(s)" or "examine the effect(s)" of specific events in history.

Like it or not, cause and effect is here to stay.

- Here's a sample topic, one that is in keeping with our events-leading-up-to-World-War-II theme, and a favourite in twentieth-century history classes:

  - Explain the Treaty of Versailles and explore ways in which it contributed to the rise of Adolf Hitler.

This is classic cause and effect, as even implied in the wording of the question: the Treaty of Versailles ("the cause"), dictated by Britain and France in the aftermath of World War I, "contributed" to the rise of Hitler (which, therefore, is "the effect"). In order to fulfill such an assignment, you will first explain the Treaty - which called upon defeated Germany to cede territories, give up its colonies to the victorious Allies, limit its army and navy, and pay war reparations of $33 billion - then show ways in which the treaty's effects (anger and resentment in Germany, accompanied by political and economic turmoil) helped set the scene for the rise of Hitler over the next fifteen years.

As you proceed, you will notice a whole series of causes and effects:

- Being forced to cede territories fuelled Germany's desire to reclaim those territories and, in fact, to *increase* its original territory, a desire articulated in Hitler's famous call for *Lebensraum im Osten* ("living space in the East").

- Being forced to give up its colonies (which went to England and France) stoked Germany's resentment against those countries, making it easier to support a leader who staked his political future on his ability to exact revenge against those who had "wronged" the nation.

- Being forced to limit the size of their armed forces fuelled a desire among Germans to restore the army and navy to their former stature. The explicitly militaristic appeal of Hitler and his uniformed brownshirts, along with his own military credentials and his association with German World War I hero Erich Ludendorff thus held significant appeal for the masses.

- Finally, the economic sanctions of the Treaty of Versailles, and the resulting political and economic turmoil, inspired within Germans a desire for a strongman leader who could restore order and rebuild the economy, two of Hitler's rallying cries.

Thus, we see that the method of cause and effect can yield useful results and, in so doing, can avoid its three above-listed potential pitfalls. By tracing each effect of the treaty in its own right, we are not reducing the complex issue of the rise of Hitler to an overly simplistic cause but - far from it - establishing a broader context within which to understand Hitler's career. Nor are we claiming the negative argument, that, had it not been for the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler would not have come to power (avoid such claims; also the claim that, had it not been for the treaty, there would have been no World War II; there are too many variables involved to make such claims). Finally, we are acknowledging the unpredictability principle: a Treaty that was designed to bring Germany to its knees and render it unfit to ever start another war in fact had an entirely different long-term effect.

5.4.2 Chronology

A grasp of chronology, simple as it may seem, is a fundamental skill of any historian. By "chronology," we mean what happened, in which order. Chronology is important because the exact order in which events occur helps us understand the cause and the effect of those events, and thereby allow us to step back and view the "big picture" of history - how and why events unfold in the way they do, and how they are related. In order to establish the exact order in which events unfold, consider preparing detailed timelines of the period you are studying. Such timelines will ensure that you always maintain an overview of the sequence of events at stake, and that you do not confuse cause and effect.

5.4.3 Establishing a Broader Context

Establishing a broader context is an important task for the historian. Doing so shows that events do not occur in a historical vacuum: just as any event is subject to the immediate dynamic of cause and effect, so too, by stepping back, the historian recognizes larger relationships between events and issues as they unfold over time.

In order to establish a broader context for your topic, ask yourself what events (both past and contemporaneous) may have had an impact on the subject on which you are writing. What *was* the impact of these related events on your topic, and why?

To answer such questions, you need to widen the scope of your investigation: if you are working with a textbook (and/or if it is the only source assigned for your paper) look for ways in which the authors connect the topic on which you are writing to past and contemporaneous events. If yours is a research papers, try entering key words of some of the related events into a search engine on the web and/or seek out alternative types of sources in print. Explore links, footnotes, bibliographies, and the library stacks: you'll be surprised by how much related information they can yield.

In the context of the imagined writing assignment in our Narrative History section, on Hitler's foreign policy prior to World War II:

Events fifteen years prior to Hitler's assumption of power as well as then-current events in Europe and in the world, all contributed to the short-sightedness with which the League of Nations and the United States responded to Hitler's policies. Events and issues of significance in the broader context of Hitler's Pre-World War II foreign policy include the following:

- The measures imposed upon Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, following World War I.

- the reluctance of France and England to become involved in a confrontation with Germany so soon after World War I.

- a worldwide economic depression that made the United States reluctant to become involved in European affairs and, because of its negative repercussions on the German economy, increased Hitler's support among the German populace.

5.4.3 Past events that figure into the broader context of Hitler's foreign policy

Consider that Germany after World War I had been severely punished politically and economically. As per the Treaty of Versailles (1919), Germany was forced to give up its colonies, to reduce its armed forces, make territorial concessions, and left with war reparation debts of $33 billion. These factors contributed to a sense of resentment and hopelessness among Germans, and to an economic crisis that contributed to the political rise of Hitler. Once in power, as of 1933, Hitler systematically set about rebuilding the German armed forces and reclaiming Germany's ceded territories. Retroactively acknowledging the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles, England, France and the United States hoped to avoid a major confrontation by acquiescing to Hitler's increasingly aggressive policies.

5.4.4 Contemporaneous events that figure into the broader context

Now factor in current issues and events of the 1930s: at this time France and England were still feeling the after-effects of World War I. When Hitler came to power, in 1933, World War I (which had ended in 1918, fifteen years earlier) was still a vivid memory to all of Europe, especially in those countries that had been directly involved: landscapes were still battle-scarred and casualties ran extremely high among all principal belligerents. Therefore, France and England (whose combined casualties were approximately 2.3 million, with many more seriously wounded among their populations) were willing to go to great lengths to avoid another major war, especially given the fact that neither had sufficiently re-armed since World War I to be in any position to confront the growing threat of Germany.

Finally, consider the impact of the Great Depression, which originated in the United States in October 1929 and had worldwide repercussions. Germany, whose economy had been precarious ever since World War I, was hit particularly hard. The resulting economic chaos increased Adolf Hitler's appeal to Germans, as he promised to rebuild the country's economy. Once Hitler came to power in 1933 (at which time the depression was still ongoing) alternative sources of national income for Germany, such as reclaiming the Rhineland, appeared legitimate in the eyes of many Germans (and, if to a lesser extent, in the eyes of the English and the French, too, who acquiesced to Germany's re-militarization of the Rhineland without much protest). The depression also made the United States, consumed by its own economic hardship, back away from any leading role in international affairs, and thus weakened America's potential to take a stand against Hitler that may have caused him to modify his foreign policy.

Taking such factors of the broader context of Hitler's foreign policy into account (there are many more) heightens your awareness of the interconnectedness of historical issues and events. You may choose to establish some or all of (indeed, perhaps even more than) the above-explored broader context in a paper of narrative history, depending on its scope and length and the nature of the assignment. For a longer, research paper, you will almost certainly want to take some of the broader context of your topic into consideration.

While our example is specific to the "Hitler's foreign policy"-assignment imagined in our section on Narrative History, the basic approach to establishing a broader context, explained in the opening paragraphs of this section, can be applied to any topic in history.

Dont's: Here are some basic things to avoid when writing about history. We refer not to the "don'ts" of style and grammar but, rather, to larger "mindset"-related issues that can undermine

the effectiveness of your writing, the validity of your claims, or the honesty of your work. There are many such "don'ts" but we will here highlight only three:

1. Don't ignore research or evidence that runs counter to your working hypothesis. Imagine you have spent days researching a topic on which you have developed a thesis and feel just about ready to write, only to discover evidence that seriously challenges your thinking on the subject. You may be tempted to ignore this new information, to act as if it didn't exist, and to proceed with your paper just as you'd planned all along. Don't. Ignoring evidence that runs counter to your thesis is intellectually dishonest and invalidates your claims. Furthermore, *engaging* such contradictory evidence will have one of two desirable effects:

    a. it will change your way of thinking on the subject altogether (in which case, your working hypothesis was wrong - good thing you found that counter-evidence before starting to write!), or

    b. it will force you to acknowledge the challenge it poses to your view of things and encourage you to strengthen your argument.

Either way, acknowledging and engaging inconvenient data will benefit your writing on history far more than ignoring it - which you should *never* do.

2. Avoid displaying bias or prejudice in your writing. For reasons explored in our section on Bias/Prejudice, the use of epithets, slurs, and inflammatory language of any kind is of course unacceptable, as are claims designed to elevate (or demean) one social, ethnic, national, religious, or gender group as compared to another, or all others. As importantly, the use of falsified evidence, the manufacture of evidence, or - as discussed above - the omission of evidence is equally unacceptable and often represents an attempt to justify or conceal a biased or prejudiced perspective. If you must operate from a biased perspective (which we discourage on principle) we recommend that you disclose your bias up front, in your introduction. Ideally, however, you should strive to remain open to all sides and interpretations of an issue, argument, or event.

The above two "dont's" are matters of principle. Avoiding such behavior will protect you from being criticized for your methodology, reasoning, or ideological beliefs. Our final "don't" on this page is of a different sort, however, less concerned with methodological integrity than basic academic honesty (related "don'ts" are explored in the sections on:

3. Don't hand in the same work in two (or more) different classes. Handing in the same work on multiple occasions is a common form of academic dishonesty that carries the same penalty as plagiarism. Basic rule: you can only receive credit for an assignment *once*. Trying to pass off a paper written (and handed in) for one course as a paper written for another is not only dishonest, it is also transparent: your professor will almost always be able to tell that such a paper was in fact not written for the class he or she is teaching. Note that a few changes to an existing paper's introduction and conclusion, and a slight change to its main body, do not make it a different paper. Remember: you can only receive credit for an assignment *once*.

Common Fallacies: There are a number of common approaches to history which - popular though they are - encourage false assumptions. We call these common fallacies and briefly list three below:

1. apples and oranges - drawing comparisons between events or sets of circumstances that *seem* to share a common denominator but are in fact distinct from one another by virtue of having occurred during different time periods, in different places, under

different socio-economic conditions, to different groups of people, etc., can lead to the incorrect assumption that, just because something is true under one set of circumstances, it will necessarily hold true for all circumstances of a similar sort. The act of making such comparisons is sometimes referred to as "comparing apples and oranges."

2. presentism - thinking about history from an exclusively "presentist" point of view (i.e., from the perspective of our present-day understanding of events) fails to take into account that, at the time in which historical events occurred, those involved did not enjoy the benefit of hindsight that has informed our present perspective. Presentism invites us to dismiss the poor decisions made by previous generations as having been based on their failure to anticipate the long-term consequences of their deeds. Yet to fully understand an historical event, we must view it not only with the benefit of hindsight, but also in the more limited context of its own times.

3. "history repeats itself" - we'll make this clear: history does *not* repeat itself. Yes, we can discern trends in history and - at best - will attempt to learn from the past in order not to repeat its mistakes. That history repeats itself, however, is simply too broad a claim.

5.5 PLAGIARISM

The word *plagiarism* is derived from the Latin *plagiarus*, or "kidnapper." In the English language, plagiarism refers to the intentional or unintentional act of using other people's ideas, words, or work without providing documentation.

As you know, every word-for-word quote is placed in quotation marks, and its origin is clearly acknowledged in a footnote or reference. Failure to provide such documentation constitutes plagiarism.

Additionally, lifting another person's *ideas* without acknowledging the source *also* constitutes plagiarism. Ideas originating outside of yourself, even when paraphrased or summarized in your own words, require explicit documentation. Failure to provide such documentation constitutes plagiarism.

Related acts of academic dishonesty include submitting under your own name papers borrowed, purchased, or stolen; and submitting a paper for which you have already received credit in a different course.

5.6 SUMMARY

This lesson provides a comprehensive guide to conducting historical research, emphasising the process of interpreting the past through informed questioning and evidence analysis. It highlights key steps, such as selecting a sharply focused topic, identifying the intended audience, and presenting an argument supported by primary and secondary sources. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate evidence, consider multiple perspectives, and avoid generalisations or preconceived conclusions.

The historian's mindset is central to the process, requiring careful questioning of sources to uncover what happened, why it happened, and its significance. The lesson also explains different modes of historical writing—description, narration, exposition, and argument—and stresses the importance of crafting a clear thesis, providing evidence, and maintaining clarity and focus. Finally, students are urged to write dispassionately, consider counter-evidence, and document sources properly to produce well-researched, analytical, and compelling historical papers.

5.7 KEYWORDS

Primary Sources: Original materials created during the time period being studied, like diaries, letters, photographs, government documents, or newspaper articles.

Secondary Sources: Interpretations of primary sources, like books, articles, or documentaries written by historians analyzing past events.

Bias: A perspective or prejudice that can influence the interpretation of historical events, present in both primary and secondary sources.

Chronology: The order in which historical events occurred.

Context: The social, political, and economic environment surrounding a historical event.

Historiography: The study of how historians have interpreted and written about the past, including different schools of thought.

Interpretation: The process of assigning meaning to historical evidence and constructing a narrative about the past.

Viewpoint: The perspective of the person creating a historical source, which can influence their account.

Evidence: The information used to support historical claims, including primary sources and material culture.

Artifacts: Physical objects from the past that can provide insight into history, like tools, clothing, or pottery.

Documents: Written records like letters, official reports, or legal documents.

Diaries: Personal journals recording daily experiences.

Memoirs: Personal accounts of significant events written by someone who experienced them.

5.8 ESSENTIAL/SUGGESTED READINGS

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