

UNIT I

DEFINITION

History is the study of life in society in the past, in all its aspect, in relation to present developments and future hopes. It is the story of man in time, an inquiry into the past based on evidence. Indeed, evidence is the raw material of history teaching and learning. It is an Inquiry into what happened in the past, when it happened, and how it happened. It is an inquiry into the inevitable changes in human affairs in the past and the ways these changes affect, influence or determine the patterns of life in the society. History is, or should be an attempt to re-think the past. Collingwood (1945) is particularly interested in this concept of history.

History aims at helping students to understand the present existing social, political, religious and economic conditions of the people. Without the knowledge of history we cannot have the background of our religion, customs institutions, administration and so on. The teaching of history helps the students to explain the present, to analyze it and to trace its course. Cause-and-effect relationship between the past and the present is lively presented in the history. History thus helps us to understand the present day problems both at the national and international level accurately and objectively.

In this unit we will be dealing with meaning, nature and scope of history, aims and objectives

of teaching history at secondary level and values of teaching history.

Concept of History

History is the analysis and interpretation of the human past enabling us to study continuity and changes that are taking place over time. It is an act of both investigation and imagination that seeks to explain how people have changed over time. Historians use all forms of evidence to examine, interpret, revisit, and reinterpret the past. These include not just written documents, but also oral communication and objects such as buildings, artifacts, photographs, and paintings. Historians are trained in the methods of discovering and evaluating these sources and the challenging task of making historical sense out of them. History is a means to understand the past and present. The different interpretations of the past allow us to see the present differently and therefore imagine—and work towards—different futures. It is often said to be the “queen” or “mother” of the social sciences. It is the basis of all subjects of study which fall under the category of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is also the basis of the study of philosophy,

politics, economics and even art and religion. No wonder, it is considered an indispensable subject in the complete education of man.

Defining history

The origin of the word History is associated with the Greek word 'Historia' which means 'information' or 'an enquiry designed to elicit truth'.

History has been defined differently by different scholars. Following definitions indicate the meaning and scope of History.

Burckhardt: "History is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another."

Henry Johnson: "History, in its broadest sense, is everything that ever happened."

Smith, V.S: "The value and interest of history depend largely on the degree in which the present is illuminated by the past."

Rapson: "History is a connected account of the course of events or progress of ideas."

NCERT: "History is the scientific study of past happenings in all their aspects, in the life of a social group, in the light of present happenings."

Jawaharlal Nehru: "History is the story of Man's struggle through the ages against Nature and the elements; against wild beasts and the jungle and some of his own kind who have tried to keep him down and to exploit him for their own benefit."

The above definitions explain History as a significant records of events of the past, a meaningful story of mankind depicting the details of what happened to man and why it happened. Mainly it deals with the human world.

2. NATURE AND SCOPE OF HISTORY

1. *A study of the present in the light of the past:* The present has evolved out of the past. Modern history enables us to understand how society has come to its present form so that one may intelligently interpret the sequence of events. The causal relationships between the selected happenings are unearthed that help in revealing the nature of happenings and framing of general laws.
2. *History is the study of man:* History deals with man's struggle through the ages. History is not static. By selecting "innumerable biographies" and presenting their lives in the appropriate social context and the ideas in the human context, we understand the sweep of events. It traces the fascinating story of how man has developed through the ages, how man has studied to use and control his environment and how the present institutions have grown out of the past.

3. *History is concerned with man in time:* It deals with a series of events and each event occurs at a given point in time. Human history, in fact, is the process of human development in time. It is time which affords a perspective to events and lends a charm that brightens up the past.
4. *History is concerned with man in space:* The interaction of man on environment and vice versa is a dynamic one. History describes about nations and human activities in the context of their physical and geographical environment. Out of this arise the varied trends in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of man's activities and achievements.
5. *Objective record of happenings:* Every precaution is taken to base the data on original sources and make them free from subjective interpretation. It helps in clear understanding of the past and enables us to take well informed decisions.
6. *Multisided:* All aspects of the life of a social group are closely interrelated and historical happenings cover all these aspects of life, not limited only to the political aspect that had so long dominated history.
7. *History is a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends.* The historian's interpretation of the past, his selection of the significant and the relevant events, evolves with the progressive emergence of new goals. The general laws regulating historical happenings may not be considered enough; attempts have to be made to predict future happenings on the basis of the laws.
8. *Not only narration but also analysis:* The selected happenings are not merely narrated; the causal relationships between them are properly unearthed. The tracing of these relationships lead to the development of general laws that are also compared and contrasted with similar happenings in other social groups to improve the reliability and

validity of these laws.

9. *Continuity and coherence are the necessary requisites of history:* History carries the burden of human progress as it is passed down from generation to generation, from society to society, justifying the essence of continuity.
10. *Relevant:* In the study of history only those events are included which are relevant to the understanding of the present life.
11. *Comprehensiveness:* According to modern concept, history is not confined to one period or country or nation. It also deals with all aspects of human life-political, social, economic, religious, literary, aesthetic and physical, giving a clear sense of world unity and world citizenship.

Scope of History

The scope of History is vast; it is the story of man in relation to totality of his behavior. The scope of history means the breadth, comprehensiveness, variety and extent of learning experiences, provided by the study. History which was only limited to a local saga, has during the course of century become universal history of mankind, depicting man's achievements in every field of life-political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, technological, religious and artistic etc., and at various levels-local, regional, national, and international. It starts with the past; makes present its sheet-anchor and points to the future. Events like wars, revolutions, rise and fall of empires, fortunes and misfortunes of great empire builders as well as the masses in general are all the subject matter of history. History is a comprehensive subject and includes- History of Geography, History of Art, History of Culture, History of Literature, History of Civilization, History of Religion, History of Mathematics, History of Physics, History of Chemistry, History of Education, History of Biology, History of Atom, History of Philosophy-in fact history of any and every social,

physical and natural science we are interested in. History today has become an all-embracing, comprehensive subject with almost limitless extent.

3. VALUE OF HISTORY

Value is that experience or fruit which one gets in the path of achieving aim whereas aim is a conscious and active purpose that we always keep before our mind. It always remains before us in the path of achievement. History is valuable as a study in more ways than one. Some of the values are general that is they apply to the teaching of the subject in all circumstances. Other values are limited and specific. They apply to particular types of history, hold for a particular level of schooling or are the necessary result of teaching if carried out in a particular way.

The values of teaching history may be stated as under:

Disciplinary value: History is quite fruitful for mental training. It trains the mental faculties such as critical thinking, memory and imagination. It quickens and deepens understanding, gives an insight into the working of social, political, economic, and religious problems.

Informative value: History is a wonderful treasure-house of information and can offer guidance for the solution to all human problems pertaining to science and art, language and literature, social and political life, philosophical speculation and economic development. History shows us the roots without uprooting the tree. A mere emotional attachment to our past can do us little good, unless it is accompanied with a sober, matured and rational assessment of the values involved. History is a path finder of man's future.

Cultural and social values: It is essential that one should understand the importance of his/her own cultural and social values. We should also develop attachment towards our cultural heritage. History makes us able to understand our present culture. It expounds the culture of the present time by describing the past. It explains the origin of existing state of things, our customs, our usages, our institutions. It enables us to understand that the transformations in human history were brought about by change of habits and of innovation. One of the main motives of history teaching has been to convey to the pupils the rich heritage of the mankind. It develops an understanding of the different forces which have shaped the destiny of man and paved the way for his development in society.

Political values: History is regarded to be the past politics. According to T.S. Seeley, "The historian is a politician of the political group or organization, the state being his study. To lecture on political science is to lecture on history." History stands as a beacon of hope when some nation is overcast with dark clouds. History is extremely necessary for completing the political and social sciences which are still in the making. History supplements them by a study of the development of these phenomena in time.

Nationalistic value: History teaching renders an effective service in imbibing the young

minds with a sense of patriotism. It is through history alone that an Indian child comes to know of the various deeds performed by such patriots as Shivaji, Rana Pratap, Guru Gobind Singh, Rani Lakshmbai, Bhagat Singh, Gandhiji, Nehru, etc. By reading their great lives and deeds, the child can easily be inspired to emulate them. A proper teaching of history can prepare the way for sober nationalism.

Internationalistic value: History shows the dependence and interdependence of nations which is the root of internationalism. The domain of history is very extensive and wide. Through a survey of world history, the young learners will come to realize that although different peoples had and still have different customs, habits, laws, and institutions; they have been striving towards the same end. The realization of essential unity of human race is the first step towards fostering universal understanding based on the virtues of tolerance, kindness, love, sympathy, and goodwill.

Educational value: History has unique value and importance because it is the only school subject which is directly and entirely concerned with the behavior and action of human

beings. The imagination of the children is developed through the teaching of history. It is logical to treat history as a temporal canvas against which the facts learned in other subjects can be arranged. History is a veritable mine of stories-stories can illustrate even subject of curriculum- the only condition is that the teacher should know enough stories and should know how to narrate them.

Intellectual value: A large number of intellectual values accrue from the teaching of history. It sharpens memory, develops the power of reasoning, judgement and imagination. It cultivates the qualities of reading, analyzing, criticizing, and arriving at conclusions. In historical writings our past is alive and treasured in the form of chronicles, biographies, stories and other forms of literary tradition. Once the pupils' curiosity is aroused and interest awakened, he can easily browse the vast pastures of historical knowledge.

Ethical value: History is important in the curriculum because it helps in the teaching of morality. Through it a child comes close to the valuable thoughts of saints, reformers, leaders, important persons and sages. The children get inspired by the life stories of these great leaders. There are other arguments that go against this notion that history gives ethical teaching.

- Truth or virtue does not always have the victory and falsehood or wickedness does not always come to grief. Many times it has been seen that honest and truth- loving man faces difficulties throughout the life and wicked and liars succeed in life.
- On the basis of experience and observations it has been seen that students do not take any interest in the work and life of saints and holy persons. They take more

interest in the deeds of warriors and they almost worship them.

- One more argument is that the lives of great men are full of complexities. Both good and evil are present in their characters. It would be unscientific if only their goodness is described. It is possible that students may emulate evils from the characters presented if both the elements are presented.

Above given arguments are quite convincing. Teachers should be given this suggestion that in teaching history they should impart the ethical teaching not directly but indirectly.

Vocational value: History has its vocational value. There are several openings for persons well qualified in the subject. They can get jobs of teachers, librarians, archivists, curators of museums, secretaries of institutions, social service workers, and political journalists etc.

4. HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Diplomatic history is a specialized branch of political history which deals with the principles of international relations. Ambassadors are the links between nations and they were custodians and practitioners of diplomacy.

The issue like—balance of power, cold war, international peace, disarmament have assumed great importance in recent times. The military history is an important chapter in political history where in wars, battles, campaigns and conquests figures very prominently. It deals with the causes of a war, strategy and war tactics, war weapons etc.

History is very helpful to politics because the political aspects is a part of the whole range of activity recorded by historian and knowledge of history would enable the politicians to know the politics better

and play their role effectively. Prof. Acton has correctly pointed out, “the science of politics is the one science that is deposited by the stream of history like grains of gold in the sand of a river.”

History and Economics:

History is also closely related to Economics. As the activities of a man in society are very closely related with the economic matters, the historian of any period must possess at least a rudimentary knowledge of the economics. In fact, the economic history of any period is an important branch of history and its understanding is absolutely essential for the proper understanding of history of any period.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

There has been a new orientation in our historical outlook from the days of the materialistic interpretation of history by Marx and such class struggle, man’s skill in earning, arts and crafts, trade, business and commerce, land revenue, taxes and a host of all other economic activities of the past figure very prominently in history.

No doubt, it is true that during the last few years economics has become very complex and difficult subject, mostly dependent on mathematics, and a modern historian cannot acquire basic working knowledge of economic theory without devoting a lot of time and leaving little time for the study and writing of history.

Therefore, a new set of economic history by the use of economic historians have emerged who try to study the economic history by the use of the economic tools. At present, history is so closely interlinked with the study of economic problems that it would not be possible to reconstruct history without knowledge of the relevant economic problems.

History and Statistics:

In the present century the writing of history has been greatly influenced by the statistical data. With the invention of computers, the collection of statistical data has become possible. The historians have given up the former practice of using the in exact term like majority of historians or people, “wide support” etc., and have started quoting the exact percentage of the people or the help of the computer and processing of enormous data can be completed within a short span and a systematic information can be collected.

Though the conclusion drawn on the basis of the data may be known to the historians on the basis of the impressionistic evidence, which does reduce the value because it provides a concrete evidence for a previously held thesis.

On the same line the use of the historical demography ‘viz-information regarding the movement of people, births and deaths, fertility rates, immigrations, etc., cannot be possible without the means to process and correlate the vast and complex data made available by various official records.

This type of detailed investigation enables the historians to understand the different facts of the past life. A new branch called “Cliometrics” has come into vogue, according to which the use of mathematics has come into greater play in the writing of history and interpretation of the numerous sources.

A good historical writing is described as:

$$A = a + b$$

“A” stands for the net result that flow from the historian’s mind and pen. “a” is the statistical “d” data and facts which he finds in the records or source “b” is the interpretative and explanatory skill of historian which are essential to make history meaningful. The proper of “Cliometrics” has resulted in what called “Quantified History”.

History and Sociology:

History and sociology are intimately related and a number of sociologists like Auguste Comte are also important figure in the development of historical studies. Karl Marx was also a great historian and sociologist. Both History and Sociology are concerned with the study of man in society and differed only with regard to their approach.

In the recent years it was realized that a fruitful interaction between the two disciplines was possible and Emile Durkheim, Max Weber acknowledge the initial dependence of sociology upon history. Although, history too benefits from the synthesis produced by the sociologists.

Sociologists exercised profound influence on the study of history by developing the certain narrow areas of human activity. They adopted the sampling techniques and develop their tools with a view to minimize the subjective element. In brief, sociology is helping history to study 'social dynamics' which is a study not of society at rest but constantly in social change and development social processes and social causation are giving a new perspective to history. India too our historians are now giving increasing attention to social history.

History and Ethics:

History and ethics have a close relationship. Although a true historian is not expected to pass distinct and sensitive judgments on the historical incidents and characters, yet he must know about the ethical principle of the time which influenced the conduct of the people in the past. Probably in the past, there was not reliable ethical science and much of followed were merely a reflection of the bigotry, partial and complexes of the different writers.

In the recent times an attempt has been made to evolve an ethical theory on the basis of biology, psychology and sociology by the scholars like Stephen, Duprat, Dewey etc. A science of conduct has been

evolved. A historian must understand and master this science of ethics to have a wider perspective of the issue.

History and Psychology:

History and Psychology are also closely linked. A historian must have to show some psychological insights while making an analysis of the motive and actions of men and societies. Historian work would be mere fiction unless he uses the discoveries of modern psychology. The personal life and the environment of a historian has a direct bearing in his decision and often import a bias to his account and renders the much desired objectivity impossible.

The impact of psychology on history is evident from the fact that in the past historian inquired primarily into the origins of war and ignored the result of war. As a result of the influence of psychology historians have under taken the study of the results and impacts of war. An understanding of the group psychology can enable a historian to determine the role of masses in the various revolutions such as Jingoistic patriotism has been described as the cause of certain wars but historian can discuss this cause with the help of the social psychology.

History and Geography:

Universally it is accepted that History and Geography have very close ties. In fact it would be practically impossible to study; certain branches of history without rudimentary knowledge of geography e.g., the diplomatic or military history cannot be fallowed without necessary geographical knowledge of the region. Geography is one of the eyes of history the other eye being chronology. Time and space factors give history its correct perspective.

Prof. Michelet was of the opinion that history was in essence found upon geography. He says “Without a geographical basis the people, the makers of history, seek to be walking.” German philosopher Kant said, “Geography lies at the basis of history.” Herder said that “history is geography set in motion.”

There are others like American geographer, Ells Worth Huntington, and Allen Semple who emphasise the importance of climate as having crucial influence on the course of history as well as on race temperament.

It is a fact that many geographical factors such as climate, social, rivers, mountains, sea, coastline and mineral resources aided the development of river in valley. Cultures as in early Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China. Herodotus, the early Greek historian describes that “Egypt is the gift of the Nile”.

Even Aristotle and Montesquieu have emphasized the influence of climate on man. The physical formation of the country such as Britain, Japan and Greece with broken coastlines had a very powerful impact on its history. This facilitated their naval strength and empire building activities.

Similarly, the Himalayas and the jungles of Assam have acted as barriers against invasions from the North and East of India. The Himalayas and the Gobi and Mangolian deserts were responsible for the isolation of China. The geographical discoveries of America and a new route to India determined the character of World History since the Renaissance.

Geography also plays an important role in the national character formation and influence the human behaviour. As we know that climate of a country greatly affected the civilisation of a country. Hence the knowledge of geographical is very essential for historians. It would be wise to accept the limited interpretation of geographical influence on man’s conduct or on his history.

