

**M.A. Semester – I
HISTORY**

**Course Code: HIST 101
Course Credit: 06 (Core)**

History and Historiography

Units: 1 to 20

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CBCS SYLLABUS
M.A. FIRST SEMESTER
CORE COURSE- HIST 101
History and Historiography

Course Description

Expressing the purpose and methods of history as in academic discipline seems simple and intuitive but, closer examination divulges that a variety tools methods, and ideas influence history writings in considerable ways. This course provides students with an introduction to key perspectives on historical writing. It explores influential approaches to history, examines the assumptions and methods used by academic historians, and traces the evolution of the discipline in recent decades. Students will engage with fundamental concepts such as fact, causality, objectivity, and evidence.

Outlook of the course will be global recognizing at the same time the influence of different ideology on the discipline. Through the course, students will also have the chance to sharpen their skills in analytical thinking, reviewing scholarly work and evaluating historiography traditions.

Course Learning Objectives

- a. Help students recognize the significance of history as an academic discipline and explore fundamental questions such as "what is history?" and "why study history?"
- b. Introduce students to different perspectives on the development of history as an academic field, along with the predominant forms and conventions of historical writing in recent decades.
- c. Develop a critical understanding of the theories, methods, and concepts historians use to analyze continuity and change in history.
- d. Encourage students to evaluate the influence of various schools of historical thought on the discipline.
- e. Acquaint students with key historiographical terms and trends, including concepts such as Marxist history, Subaltern studies, "history from below," the Annales School, and "history from the margins."
- f. Enhance students' research skills by strengthening their abilities in critical reading, analytical thinking, and academic writing.

Unit-I

1. History, what and why? nature and scope, section will include reflection on history, people and time.
2. Historical concepts: fact, causation and objectivity.

Unit-II

3. Pre-modern historiographical tradition: Greek. Herodotus and Thucydides: Roman. Livy and Tacitus: Christian, St Augustine; Arabs, Ibn Khaldoun; India, *Itihasa-Purana* tradition. Kashmir chronicle of Kalhan; Genealogy writing tradition, *vanshavali* of Chamba.
4. Modern historiography; Ranke and empiricism; August Comte and positivism.

Unit-III

5. Marxist and subaltern histories, reflection of classical Marxist framework, history from below:
The French and the Annales school.
6. Approaches in Indian historiography; Orientalist writings. William Jones; Colonial. James Mill and Vincent Smith; Nationalist, Jadunath Sarkar and R.C. Majumdar; Marxist. D.D. Kosambi and Romila Thapar.
7. History from the margins, with the intention of familiarizing students with approaches to writing oral, feminist and Dalit histories.

Unit-IV

8. Historical observation; General characteristics of historical observation, evidence, criticism and analysis.
9. The process of writing history; Selection of topic, note taking, research ethics, quotation & paraphrase synopsis, final draft: UNITisation, footnotes, citations, references & bibliography.

Essential Readings

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- Said, Edward W, *Orientalism*, New York: Random House, 1978.
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- Webster, John C.B., *An Introduction to History*, 2nd edn., Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd 1981.
- What is Marxism: The Marxist Theory of History, [http: www.marxism.org.uk/pack.history.html](http://www.marxism.org.uk/pack.history.html).

Suggested Readings

- Anderson, Perry, *Arguments within English Marxism*. London: Verso. 1980.
- Aymard, Maurice and Mukhia, Harbans (eds.). *French Studies in History*. New Delhi. Orient Longman, 1988.
- Banga, Indu (ed.), *Causation in History*, Delhi: Manohar Publishers. 1992.
- Barnes. H.E., *A History of Historical Writing*, New York; Dover Publications. 1962.
- Barzun. J. and Graff. H.F., *The Modern Researcher*, New York. Harcourt Brace & World Inc., 1970.
- Blackburn, R. (ed.), *Ideology and Social Science*. London; Fontana Press. 1972.
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 - *Feminisms*, Ania Loomba and Ritty Lukose (eds.). Durham; Duke University Press. 2012). pp 356-74.
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UNIT-1

MEANING OF HISTORY

STRUCTURE

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Learning Objectives

1.3 Understanding the Scope of History

Self-Check Exercise-1

1.4 Relationship of History with other Fields

1.4.1 History as a Science

1.4.2 History and Social Sciences

1.4.3 History and Literature

Self-Check Exercise-2

1.5 The Role of History

Self-Check Exercise-3

1.6 Summary

1.7 Glossary

1.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

1.9 Suggested Readings

1.10 Terminal Questions

1.1 Introduction

In this unit, we will introduce you to concepts related to the study of history. The study of history is important because our past determines the way we deal with the present, and therefore, it dictates what answers we offer to existing problems. The past must not be forgotten and it is essential to understand what history means, its scope in understanding our present, and its effect on the future. The Spanish philosopher and novelist George Santayana once said, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' The discipline of history can be defined as the discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events. Historians believe that discussions on the problems and issues of the past may lead to answers for the problems being faced in the present. As a field of study, history encompasses many sub-fields such as cliometrics, historiography and chronology amongst others. However, the most basic and essential one of these is historiography which is the history of historical study, its methodology and practices. The unit will also discuss the relationship of history with other social sciences.

1.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Determine the meaning of history, trace its origin and understand the relationship of history with other disciplines
- Understand the Scope and essence of history beyond cultures and across borders
- Explain the importance and the role of history as a discipline in its entirety

1.3 Understanding the Scope of History

History, in simple terms, is the documentation of change over time. Every individual, institution, community, and nation originate from the past. However, the events that shaped these entities are not always clear, prompting the need for references and study—commonly referred to as "history." If history is a chronological record of past events, then its interpretation and narration largely depend on the perspective and creativity of the historian. When significant time gaps exist between events and there is a lack of physical evidence, memory failures occur, making oral accounts less reliable. This underscores the crucial role of historians in preserving and accurately communicating historical facts for future generations.

The term "history" is commonly used in two ways: first, as a narration of past events, and second, as the interpretation and opinions surrounding those events. The foundation of history lies in a specific time period or location, which is studied through various sources. The diverse and multifaceted nature of human life provides ample evidence to reconstruct the past. The more historical evidence that is gathered, the more accurate and comprehensive the historian's depiction of the past becomes. In essence, history is an interpretation of past events based on available evidence, viewed through the lens of the historian. However, even with abundant evidence, historical accounts are never completely objective or absolute. Some scholars argue that achieving a fully accurate and complete understanding of history is impossible. However, with deep knowledge and extensive study of historical facts and evidence, our interpretations can closely reflect reality.

To effectively reconstruct and narrate history, it is essential to rely on substantial evidence, scientific inquiry, and investigative skills. Historians must interpret artifacts and documents critically to construct a vivid and meaningful historical narrative. It is important to recognize that history is neither a purely scientific field nor a purely imaginative discipline but rather a blend of both.

In its earliest form, history was recorded through prose, poetry, and accounts of heroic deeds, inscribed on manuscripts, stone tablets, tree bark, and fabric. The invention of paper greatly facilitated the documentation and study of history. Over time, historical records expanded through written materials enriched by archaeological findings such as cave paintings, human remains, tools, coins, and artifacts. The scientific study of these materials further enhanced historical accuracy, while advancements in language and writing played a vital role in the development of historical literature. Despite these improvements, the interpretation of history has always depended on the historian's imagination, analytical skills, and attention to detail.

History is believed to have originated in Asia, but its structured development as an academic discipline is credited to Europe. In modern times, historical research has reached advanced levels, particularly in Europe, where academic institutions have established rigorous research methodologies. Numerous specialized fields of history—covering social, political, and economic aspects—have emerged, enriching historical studies. In India, historical sources include ancient texts such as the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda, along with the Puranas, which serve as significant historical records.

The scope of history is vast, encompassing every individual, subject, discovery, and movement. Even history itself has a history. From the 19th century onward, incorporating a historical perspective into various disciplines became essential. The study of history provides practical insights that help people analyze situations, interpret emotions and societal behaviors, and develop a framework for evaluating human experiences. Traditional history focused primarily on cities, provinces, and foreign nations, but recent efforts aim to document the development of human societies as a whole, similar to studies in geography. While documenting the history of the human race is an ambitious task, it requires a systematic and collaborative approach by historians worldwide.

Leopold Von Ranke is regarded as the father of modern historical writing. His contributions helped establish history as a scholarly discipline based on empirical research. Beyond history itself, the study of historiography—the examination of how history is written—has gained prominence. Historiography involves analyzing the methods, perspectives, and biases of historians in constructing historical narratives.

Ultimately, the history of humanity is the history of human development. However, a long-standing debate remains about when and where the earliest human civilizations began.

This study of prehistoric human race is broadly classified into four parts, namely:

- Primitive stone age
- Former stone age
- North stone age
- Metal period

From the uncivilized age to semi-civilized age, and from a semi-civilized stage to a somewhat civilized age yet far from the modern times, the journey has gone on for thousands of years. But which type of civilization developed at what time period is still unknown to the world. What is definitely known to the world is that almost all the civilizations came up and flourished along the river valleys which were conducive for their developments. Examples of Indus valley civilization and Mesopotamian civilization are well-documented for everyone to read.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Briefly discuss the meaning of History.

Q2. What is the scope of History?

Q3. Name two of the oldest civilisations in the world.

Q4. Who is considered the father of modern historical writing?

1.4 Relationship of History with Other Fields

History which is a record of unique events in the life of mankind is the stir and vibration of life. It is not only the conserving and understanding of what has happened, but also the completion of what has been going on at present. History in this sense is philosophy in motion. To exist is to change, to change is to mature, and to mature is to advance and make progress. History is the barometer to record this progress of mankind. To Napoleon it was 'the only true philosophy and the only true psychology.' It is a drama in which God played the game, while man watched and learned. It is certainly a nerve-racking game to watch and learn, but man has indeed learnt to judge of things past, to improve upon things present and foresee things to come, so that they may know that to follow, what to appreciate, and what to avoid. Man looked at the wilderness of the past when he was brute and savage, and even as he looked, he beheld a garden which could be created out of a jungle. He has an eye not merely on the dizzy heights of the past but on the ditches and uneven surfaces as well, with the intention of building a glorious monument for the future. The nature of history is too complex and its scope too vast, touching almost every domain of human activity. Let us start with a few definitions of history.

History is a Greek word which means enquiry, research, exploration or information. The Greeks were the earliest to define history. It was Dionysius of

Halicarnassus who gave us the idea that history is philosophy teaching by examples. What he meant by this was that history offers us the quintessence of human experience whose study has universal value. When lessons are drawn from real life, and when these lessons are ordered to form a coherent whole, we have history. It indicates the growth of the human mind in which the unique facts of life are collected, classified and interpreted in a scientific way.

1.4.1 History as a Science

The high priest of the concept that history is a science is J.B. Bury, (the celebrated Professor of History, Cambridge University who succeeded Lord Acton. Bury declared in his inaugural address in January 1903 that, 'History is a science, no less and no more'. This bold and categorical assertion has excited much controversy. Bury's full statement deserves to be quoted. He said, 'If year by year history is to become more and more powerful for stripping the bandages of error from the eyes of men for shaping public opinion for advancing the cause of intellectual and political liberty, she will best prepare her disciples for the performance of the task, not by considering the immediate utility of next week or next year or next century, not by accommodating her ideal or limiting her range but by remembering always that though she may supply material for literary art or philosophical speculation she is herself simply a science, no less and no more'. This was the trend of thought all through the nineteenth century. The great German historian, Leopold Von Ranke, considered the father of modern historical writing, was also of the same view, when he said that the business of history 'is not to judge the past or instruct the present for the benefit of the future. Its business is only to show what actually happened'. Simultaneously the same view was upheld in France by Auguste Comte, who is one of the strongest protagonists of this view. Being a professor of mathematics he applied the principle of continuity, characteristic of numbers, to the historical process. Just as a curve can be traced when its algebraical formula is determined, the course of mankind can be traced when we have found the law by which it is directed. He calls history 'positive philosophy' which is another phrase for scientific thought from which supernaturalism is totally excluded. The course of men's thoughts may be traced by marking their mental path as determined by their natural limitations at various times. Thomas Buckle an English historian subscribed to this view.

History is not only a science but also an art. It cannot exclusively be called a science because it does not fulfil all the conditions of a science. Likewise, it is not a pure art, such as painting or music or sculpture, or literature, for the kind of imagination which these arts require is different from the kind of imagination which the historian should possess. The artist's work is highly creative and original, but a historian's work is mostly reflective and imitative. Unlike photography, history has a human touch as well. In short is both a science and an art.

1.4.2 History and Social Sciences

Having discussed where history stands in its structure, either in science or in arts or in both, we shall proceed to examine two more basic problems of historical theory, namely the kinds of history and its relation with other social sciences, and also history and ancillary sciences. History being a very comprehensive subject, has many aspects such as political, constitutional, diplomatic, military, economic, social, intellectual, and so on. These are not the only areas with which history is mostly concerned, but are the major ones. Political history demands a great share in the workshop of history, as politics is an important activity which brings about radical, speedy and far-reaching changes. Politics is instrumental in parameters the constitutional, legal, diplomatic, military, economic and even social problems of a country. Politics happened to be such a favourite branch of English historians that they went to the extent of saying that all history is political history, that history is the root and politics is the fruit, and that past politics is present history. At every turn from the earliest times down to the present period, it is the political activity either through monarchy or oligarchy, or aristocracy or democracy or tyranny or dictatorship that has dominated the life of mankind. At all times and in every country, either only one or only a few have ruled the many. Even in democracy, once the elections are over, power rests only in the hands of a few. As history takes stock of unique events, it is the story of the shepherd that attracts the attention rather than the flock of sheep, whose behaviour is steady. The king has been called the shepherd of his people. The modern Presidents, Prime Ministers, Parliaments, Senates and other political agencies are so much in the news that politics happens to be the mainstream of all history, and demands the lion's share of a historian's attention. Acton says that politics is like the grains of gold deposited by the stream of history in the sands of time. Polybius says that the use of history lies in learning the art of politics. Sir John Seeley says, 'Politics are vulgar when they are not liberalised by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to practical politics.'

Related to politics is constitutional history which assists in the understanding of the political trend in any period. The development of political institutions, rules, regulations, rights and duties, law and mode of justice, executive, legislative and administrative functions, economic and financial implications, nature of bureaucracy, fundamental principles of State policy are all defined under constitutional history. Certain countries have rigid and written constitutions whereas others have flexible and unwritten constitutions, such as in England. Constitutional history traces the origin, development, nature and functions of political institutions. The evolution of the principle of constitutionalism is impersonal and has a relationship with the history of ideas. Legal history is also importance these days, particularly in assuming societies where the Rule of Law is the way of life. The laws of Manu, the Code of Hamurabi. The Code of

Justinian, the Code of Napoleon, The Indian Penal Code of Macaulay, Holdsworth's *History of English Law*, Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* and P. V. Kane's *History of the Dharmashastras* are all very important works on legal history.

Diplomatic history is a specialized branch of political history. It deals with principles of international relations. Ambassadors are the links between nations and they are the custodians and practitioners of diplomacy. Such issues as balance of power, cold war, international peace, disarmament, outlawry of war have assumed great importance in recent times. Again, military history is an important UNIT in political history, wherein wars, battles, campaigns and conquests figure very prominently. It deals with the causes of a war, strategy and tactics in the war, war weapons, mode of fighting and similar topics. *The History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides, *The Great Rebellion* by Clarendon, and several histories on the American Civil War, the World Wars, and the Indian Mutiny literature have all added to historical. Since wars are psychological factors in the life of man, and since no age and no country is free from warfare, military history is as prominent in history as political history.

1.4.3 History and Literature

History and literature are closely associated. For a long-time history was considered a branch of literature, and it is only from the nineteenth century that history came to be regarded as a science. However, if history is the record of life, literature is the reflection of life the substance and the shadow always go together. Sometimes the shadow has amused man much more than the substance, just as a painting or photograph of a person appears to be more glamorous than the person himself. The main theme of both history and literature is man in society. Whereas history deals with the past, literature deals with the present and the future, although biography, one of the branches of literature, deals with the past as well. Both these disciplines use imagination as their powerful weapon, although its use is not liberal in history. In both, rhetoric plays an important part, so important that in the Elizabethan era, historians used to copy the style of Italian drama to enhance the effect of history. The result was magnificent art, but not history, and hence from the nineteenth century, the use of picturesque details in the narration of history has been curtailed. Nevertheless, the artistic presentation of the result of the research is highly desirable. Bury himself speaks of sympathetic imagination and psychological imagination regarding the interpretation of the past. There are many cases in which the truth can only be ascertained by methods which are not purely scientific. It is here that the imagination plays a vital part. 'The science of history deserves to be sprinkled with dutiful hands some grains of incense on her altar.' History would retain its graces by remaining close to literature. Ranke asserted that history was not an edifying branch of literature, but in the hands of Gibbon, history attained a literary garb unparalleled in later literature. Herodotus and Thucydides,

Livy and Tacitus, Macaulay and Trevelyan have used a literary art which has enhanced the beauty of their historical writing. The divorce of literature from history may almost certainly do it some definite harm.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. Which Historian claimed "History is a science, no less and no more."

Q2. How is History similar to Literature?

1.5 The Role of History

The question of usefulness of history depends on the meaning and concept of usefulness. The meaning and concept of utility in history is not explicit. It depends on satisfying a given need in a particular era, period or age. Since the concept of the utility of history reflects the attitude and approach of individuals, institutions and groups to the needs accepted or rejected by them, it becomes complex, complicated and controversial. Many renowned thinkers have also defended and demonstrated the utility of history. According to Herodotus, history evokes interest; Instructs delightfully, imparts information and excites curiosity. The Roman jurist. Cicero stated, 'Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child.' According to R.G Collingwood- The value of history is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.

History promotes in us an insight into human nature. It is a social memory without which society will lapse into societal amnesia. History plays a similar role in society as memory plays in the activity of the individual. History provides precedents. It helps to settle various internal and international disputes. History is a time - tested teacher. It teaches not how to live by it but how to learn from it. History gives us an indelible insight into man's vision and mission, words and deeds, ups and downs. It tries to reveal the meaning of life and unravel the purpose of living. History is a true friend, philosopher and guide Through history alone one can know, understand and appreciate the world as it is. It is an unending dialogue between the present and the past. History serves and satisfies the need for social education. Knowledge of the past offers a host of examples of socially significant human behaviour. Knowledge of history makes the present intelligible since the past is not self - explanatory. According to Levi Strauss. 'Those who ignore history condemn themselves to not knowing the present.' History is a social necessity since the past dominates human thinking, behaviour and conduct. Decisions are taken on the basis of past knowledge. History helps us to foresee the future. It is impossible to rationally reconstruct the present of the near future without understanding the historical roots.

History is misused as much as it is used. The scope of missing history is rather innate in the nature of the subject. Since the historian is concerned with the recent as well as the remote past, he or she is prone to committing errors while recording.

reconstructing, writing, narrating and interpreting historical facts and events. Ranke in the 1830s remarked that the task of the historian was 'simply to show how it really was'. Historical facts have to go through the prism of prejudice, predilection and preconceived notions and during this process they get distorted. In other words, history is misused when there is subjectivity.

History is misused when it is written on the basis of belief in the divine creation of universe. Theocratic history fits in this category. It is quasi - history at the best and abuse of history at the worst. History is abused when it is written on the premise that God is the real head of humanity and rulers are its agents. Similarly, mythological history also deals with supernatural characters. In theocratic history, the divine characters are portrayed as the super human rulers of human societies, however, in mythology the divine characters are not concerned with human actions at all. The divine actions are not dated. Mythological history is completely outside time estimation. History is misused when religious faith is used to explain historical phenomena. Events in history are, therefore, viewed from the angle of belief instead of reason. For example, Christian historiography. It was and still believed that God created people and countries. Historical process is, therefore, the working of God's purpose which ought to be the purpose of man. Fixing the birth of Christ at the centre of chronology, history was divided into two parts - Before (B.C) and after (A.D) the birth of Christ. This type of history has been termed as 'Apocalyptic' by R.G. Collingwood. To write history with the objective of justifying a preconceived notion is its misuse. Sometimes vested interests misuse history to justify their own view points. They persistently try to find out the historical materials to defend their cause or to deplore the cause of their opponents. For example, in 1917, the Russian Communists published some secret treaties with the purpose of discrediting the Czarist regime.

History is abused when it is written by writers provoked by the ideologies of their societies and ages. Since a historian is a product of his society, he is predictably influenced by ideological passion shared by his social contemporaries. For example, in the 19th century, when British prosperity, power and self-confidence were at their height, the British historians glorified the cult of progress. Bury explained progress as, the animating and controlling idea of Western Civilization. History is abused when historians propagate theories or patterns in an attempt to explain the historical events. It is misused when it is written with patriotic fervour. Patriotic history is essentially biased as it exaggerates the virtues of the native country at the cost of the enemy country. History is also misused when it is based on the view that what matters in history is the achievement of individuals. It is misused when it is written from the racist viewpoint. History gets distorted when it is written imaginatively and interpreted philosophically. It is abused when the historical evidence and facts are not strictly scrutinized and screened scientifically.

Self-Check Exercise-3

- Q1. Mention two Uses of History.
- Q2. In what manners can History be abused?
- Q3. What is Theocratic history?

1.6 Summary

History is the study of past events and the changes that have shaped human civilization. It is not merely a record of facts but an interpretation influenced by the available evidence and the perspectives of historians. The term 'history' originates from the Greek word 'historia,' meaning inquiry or knowledge gained through investigation. Historians classify human civilization into distinct periods, such as the Primitive Stone Age, Former Stone Age, North Stone Age, and the Metal Period, to better understand societal evolution.

While some view history as a science due to its reliance on systematic analysis, others recognize its artistic aspects, as it requires imagination and storytelling to reconstruct the past. History is deeply connected to political, economic, military, and social studies, offering insights into governance and human development. Aristotle defined history as a "systematic account of natural phenomena," highlighting its structured approach to understanding past events. More than just an academic discipline, history serves as a guide, offering valuable lessons that shape present and future decisions. Historiography, the study of how history is written, examines the methods historians use to construct narratives. Traditionally, history has been preserved through written records and oral traditions, enabling historians to explore and interpret past societies through diverse sources.

1.7 Glossary

- **History:** It is the chronological record of events or of a particular trend or institution.
- **Historiography:** It is the study of the methods of historians in developing history as an academic discipline and by extension is anybody of historical work out a particular subject.
- **Primitive Age** refers to the earliest period of human existence, characterized by simple tools, hunting and gathering for survival, and the absence of written records.
- **Positivism:** is a philosophical theory that asserts that genuine knowledge is exclusively derived from empirical evidence—observable, measurable facts and logical or mathematical reasoning.
- **Abuse of History:** Misuse of History when it is written by writers provoked by the ideologies of their societies and ages.

- **Theocratic History:** refers to periods in history when governments were ruled by religious authorities or based on divine guidance.
- **Prejudice:** a preconceived opinion or judgment about a person, group, or idea that is not based on reason or actual experience. It often stems from stereotypes and can lead to discrimination or unfair treatment.

1.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 History, in plain words, is a documentation of change. The word history is used largely in two contexts. One, about narration of events past. The other is the opinion and views surrounding those opinions.

Answer-2 The scope and expansion of history is very vast. Every person, subject, discovery and movement have a history related to it. Even history has a history. From the nineteenth century onward, it became mandatory and necessary to have a historical perspective of most things that were studied. The study of history provides practical knowledge of things in a variety of areas. This helps people evaluate circumstances, understand and interpret emotions and thoughts, group behaviour and also provide them with a yardstick to calibrate the same.

Answer-3 Two of the oldest civilisations are the Mesopotamian and the Indus Valley Civilisation.

Answer-4 Leopold Von Ranke is the father of modern historical writing.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 J.B Bury claimed "History is a science, no less, no more."

Answer-2 History and literature are closely associated. The main theme of both history and literature is man in society. Both these disciplines use imagination as their powerful weapon, although its use is not liberal in history.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 The question of usefulness of history depends on the meaning and concept of usefulness. According to Herodotus, history evokes interest; instructs delightfully, imparts information and excites curiosity. The Roman jurist. Cicero stated, 'Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child.' According to R.G Collingwood- The value of history is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is. History promotes in us an insight into human nature. It tries to reveal the meaning of life and unravel the purpose of living. Knowledge of the past offers a host of examples of socially significant human behaviour. History is a time - tested teacher.

Answer-2 History is abused when it is written by writers provoked by the ideologies of their societies and ages. History is also misused when it is based on the view that what matters in history is the achievement of individuals. History gets distorted when it is written imaginatively and interpreted philosophically. It is abused when the historical evidence and facts are not strictly scrutinized and screened scientifically.

Answer-3 Theocratic History refers to periods in history when governments were ruled by religious authorities or based on divine guidance.

1.9 Suggested Readings

- Warren, John. 1998. *The Past and Its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Educational
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1.10 Terminal Questions

- Q1. Discuss in detail the meaning of history?
- Q2. Does history play a crucial role in this world or is it a dead discipline? Comment.
- Q3. Do you think that History as a discipline has a wide scope? Discuss.
- Q4. Explain with relevant examples history as science and history as literature?

UNIT-2 HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY

STRUCTURE

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Learning Objectives

2.3 Understanding Historical Methodology

Self-Check Exercise-1

2.4 Evaluating Historical Sources

2.4.1 Types of Historical Sources

2.4.2 Assessment of Historical Sources

2.4.3 Historical Interpretation and Revisionism

Self-Check Exercise-2

2.5 Interdisciplinary Approaches in History

Self-Check Exercise-3

2.6 Summary

2.7 Glossary

2.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

2.9 Suggested Readings

2.10 Terminal Questions

2.1 Introduction

History goes beyond merely documenting past events; it seeks to understand the causes and consequences of those events. However, uncovering history is not always simple. The past must be pieced together using evidence, which must be thoroughly examined, interpreted, and analysed. This structured approach to studying and comprehending history is known as historical methodology.

Historians follow a systematic process to investigate past events, drawing upon various sources, assessing their credibility, and interpreting their significance. This lesson will delve into the fundamental aspects of historical methodology, including the different types of historical sources, the methods historians use to evaluate evidence, and how historical interpretations evolve over time.

2.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- define historical methodology and explain its significance in the study of history.
- identify and differentiate between primary and secondary sources, evaluating their reliability and usefulness in historical research.

- explore how historical perspectives evolve over time and understand the role of evidence and analysis in shaping historical narratives.

2.3 Understanding Historical Methodology

Historical methodology refers to the techniques and principles that historians use to study and write about the past. It involves collecting evidence, verifying its authenticity, analysing its context, and forming interpretations based on available information. Since history is often reconstructed from incomplete records, historians must be careful in their approach to avoid bias, misinterpretation, or manipulation of facts. Historians follow a step-by-step process to construct an accurate understanding of the past:

Identifying a historical question or problem – Historians begin their research by formulating a specific question or identifying a historical problem that needs investigation. This question often arises from gaps in existing knowledge, conflicting interpretations, or the need to understand causes and effects. For example, Historians begin by asking a specific question about the past, such as "What were the causes of World War I?" or "How did the Industrial Revolution change society?"

Collecting evidence: Once a question is established, historians gather evidence from a wide range of sources. These sources can be categorized into primary sources (such as letters, diaries, government documents, and photographs) and secondary sources (such as books, journal articles, and documentaries). Artifacts, oral histories, and archaeological findings also provide valuable insights. The goal is to collect as much relevant information as possible to build a comprehensive understanding of the historical event. They gather information from different sources, including written documents, artifacts, oral traditions, and more.

Evaluating sources: After gathering evidence, historians critically assess the authenticity, reliability, and potential bias of each source. They examine who created the source, when it was produced, and why it was made. A government document, for instance, may have been written to serve political interests, while a personal letter may reflect individual opinions rather than objective facts. Cross-referencing multiple sources helps historians develop a more accurate and balanced perspective. Each source is examined for authenticity, reliability, and bias.

Interpreting findings: With evaluated evidence in hand, historians analyze and synthesize the information to construct a meaningful narrative. This process involves identifying patterns, comparing different viewpoints, and considering historical context. Interpretation is influenced by existing knowledge, theories, and even the historian's own perspective. As new evidence emerges, interpretations may change, highlighting the evolving nature of historical understanding. Historians analyze the evidence and develop conclusions about historical events.

Presenting the findings: Once conclusions are drawn, historians share their research through various forms, such as books, academic papers, documentaries, or lectures. Their work not only contributes to historical scholarship but also informs the public and helps shape collective memory. Effective presentation ensures that historical knowledge is accessible and open to further discussion, allowing future historians to build upon previous work. The final interpretation is shared through books, articles, documentaries, or lectures.

By using this Historical methodology, historians ensure that their work is as accurate and objective as possible.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What do you mean by Historical Methodology?

Q2. Write down any 3 important steps to construct an accurate understanding of the past.

Q3. How is Evaluation of a source an important part of historical methodology?

2.4 Evaluating Historical Sources

Historians must carefully analyze historical sources to determine their accuracy and reliability. This process is known as Source Criticism. There are four key factors to consider when evaluating sources:

2.4.1 Types of Historical Sources

A key part of historical methodology is the study of historical sources. These sources provide the raw material that historians use to construct an understanding of the past. Historical sources can be categorized into two main types:

1. Primary Sources: Primary sources are firsthand accounts created at the time of the event or shortly after. These sources provide direct evidence of historical events and allow historians to get as close as possible to the past. Primary sources are valuable because they provide direct insight into historical events. However, they may also contain bias or personal opinions, so historians must carefully analyze their accuracy and reliability.

Examples of Primary Sources: Letters and diaries (e.g., Anne Frank's diary), Official documents (e.g., government records, treaties, birth certificates), Speeches and interviews, Photographs and paintings from the time, Newspapers and articles written during the event, Artifacts (e.g., coins, tools, clothing), Oral histories and recorded testimonies

2. Secondary Sources: Secondary sources are interpretations or analyses of historical events written after the fact. These sources are based on primary sources and other

research. Secondary sources help provide context and analysis of historical events. However, they are influenced by the historian's perspective, so they may contain bias or differing interpretations.

Examples of Secondary Sources: History textbooks, Biographies, Documentaries and historical films, Research articles and academic papers, Encyclopaedias and reference books.

2.4.2 Assessment of Historical Sources

Historians must carefully analyze historical sources to determine their accuracy and reliability. This process is known as source criticism. Once historians gather evidence, they must carefully evaluate each source to determine its credibility, authenticity, and relevance. This step is crucial because not all sources provide accurate or unbiased information. By critically assessing historical sources, historians can develop a more accurate and reliable interpretation of past events. The evaluation process typically involves the following key aspects:

1. Authenticity: Is the Source Genuine? Before using a source, historians must verify its authenticity to ensure it is not a forgery or misrepresentation. This involves examining factors such as:

- **Origin of the Source:** Who created it? Was the author a direct witness to the events, or is the account based on second-hand information?
- **Date of Creation:** Was the source produced at the time of the event (primary source), or was it created later based on interpretations (secondary source)?
- **Preservation and Alteration:** Has the source been modified, edited, or censored over time? Some historical documents may have been rewritten or manipulated for political or ideological reasons.

2. Reliability: Can the Source Be Trusted? Even if a source is authentic, it may not be entirely reliable. Historians must assess how accurately it represents historical events by considering:

- **Author's Perspective and Motive:** Every source reflects the perspective of its creator. Was the author an objective observer, or did they have a personal, political, or ideological agenda? For example, a government propaganda poster from wartime may exaggerate victories while downplaying defeats.
- **Intended Audience:** Was the source meant for public or private use? A personal diary may provide honest reflections, whereas a public speech might be designed to persuade or influence people.
- **Consistency with Other Sources:** Reliable sources should align with other independently verified sources. If multiple sources contradict each other, historians must carefully determine which is more trustworthy.

3. Bias: How Does Perspective Influence the Source? All historical sources contain some degree of bias, as they reflect the opinions, beliefs, and cultural background of their creators. However, recognizing bias does not mean dismissing a source entirely—it means understanding its limitations. Historians analyze:

- **Political and Social Context:** What was happening in society when the source was created? A newspaper article written during a revolution may depict events differently from one written in a stable period.
- **Language and Tone:** Does the source use emotional or persuasive language? Strongly worded texts may indicate an attempt to shape public opinion rather than provide objective facts.
- **Selective Omission:** What information is left out? Some sources emphasize certain events while ignoring others to shape a particular narrative.

4. Corroboration: Cross-Checking Evidence- To ensure accuracy, historians compare multiple sources to see if they support or contradict each other. Corroboration helps distinguish factual information from exaggeration or false claims. This process includes:

- **Comparing Different Types of Sources:** Do written documents align with archaeological findings, oral traditions, or visual evidence?
- **Looking at Different Perspectives:** How do different eyewitnesses describe the same event? A soldier's account of a battle may differ from that of a civilian who experienced it.
- **Considering Modern Research:** Have new discoveries, scientific analyses, or declassified documents changed our understanding of the event?

2.4.3 Historical Interpretation and Revisionism

One of the most important aspects of historical methodology is interpretation. Two historians may examine the same evidence and reach different conclusions based on their perspectives, biases, or new discoveries. This is why history is not static; it is constantly being revised as new evidence emerges.

Historical interpretation: is the process of analysing and explaining past events. Since history is often reconstructed from incomplete evidence, historians must make reasoned judgments about what happened and why. Historical interpretation refers to the way historians analyze and explain past events based on available evidence. Since history is not just a collection of facts but an analysis of causes, effects, and significance, different historians may interpret the same event differently depending on the sources they use, their perspectives, and the context in which they are writing. For example, the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire have been debated for centuries. Some historians focus on economic decline, while others emphasize military weakness, political corruption, or external invasions. Each interpretation is based on different sources and perspectives.

This diversity of interpretations shows that history is dynamic and constantly evolving as new evidence and perspectives emerge.

Historical Revisionism: Historical revisionism refers to the process of reinterpreting historical events based on new evidence or changing perspectives. This does not mean rewriting history to suit a political agenda, but rather updating our understanding as new facts come to light. For instance, the changing views on Christopher Columbus: Once seen as a hero, modern historians highlight the negative impact of European colonization on indigenous populations. The Holocaust: Historians continually uncover new documents that provide deeper insight into Nazi war crimes. Historical revisionism is essential because it allows history to be refined and made more accurate over time.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. Define Source Criticism.

Q2. What type of sources are newspapers and official records?

Q3. Mention the 4 key aspects of evaluating historical sources.

Q4. What do you mean by Historical Revisionism?

2.5 Interdisciplinary Approaches in History

History does not exist in isolation; it is connected to many other disciplines. Historians often use tools from other fields to enhance their understanding of the past. The interdisciplinary approach to history involves integrating methods, theories, and insights from other disciplines such as archaeology, sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, and even natural sciences to enrich historical analysis. By drawing from multiple disciplines, historians can uncover new perspectives on historical events, cultures, and societies. For example, archaeology provides physical evidence of past civilizations, while economics helps explain trade patterns and financial systems in historical periods. Similarly, psychology can shed light on the motivations of historical figures, and environmental science can help analyze the impact of climate change on human history. Interdisciplinary approaches allow for a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the past, ensuring that history is not just a collection of dates and events but a dynamic and interconnected study of human civilization.

1. Archaeology: Archaeology plays a crucial role in historical research by uncovering physical evidence such as ruins, tools, pottery, human remains, and ancient manuscripts. Through excavation and analysis, archaeologists provide insight into civilizations that may have left little or no written records. For instance, the discovery of the Rosetta Stone helped scholars decode Egyptian hieroglyphs, while excavations in Pompeii revealed details about daily life in the Roman Empire. Modern advancements, such as ground-penetrating radar and satellite imaging, have further revolutionized archaeology by enabling the discovery of lost cities and hidden structures.

2. Anthropology: Anthropology studies human societies, cultures, and their development over time. Historians use anthropology to understand how ancient civilizations lived, what they believed in, and how their customs evolved. By examining cultural artifacts, burial sites, and religious practices, anthropologists help historians reconstruct ancient traditions and social structures. For example, the study of indigenous oral traditions has provided valuable insights into the histories of civilizations that lacked written records. Ethnographic comparisons also allow historians to draw parallels between past and present societies, offering a deeper understanding of human behaviour across different eras.

3. Sociology: Sociology examines how societies function and how historical events influenced social structures, norms, and institutions. Historians use sociological perspectives to study issues such as class struggles, gender roles, family structures, and migration patterns. For example, Karl Marx's theories on class conflict have been used to analyze the social effects of the Industrial Revolution. Similarly, the study of segregation and racial discrimination in the United States provides insight into how historical policies shaped modern society. By integrating sociology into historical research, scholars can better understand the long-term impact of social changes and revolutions.

4. Economics: Economic history examines trade, wealth distribution, labor systems, and financial policies in historical periods. Historians analyze economic factors to understand the rise and fall of civilizations, economic crises, and the development of global trade networks. For instance, the Great Depression of the 1930s had widespread social and political consequences that reshaped modern economies. Similarly, the Silk Road was not just a trade route but also a conduit for cultural and technological exchanges between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The study of economic history helps historians understand how financial decisions and economic policies influenced historical events, from the expansion of empires to the causes of revolutions.

5. Geography: Geography plays a key role in shaping historical events by influencing settlement patterns, resource availability, and military strategies. Natural features such as mountains, rivers, and deserts have often determined the rise and fall of civilizations. For example, the Nile River provided fertile land for ancient Egyptian agriculture, while the Himalayas acted as a natural barrier that influenced the development of distinct cultures in India and China. Additionally, historians use climate and environmental studies to analyze the effects of natural disasters, such as how the Little Ice Age in the 17th century contributed to food shortages and social unrest in Europe.

6. Science and Technology: Science and technology help historians date artifacts, analyze ancient DNA, and understand historical diseases. Techniques such as carbon dating allow archaeologists to determine the age of fossils and artifacts, while genetic

studies have provided insights into human migration patterns. For example, DNA analysis has helped trace the ancestry of modern populations to early human migrations out of Africa. Advances in medical history have also revealed how pandemics, such as the Black Death, shaped societies by influencing population growth, labor markets, and public health policies. Additionally, satellite technology has helped archaeologists discover lost civilizations in the Amazon rainforest, reshaping our understanding of ancient societies.

By integrating these disciplines, historians gain a more comprehensive understanding of the past, ensuring that history is studied not only through written records but also through scientific, economic, social, and cultural perspectives.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1. What is Archaeology?

Q2. Highlight the role of geography in shaping history.

2.6 Summary

Historical methodology is the foundation of historical study. It ensures that history is not just a collection of stories but a well-researched and evidence-based discipline. By using primary and secondary sources, critically evaluating evidence, and considering different interpretations, historians can reconstruct the past as accurately as possible. History is constantly evolving as new evidence emerges, and historians must remain open to revising their understanding.

History is deeply interconnected with various disciplines, and interdisciplinary approaches enhance our understanding of the past. Historians integrate insights from archaeology, anthropology, sociology, economics, geography, and science to create a more comprehensive historical analysis. By integrating these disciplines, historians move beyond a mere collection of dates and events, constructing a dynamic and interconnected narrative of human history. As students of history, developing critical thinking skills and a questioning mindset is essential to uncovering the truth about our past.

2.7 Glossary

- **Primary Sources:** Original records from the past, such as documents, artifacts, photographs, and firsthand accounts.
- **Secondary Sources:** Interpretations of past events based on primary sources, including books, articles, and documentaries.
- **Oral Tradition:** The transmission of history through spoken stories, legends, and eyewitness accounts rather than written records.
- **Bias:** A perspective or inclination that can influence historical interpretation, often shaping how past events are recorded.

- **Source Evaluation:** The process of assessing the reliability, authenticity, and significance of historical sources.
- **Archaeology:** The study of human history through the excavation and analysis of artifacts, structures, and physical remains.
- **Interpretation:** The way historians analyze and explain historical events based on available evidence and perspectives.
- **Revisionism:** The process of reinterpreting historical events based on new evidence or perspectives.
- **Chronology:** The arrangement of historical events in the order they occurred.
- **Periodization:** The division of history into distinct time periods based on significant events or characteristics

2.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Historical methodology refers to the techniques and principles that historians use to study and write about the past.

Answer-2 The three steps to achieve accuracy in a historical enquiry are - Identification of a historical problem, Collection of Evidence and Evaluation of the sources and facts.

Answer-3 After gathering evidence, historians critically assess the authenticity, reliability, and potential bias of each source. They examine who created the source, when it was produced, and why it was made. A government document, for instance, may have been written to serve political interests, while a personal letter may reflect individual opinions rather than objective facts. Cross-referencing multiple sources therefore helps historians develop a more accurate and balanced perspective. This is the importance of evaluation of a source.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Historians must carefully analyze historical sources to determine their accuracy and reliability. This process is known as source criticism.

Answer-2 Newspapers and official records are an example of Primary sources.

Answer-3 4 key aspects of an evaluation process are: Authenticity, Reliability, Bias and Corroboration.

Answer-4 Historical revisionism refers to the process of reinterpreting historical events based on new evidence or changing perspectives.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Archaeology is the study of human history through the excavation and analysis of artifacts, structures, and physical remains.

Answer-2 Geography plays a key role in shaping historical events by influencing settlement patterns, resource availability, and military strategies. Natural features such as mountains, rivers, and deserts have often determined the rise and fall of civilizations.

2.9 Suggested Readings

- Warren, John. 1998. *The Past and Its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.
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2.10 Terminal Questions

Q1. Briefly discuss the key aspects and steps into a serious historical inquiry.

Q2. How various disciplines add to the making and writing of history. Comment by giving examples.

Q3. What are sources? Write a short note on the assessment of historical sources.

UNIT-3

CAUSATION, OBJECTIVITY AND GENERALISATION IN HISTORY

STRUCTURE

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Learning Objectives

3.3 Causation in History

3.3.1 Importance and Challenges

Self-Check Exercise-1

3.4 Objectivity in History

3.4.1 Methods to achieve Objectivity

Self-Check Exercise-2

3.5 Generalisation in History

3.5.1 Role of Generalisation in Historical Inquiry

Self-Check Exercise-3

3.6 Summary

3.7 Glossary

3.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

3.9 Suggested Readings

3.10 Terminal Questions

3.1 Introduction

History is the study of past events, but it is not just about recording facts. Historians seek to understand why events happened (causation), how to interpret the past fairly (objectivity), and how to identify broader trends or patterns (generalisation). These three concepts help historians construct meaningful and reliable historical narratives. However, each concept presents challenges, requiring careful analysis and critical thinking. Causation, objectivity, and generalisation are essential tools for historical inquiry. By carefully analyzing causes, striving for fairness and accuracy, and identifying patterns without oversimplifying, historians aim to construct a truthful and meaningful understanding of the past. These concepts guide historical interpretation and help shape how history is studied and written.

This unit explores the importance of causation, objectivity, and generalisation in history, along with the difficulties historians face in applying these concepts.

3.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the students should be able to:

- Explain the concept of causation and its significance in historical study.

- Identify the challenges historians face in determining causes and apply critical thinking to evaluate historical interpretations.
- Discuss the importance of objectivity in historical writing and describe the methods used to achieve objectivity and minimize bias.
- Understand the role of generalisation in history and its limitations.

3.3 Causation in History

Causation is a key concept in historical study, as it helps explain why events happen and how they are interconnected. Historians analyze events by identifying their causes (the factors that lead to an event) and their effects (the consequences of that event). Understanding causation allows historians to move beyond simply listing events and instead explain the relationships between them.

Historical causation is often complex, involving immediate causes (short-term triggers) and underlying causes (long-term factors). Additionally, most historical events have multiple causes, including political, economic, social, and cultural influences. However, identifying causation is challenging due to biases in sources, differing perspectives, and the complexity of historical events. By studying causation, historians develop a deeper understanding of how the past unfolded and how different factors shaped human history.

Theory of Causation

The term 'causality' reflects on the relationship between the first event (cause) and a resultant next event (effect). It is generally accepted that the second event is the result of the first. Though the causes and effects are typically related to changes or events, historians include objects, processes, properties, variables, facts and states of affairs as characterizing the causal relationship. However, this can be the subject of much debate.

Carveth Read was a famous British philosopher who devised the Theory of Causation. His theory states the following:

- One thing is a mark of another and the surest of all marks is a cause.
- The uniformity of space and time is involved in causation. If space and time were not uniform, causation would be irregular, for time and space are not agents, though they are conditions of every agent's operation.
- A cause is relative to a given phenomenon, called the effect.
- The given phenomenon is always an event; that is to say, not a new thing (nothing is wholly new), but a change in something or in the relative position of things.
- The cause is antecedent to the effect, which is often called its consequent. Nor must it be supposed that the whole cause is antecedent to the effect as a whole.

- The cause is the invariable antecedent of the effect; that is to say, whenever a given cause occurs it always has the same effect; not every antecedent of an event is its cause but every event has an infinite number of antecedents that have no ascertainable connection with it.

3.3.1 Importance and Challenges of Causation

Importance of Causation in History

Causation is central to history because it helps explain why events occur and how different factors interact. It is important because it helps historians understand why events happened, rather than just describing them. By analyzing causes and effects, historians can identify patterns, make connections between events, and develop deeper insights into historical change. Historians classify causes into:

1. Immediate Causes – The Direct Triggers of an Event

Immediate causes are specific events or actions that directly lead to a major historical occurrence. They act as the final spark that sets a larger event into motion. For Instance, The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 was the immediate cause of World War I. While tensions had been building in Europe due to nationalism, militarism, and alliances, the assassination acted as the direct trigger, leading Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia, setting off a chain reaction.

- **Why It Matters:** Immediate causes are often the most visible reasons for an event, but they do not tell the full story. Historians must look beyond them to understand deeper causes.

2. Underlying Causes – The Long-Term Conditions Behind an Event

Underlying causes are long-term developments that create the conditions for an event to occur. These causes may not directly trigger an event, but they contribute to tensions, conflicts, or shifts that make an event more likely. For Instance, The underlying causes of World War I included:

Nationalism: Rivalries between European nations created tensions, particularly in the Balkans.

Militarism: Countries were building up their armies, increasing the likelihood of war.

Alliances: Complex alliances (such as the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance) meant that a conflict between two nations could quickly escalate into a global war.

- **Why It Matters:** Underlying causes provide deeper insight into why events happen and help historians understand broader historical patterns.

3. Multiple Causation – The Complexity of Historical Events

Most historical events are not caused by a single factor but rather by a combination of political, economic, social, and cultural influences. Historians use the concept of multiple

causation to recognize that history is shaped by a variety of interwoven factors. For Instance, The French Revolution (1789) was caused by multiple factors, including:

Economic Factors: Heavy taxation, national debt, and food shortages created widespread discontent.

Political Factors: The monarchy's failure to reform and the absolute rule of King Louis XVI led to calls for change.

Social Factors: Growing inequality between the privileged nobility and the suffering lower classes fueled resentment.

Intellectual Factors: Enlightenment ideas about democracy and individual rights inspired revolutionary movements.

- Why It Matters: Recognizing multiple causes prevents oversimplification and helps historians provide a more comprehensive explanation of historical events.

Challenges in Determining Causation

While causation is a key aspect of history, historians face significant challenges in identifying causes accurately.

1. Bias in Source Selection – Different Perspectives on Causes

Historians rely on sources to determine causes, but sources can be biased or incomplete. Different sources may emphasize different causes, depending on the author's background, political views, or purpose.

2. Complexity of Events – Difficulty in Pinpointing a Single Cause

Most historical events are multifaceted, involving a mix of causes. It is difficult to isolate a single factor as the most important because different elements interact in complex ways.

3. Counterfactual Reasoning – The "What If?" Dilemma

Historians sometimes engage in counterfactual reasoning, which involves asking "What if this had not happened?" While this can help explore alternative possibilities, it is speculative and cannot be proven.

4. Agency vs. Structure – Individual Actions vs. Systemic Forces

Historians debate whether history is shaped more by individual choices (agency) or by larger historical forces (structure).

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What is the difference between immediate and underlying causes in history?

Q2. Write down the classification of causes.

Q3. Why is causation important in historical analysis?

3.4 Objectivity in History

Objectivity in history refers to the historian's effort to analyze and present the past fairly, without personal bias or distortion. While absolute objectivity is difficult to achieve, historians strive for accuracy by examining multiple sources, considering different perspectives, and acknowledging their own biases. Avoiding presentism (judging the past by modern standards) is also crucial for maintaining objectivity. The challenge lies in the fact that historical sources themselves may be biased, requiring careful cross-examination. Despite these difficulties, objectivity remains essential for producing credible and balanced historical interpretations.

3.4.1 Methods to Achieve Objectivity

Achieving complete objectivity in history is challenging, but historians use several techniques to minimize bias and ensure a more balanced interpretation of past events. These methods help historians present history as accurately and fairly as possible, despite the inherent difficulties in eliminating all subjectivity.

1. Source Cross-Examination – Verifying Facts Through Multiple Sources

Historians do not rely on a single source but instead compare multiple sources to verify the accuracy of historical claims. Cross-examining sources reduces the risk of relying on biased or incomplete information and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of events.

2. Acknowledging Bias – Recognizing Subjectivity in Sources and Interpretation

Historians are aware that every source has some level of bias, whether intentional or unintentional. Even historians themselves have biases based on their background, education, and cultural perspectives. Acknowledging bias helps historians remain critical of sources and their own interpretations, ensuring a more balanced analysis.

3. Using Multiple Perspectives – Considering Diverse Viewpoints

To achieve objectivity, historians must consider perspectives from different groups, regions, and social classes, including marginalized communities that were often excluded from historical records. Including multiple perspectives prevents history from being written solely from the viewpoint of the dominant group, providing a fuller picture of the past.

4. Avoiding Anachronism – Not Imposing Modern Values on the Past

Anachronism occurs when historians judge past events, people, or societies by modern standards, rather than understanding them in their historical context. Avoiding anachronism ensures a fair and historically accurate understanding of past societies, rather than viewing them through the lens of modern expectations.

Challenges to Objectivity in History

Despite efforts to achieve objectivity, historians face several challenges that make complete neutrality difficult. These challenges stem from both the nature of historical sources and the historian's own perspective.

1. Historian's Subjectivity – Personal Beliefs and Background Influence Interpretation

Every historian has personal beliefs, cultural influences, and academic training that shape how they interpret history. Even when striving for objectivity, their perspectives may influence their choice of topics, sources, and conclusions.

2. Presentism – Judging the Past by Modern Standards

Presentism occurs when historians evaluate past events based on today's moral, social, or political values, rather than understanding them in their historical context.

3. Limited Sources – Bias and Gaps in Historical Records

Historical sources are often incomplete, biased, or lost, making it difficult to reconstruct events with absolute accuracy. Many records were created by ruling elites, governments, or religious institutions, leaving out the voices of marginalized groups.

While complete objectivity in history may be unattainable, historians can minimize bias by using methods like cross-examining sources, acknowledging bias, incorporating multiple perspectives, and avoiding anachronism. However, challenges such as historian subjectivity, presentism, and gaps in historical records mean that historical interpretation is always evolving. By being aware of these difficulties, historians can work toward a more balanced and accurate understanding of the past.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. Why is complete objectivity difficult to achieve in history?

Q2. What strategies can historians use to minimize bias?

Q3. How does considering multiple perspectives contribute to objectivity?

3.5 Generalisation in History

Generalisation in history refers to the process of identifying broad patterns and trends based on specific historical events. It helps historians draw conclusions about recurring themes, such as the causes of revolutions or the rise and fall of empires. However, generalisation must be used carefully, as it can sometimes lead to oversimplification or ignore unique historical contexts. While useful for understanding historical developments, historians must balance general trends with the specific details and complexities of individual events.

3.5.1 Role of Generalisation in Historical Inquiry

Generalisation in history helps the historians to recognize patterns and trends over time. A few examples of generalisation could be- "Most revolutions occur due to economic hardship and political oppression" or "Empires tend to decline due to

overexpansion and internal conflict." Etc. Instead of viewing history as a collection of isolated events, generalisation allows for the recognition of underlying causes, recurring themes, and long-term developments.

1. Identifying Patterns and Trends: Historians use generalisation to observe recurring themes across different historical events. For example, revolutions throughout history often share common causes, such as economic hardship, political oppression, and demands for rights. By recognizing these patterns, historians can better understand the broader forces that shape human societies. For example- The French Revolution (1789), the Russian Revolution (1917), and the American Revolution (1775) all involved struggles against oppressive governments and demands for political change.

2. Simplifying Complex Historical Events: History is vast and complex, and generalisation helps simplify this complexity by grouping events into broader categories. This makes history more accessible and easier to analyze, especially for students and scholars who need to study large periods of time. For example, The term "Industrial Revolution" is a generalisation that describes a period of technological and economic change in the 18th and 19th centuries, even though industrialization happened differently in various countries.

3. Making Comparisons Across Time and Space: Generalisation allows historians to compare different historical periods, civilizations, or movements and understand similarities and differences between them. For Example Comparing the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and the British Empire reveals common patterns, such as overexpansion, economic challenges, and military struggles.

4. Helping in Historical Interpretation and Prediction: By recognizing general trends in history, historians can make informed interpretations about how societies evolve. While history does not repeat exactly, understanding past trends helps in predicting future societal changes. For Example: Economic recessions throughout history, such as the Great Depression (1929) and the 2008 financial crisis, share common features like financial speculation, banking failures, and government interventions.

Challenges of Generalisation

A few challenges of Generalisation are Oversimplification (Some events do not fit into general patterns), Ignoring exceptions (Unique historical circumstances may challenge general conclusions), Cultural differences (A pattern in one society may not apply to another) etc. A Historian must therefore use detailed case studies to support broad claims, recognize differences between historical events and avoid forcing events into pre-existing theories.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1. Why is generalisation important in history?

Q2. What are the risks of oversimplifying historical events?

Q3. Give an example of a historical generalisation and discuss its limitations.

3.6 Summary

Causation helps explain why events happen and involves immediate, underlying, and multiple causes. However, determining causation can be complex due to bias and competing interpretations. Objectivity is essential for fair historical analysis. Historians use various methods, such as comparing sources and considering multiple perspectives, to reduce bias. Generalisation allows historians to identify patterns in history but must be applied carefully to avoid oversimplification.

3.7 Glossary

- **Causation:** The study of causes and effects in history.
- **Objectivity:** The effort to interpret history fairly and without bias.
- **Generalisation:** Drawing broad conclusions from historical events.
- **Multiple Causation:** The idea that historical events have more than one cause.
- **Presentism:** Judging past events by modern values.

3.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Immediate causes are direct triggers, while underlying causes are long-term factors that set the stage for an event.

Answer-2 The different types of causes are Immediate causes, Underlying causes and Multiple causation

Answer-3 Causation helps historians understand how and why events occur.

Self-Check Exercise- 2

Answer-1 Historians bring their own perspectives, and historical sources may be biased.

Answer-2 Methods include comparing multiple sources, acknowledging bias, and avoiding anachronism.

Answer-3 It prevents a one-sided interpretation and ensures a balanced historical account.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Generalisation helps historians recognize patterns across historical events.

Answer-2 Oversimplification ignores unique details and exceptions.

Answer-3 Example: "All revolutions are caused by economic hardship." Limitation: Some revolutions, like the Glorious Revolution, had political rather than economic motivations.

3.9 Suggested Readings

- Warren, John. 1998. *The Past and Its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.
- Ferro, Marc. 2003. *The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past is Taught to Children*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- E. Sreedharan. 2004. *A Textbook of Historiography: 500 BC to AD 2000*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Majumdar, R.C. 1970. *Historiography in Modern India*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.

3.10 Terminal Questions

- Q1. Explain the difference between immediate and underlying causes with historical examples.
- Q2. Discuss the challenges historians face in achieving objectivity.
- Q3. Why is generalisation important in historical analysis? Provide examples of useful and misleading generalisations.
- Q4. How can historians minimize bias in their interpretations?

UNIT-4

HISTORICAL TRUTH AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Learning Objectives

4.3 Understanding Historical Truth

Self-Check Exercise-1

4.4 The Relationship Between Historical Truth and Historiography

4.4.1 Methods to verify Historical Truth

4.4.2 Challenges in Establishing Historical Truth

Self-Check Exercise-2

4.5 Historiography

4.5.1 The Role of Interpretation in History

4.5.2 Preconditions for Historiography

Self-Check Exercise-3

4.6 Summary

4.7 Glossary

4.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

4.9 Suggested Readings

4.10 Terminal Questions

4.1 Introduction

History as a discipline seeks to uncover and present the truth about past events. However, the concept of **historical truth** is complex and often debated. Historiography, the study of historical writing and methods, plays a crucial role in shaping our understanding of historical truth.

Historiography is not just about recording events but also about analyzing how history is written, interpreted, and revised over time. It encompasses the study of different historical perspectives, methodologies, and sources, providing insights into

how narratives evolve and are influenced by social, political, and ideological factors. Understanding historiography helps historians critically evaluate past accounts and develop a more nuanced and comprehensive view of history. This UNIT explores the nature of historical truth, the challenges historians face in establishing it, and the role historiography plays in shaping historical narratives.

4.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the students should be able to:

- Define historical truth and its significance in historiography and explain the challenges in establishing historical truth.
- Analyze the role of interpretation in shaping historical narratives and evaluate different methods used by historians to verify historical facts.
- Understand the balance between objectivity and subjectivity in history.

4.3 Understanding Historical Truth

Historical truth refers to the accurate representation of past events based on evidence and reliable sources. However, it is not always absolute, as historical narratives are influenced by various factors such as bias, interpretation, and available evidence. Unlike scientific truths, which can be empirically tested and verified through controlled experiments, historical truth is often contested due to the limitations of available evidence, the influence of perspective, and the interpretive nature of historical writing. The pursuit of historical truth is therefore an ongoing intellectual endeavour rather than a fixed reality.

Key Aspects of Historical Truth

1. Evidence-Based Inquiry: Historical truth is fundamentally dependent on evidence. Historians rely on two primary types of sources to reconstruct the past:

- **Primary Sources** – These include firsthand accounts, such as official documents, letters, diaries, photographs, artifacts, and eyewitness testimonies. Primary sources provide direct evidence from the period being studied but may still be subject to bias or selective reporting.
- **Secondary Sources** – These are interpretations, analyses, or reconstructions based on primary sources, often written by later historians. Examples include books, journal articles, and documentaries. While secondary sources provide scholarly insights, they also reflect the perspectives and methodologies of their authors.

To ensure accuracy, historians engage in source criticism, which involves assessing the authenticity, reliability, and context of sources. This includes:

- **External Criticism** – Verifying the origin, authorship, and physical integrity of a source.
- **Internal Criticism** – Evaluating the credibility of the content and identifying inconsistencies, exaggerations, or biases.

Through rigorous inquiry, historians attempt to build a truthful representation of past events, although the completeness and accuracy of this truth are always subject to further scrutiny.

2. Multiple Perspectives: The Role of Diverse Viewpoints in History: Since history is shaped by human experiences, different individuals and groups may perceive and record events in distinct ways. Recognizing multiple perspectives is crucial for achieving a balanced understanding of historical truth.

- **Social and Cultural Perspectives** – Historical events may be interpreted differently depending on the cultural and social background of those recording them. For instance, the European colonization of the Americas is viewed as an era of expansion and progress by some historians, while others emphasize its devastating impact on Indigenous populations.
- **Political and Ideological Perspectives** – Political ideologies shape historical narratives. Governments and institutions often promote official histories that reflect nationalistic, ideological, or political interests. For example, Cold War-era histories written in the United States and the Soviet Union presented vastly different accounts of global events.
- **Historiographical Schools of Thought** – Different historiographical traditions (e.g., Marxist history, feminist history, postcolonial history) provide alternative interpretations of events, challenging dominant narratives and bringing previously overlooked perspectives into historical discourse.

Acknowledging multiple perspectives does not mean that all interpretations are equally valid, but it encourages a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to historical truth.

3. Reconstruction of the Past: History as an Interpretive Discipline: Unlike scientific disciplines where direct observation and experimentation are possible, history must be reconstructed from available records. This makes historical knowledge inherently interpretative.

- **Challenges in Reconstructing the Past** – Historians often work with incomplete records. Some evidence is lost, destroyed, or never recorded in the first place. Moreover, even well-documented events require interpretation, as the same set of facts can be framed in different ways.
- **Narrative Construction** – Since history is conveyed through written or oral narratives, the way events are organized and presented affects their

interpretation. Historians must decide which events to emphasize, which sources to prioritize, and how to connect different pieces of information.

- **Evolving Historiography** – As new sources and methodologies emerge; historical narratives are revised. For instance, traditional narratives of the Industrial Revolution focused on technological progress, but modern scholarship also considers its social consequences, such as labor exploitation and environmental degradation.

Ultimately, historical truth is a carefully constructed interpretation based on the best available evidence. While it may never be absolute, it remains a crucial pursuit for understanding the past and its implications for the present and future.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Why is historical truth considered complex?

Q2. What role do primary and secondary sources play in establishing historical truth?

4.4 The Relationship Between Historical Truth and Historiography

Historical truth and historiography are closely interconnected, as historiography—the study of historical writing and methodology—shapes how historical truth is constructed, interpreted, and revised over time. While historical truth refers to the accurate representation of past events based on available evidence, historiography examines how historians have approached, recorded, and analyzed these events across different periods and perspectives.

Historiography influences historical truth by determining which sources are considered credible, how they are analyzed, and what methods are used to verify their authenticity. Different historiographical traditions—such as Marxist, feminist, or postcolonial historiography—offer varying interpretations of the past, highlighting the fact that historical truth is not always absolute but is shaped by the historian's perspective and the evolving body of historical knowledge. Moreover, historical truth is dynamic; as historiography evolves, new evidence, methodologies, and perspectives lead to revisions in our understanding of history. For instance, traditional Eurocentric narratives of world history have been re-examined through postcolonial historiography, leading to more inclusive and diverse historical accounts.

Ultimately, historiography serves as the framework through which historical truth is explored, debated, and refined. It ensures that history remains a critical, evidence-based discipline rather than a static or unchallenged account of the past.

4.4.1 Methods to Verify Historical Truth

To ensure accuracy and reliability in historical writing, historians use several methods:

- **Records and Evidence:** Historians rely on materials such as inscriptions, treaties, chronicles, letters, and artifacts to reconstruct past events. The principle of "No records, no history" is essential.
- **Critical Method:** Evaluating the credibility and authenticity of historical sources through external and internal criticism.
- **Cross-Referencing:** Comparing multiple sources to verify facts.
- **Archaeological and Scientific Evidence:** Using material remains and scientific techniques to validate historical claims.

Objectivity in Historical Writing: One of the main challenges in historiography is achieving objectivity. Historians strive to remain impartial, but complete neutrality is difficult due to personal, cultural, and ideological influences. Mark Bevir, in his book *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (1999), argues that historical narratives are shaped by human intentions and meaning, making true objectivity elusive.

4.4.2 Challenges in Establishing Historical Truth

Several factors make it difficult to determine absolute historical truth, including:

- **Bias in Sources:** Historical records may be influenced by the perspectives of those who created them.
- **Gaps in Evidence:** Some historical events lack sufficient documentation.
- **Political and Cultural Influences:** Governments, institutions, and societies shape historical narratives to align with their ideologies.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. What are the key methods used to verify historical truth?

Q2. How does source criticism help in determining the reliability of historical accounts?

4.5 Historiography

Historiography literally means the art of writing history. It is the history of history or the study of historical writings. Historiography tells the story of the successive stages of the evolution or development of historical thought, including the changing attitudes toward the nature of history itself. It comprises the study of the development of humankind's sense of the past.

There have been differences in the nature and quality as well as the quantity of historical literature in different ages and among different peoples. These differences reflect changes in social life, beliefs, and the presence or absence of a sense of history. For example: The nature, quality, and quantity of historical literature have varied across different historical periods and civilizations. These variations are influenced by the prevailing intellectual, social, political, and religious contexts of the time. Changes in historiography often reflect shifts in societal beliefs, the availability of sources, and the

evolving purpose of historical writing. Below is an elaboration on how different historical traditions have shaped historiography:

1. Greek and Roman Historians: Storytelling and Political Narratives

Ancient Greek and Roman historians primarily viewed history as a means of storytelling, political instruction, and moral education. Their works often blended fact with myth, as they aimed to celebrate heroic deeds and reinforce political ideologies.

- **Herodotus (5th century BCE)**, often called the "Father of History," sought to document the Greco-Persian Wars by gathering oral accounts and eyewitness testimonies. However, his narratives included myths and supernatural elements.
- **Thucydides (5th century BCE)** introduced a more analytical approach by focusing on political and military history. His account of the Peloponnesian War emphasized cause and effect, marking an early attempt at objective historical writing.
- **Livy and Tacitus (1st century CE)** in Rome documented Rome's rise and imperial governance, often using history to reinforce political values and critique moral decay.

Overall, Greek and Roman historians established the foundations of historical writing but often infused their narratives with bias, rhetoric, and personal interpretations.

2. Medieval Christian Historians: Theological and Providential History

During the medieval period, historical writing became closely tied to religious beliefs, particularly in Christian Europe. History was seen as a divine plan, with events interpreted as manifestations of God's will.

- **St. Augustine (5th century CE)** in *The City of God* framed history as a struggle between divine salvation and earthly corruption, emphasizing a providential worldview.
- **Medieval chroniclers**, such as the Venerable Bede (8th century CE), wrote ecclesiastical histories that glorified the role of the Church and Christian rulers.
- **Monastic and clerical historians** primarily recorded events related to religious institutions, saints, and kingship, often presenting an idealized version of history that aligned with theological doctrine.

This period saw the dominance of religious narratives, where historical truth was often secondary to moral and spiritual lessons.

3. Renaissance Historians: Secularization of History

The Renaissance (14th–17th centuries) marked a shift towards a more secular and critical approach to history. Inspired by humanism, scholars began to question religious dogma and focus on political realism.

- **Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527)**, in *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*, analyzed history to extract lessons on power and statecraft, rejecting moral and religious interpretations.
- **Francesco Guicciardini (16th century)** advanced historiographical methods by emphasizing the role of empirical evidence and critical analysis.

Renaissance historians moved away from theological explanations and sought to understand human motivations, politics, and statecraft through rational inquiry.

4. Enlightenment Historians: Rationalism and Scientific History

The Enlightenment (17th–18th centuries) brought a fundamental transformation in historiography, as thinkers sought to apply reason, logic, and empirical methods to the study of history. Historians aimed to move beyond religious explanations and provide objective, secular analyses of past events.

- **Voltaire (1694–1778)** criticized religious influences on history and promoted a rational approach that emphasized social and cultural history.
- **Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)** in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* argued that religious institutions contributed to the decline of civilizations, demonstrating a sceptical approach to religious narratives.
- **David Hume (1711–1776)** applied philosophical reasoning to historical interpretation, arguing that history should be based on critical examination of evidence rather than tradition or superstition.

Enlightenment historiography sought to create a more scientific approach to history, laying the groundwork for modern historical methodologies.

5. Modern Historians: Interdisciplinary and Evidence-Based Approaches

From the 19th century onward, historiography became more professionalized, adopting rigorous methodologies and incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives.

- **Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886)** revolutionized historical writing by emphasizing the use of primary sources and an objective, evidence-based approach. His methodology became the foundation of modern historiography.
- **Marxist historians (e.g., Karl Marx, Eric Hobsbawm)** analyzed history through the lens of class struggle and economic structures.
- **Feminist historians (e.g., Gerda Lerner, Joan Scott)** examined history from a gendered perspective, highlighting the roles of women and challenging male-dominated narratives.
- **Postcolonial historians (e.g., Edward Said, Ranajit Guha)** critiqued Eurocentric interpretations of history and emphasized the perspectives of marginalized communities.

- **Digital and global historians** today utilize technology, big data, and transnational approaches to analyze historical events from multiple perspectives.

Modern historiography continues to evolve, incorporating diverse perspectives, interdisciplinary research, and new methodologies to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of historical truth.

4.5.1 The Role of Interpretation in History

Historiography also involves examining how historians write history, the methods they use, and how historical thought has evolved over time. Historians analyze and interpret sources to construct narratives. Different historians may interpret the same event differently based on their perspectives, leading to multiple versions of historical truth.

Interpretation plays a crucial role in history, as the past cannot be directly observed but must be reconstructed based on available evidence. Since historical events, figures, and developments are complex, historians must analyze, evaluate, and interpret sources to construct a coherent narrative. Interpretation is an essential aspect of historiography, influencing how history is written, understood, and debated across different times and perspectives.

1. Understanding Interpretation in History

Interpretation in history refers to the process by which historians analyze evidence, contextualize events, and construct narratives to explain the past. It is influenced by various factors, including the historian's perspective, available sources, methodological approaches, and prevailing social or political ideologies.

- **History is not a fixed set of facts** but a dynamic and evolving field where different historians may interpret the same event in different ways.
- **Interpretation is necessary** because historical evidence is often incomplete, biased, or ambiguous, requiring historians to make informed judgments.
- **Historical writing involves selection**—not all available evidence can be included, so historians must decide what to emphasize and how to connect different pieces of information.

Thus, history is not just about "what happened" but also about **how** and **why** historians explain events in a particular manner.

2. Factors Influencing Historical Interpretation

Several factors shape the way history is interpreted. A few of them have been discussed below.

Availability and Reliability of Sources: Historians rely on primary sources (e.g., documents, artifacts, letters, official records) and secondary sources (e.g., previous

historical works, analyses, interpretations) to reconstruct the past. However, sources are often:

- **Incomplete** (missing records, lost documents)
- **Biased** (produced by victors, rulers, or elite groups)
- **Contradictory** (different perspectives on the same event)

Historians must critically evaluate these sources and determine their credibility before forming an interpretation.

Perspective and Bias of Historians: No historian is completely objective; personal experiences, cultural background, and ideological beliefs shape the way they interpret history.

- **Marxist historians** interpret history through the lens of class struggle and economic systems.
- **Feminist historians** highlight the contributions and experiences of women, often overlooked in traditional historical narratives.
- **Postcolonial historians** challenge Eurocentric interpretations and emphasize indigenous and non-Western perspectives.
- **Nationalist historians** may emphasize patriotic narratives that glorify a country's past.

These different perspectives show that history is not just a collection of facts but a field of competing interpretations.

Changing Historical Contexts and New Discoveries: Interpretations of history evolve over time as new evidence emerges and as historians re-examine past events in light of contemporary issues.

- **Example 1:** The French Revolution was initially seen as a fight for democracy and equality. Later, Marxist historians focused on class struggle, while revisionist historians questioned the extent of its democratic impact.
- **Example 2:** Histories of colonialism were once written from a European perspective, justifying imperial rule. Today, postcolonial scholars emphasize indigenous resistance and exploitation.

Thus, history is constantly being rewritten and reinterpreted as new information becomes available and as perspectives change.

The Role of Theories and Methodologies: Historians use different methods to analyze and interpret the past:

- **Empirical or positivist historians** (e.g., Leopold von Ranke) emphasize objective, document-based history with minimal interpretation.

- **Social historians** study ordinary people, movements, and cultural aspects rather than focusing only on political elites.
- **Oral historians** use interviews and testimonies to reconstruct histories of marginalized communities.

4.5.2 Preconditions for Historiography

Historiography, the study of historical writing and methodology, is based on several essential preconditions that ensure the accuracy and credibility of historical narratives. These preconditions include the availability of records, the application of critical methods, the presence of a historical sense, and the balance between synthesis and analysis in historical interpretation. Additionally, an effective literary style is necessary to communicate history clearly while maintaining factual integrity. Historians must also strive for objectivity, despite the challenges posed by subjective interpretations and source limitations. Together, these elements form the foundation of rigorous and reliable historical study.

Records

History is essentially the historian's reconstruction of the past. The foundation of this reconstruction lies in historical records and material remains that provide evidence of past events. These records come in various forms, including buildings, inscriptions, medals, coins, edicts, chronicles, travelogues, decrees, treaties, official correspondence, private letters, and diaries. Through a meticulous study of these historical artifacts, historians gain insight into past events. As the saying goes, **"No records, no history."**

Critical Method

Since history is built upon evidence, records must be examined with caution, as they may not always be entirely reliable or authentic. A historian must remain sceptical of all sources unless their validity is firmly established. History has witnessed instances where fabricated documents, such as the Donation of Constantine, were accepted as genuine for centuries. To ensure historical accuracy, historians employ historical methodology, an analytical approach involving both external and internal criticism.

Both forms of criticism work together to determine the authenticity and accuracy of historical records. Since the 19th century, historians like **Niebuhr** and **Ranke** have refined these methods, minimizing errors in historical interpretation. However, **J.B. Bury**, in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge, asserted that history is a science "no less and no more." Despite advancements, the subjective nature of historical interpretation makes complete objectivity unattainable.

Historical Sense

A well-developed historical sense has not been equally present across different civilizations and time periods. While Ancient Greece, Rome, Judaism, and Christianity

instilled a strong historical awareness in European culture, other civilizations varied in their engagement with history.

However, historical sense extends beyond simply recognizing the past. Unlike other social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, political science, or economics—which also examine human society and change—history is distinctly concerned with change through time. Arthur Marwick highlights that while social scientists seek patterns in human behaviour, historians focus on how societies evolve over different time periods. Thus, for a historian, establishing the chronology of events is crucial to effectively narrate, analyze, and interpret the past.

Synthesis vs. Analysis

There is no contradiction between synthesis and analysis in historical writing—both are essential. Synthesis helps in constructing a coherent narrative, while analysis enables a deeper understanding of historical episodes. The combination of these methods allows historians to convey the uniqueness of historical events to their readers effectively. Neither method can function in isolation; they complement each other in producing meaningful historical accounts.

Literary Style in Historical Writing

Like a well-written novel, historical writing should engage the reader, providing a clear background, well-defined characters, and detailed descriptions. However, unlike fiction, history must be based on verified facts, supported by evidence. The primary focus of historical writing should always be accuracy, with literary style playing a secondary role. A historian cannot alter facts for the sake of a more compelling narrative.

Effective historical writing is anchored in place, chronology, and thorough documentation. However, writing techniques do not emerge solely from historical methods; they are shaped by the accumulation of human knowledge over time. While documentation is crucial, history is not merely a compilation of facts—it requires interpretation. A historian must balance factual accuracy with a coherent writing style, ensuring that the information is both well-structured and accessible to readers.

The Challenge of Objectivity in History

Achieving complete objectivity in historiography is challenging due to biases, selective evidence, and differing interpretations among historians. The historian's personal perspective, cultural background, and ideological influences often shape historical narratives. Source limitations and conflicting accounts further complicate efforts to present an unbiased version of the past. While historical methods aim to minimize subjectivity, absolute neutrality remains difficult to attain.

Ultimately, historiography reflects an ongoing dialogue rather than a fixed set of truths, making the historian's task both challenging and dynamic.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1. What factors determine historical interpretation?

Q2. What is the role of interpretation in history?

Q3. Name any 2 Enlightenment Historians.

Q4. Mention 3 preconditions for writing historiography.

4.6 Summary

Historical truth is a fundamental yet complex aspect of historiography. It is shaped by available evidence, interpretation, and various influences such as cultural and political factors. While historians strive for objectivity, complete neutrality is often unattainable. Through rigorous methods such as source criticism and cross-referencing, historians attempt to verify historical truth and construct reliable narratives. The relationship between historical truth and historiography is complex. While historiography analyses how history has been recorded and interpreted, historical truth depends on the careful evaluation of sources and evidence. Interpretation plays a central role, as historians construct narratives based on available information, theoretical frameworks, and personal or cultural perspectives. Thus, history is not just a collection of facts but a continuously evolving field shaped by scholarly debate and new discoveries.

4.7 Glossary

- **Historiography:** The study of historical writing and methods.
- **Primary Source:** A firsthand account of an event, such as letters, diaries, and official documents.
- **Secondary Source:** A work that interprets or analyze historical events, such as books and articles.
- **Bias:** A particular perspective or prejudice that affects objectivity.
- **Cross-Referencing:** Comparing different sources to confirm accuracy.
- **Historical Method:** The analytical process involving external and internal criticism to verify historical sources.

4.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Historical truth is complex because it depends on available evidence, interpretations, and perspectives. Bias, incomplete records, and differing viewpoints make it difficult to establish an absolute, objective truth.

Answer-2 Primary sources provide firsthand accounts of events, while secondary sources analyze and interpret these accounts. Together, they help historians reconstruct the past and verify historical accuracy.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Historians verify historical truth through source criticism (external and internal), cross-referencing multiple accounts, archaeological evidence, and historiographical analysis to assess reliability.

Answer-2 Source criticism evaluates the authenticity, credibility, and accuracy of historical records by analyzing their origin, context, and internal consistency, helping historians' separate fact from distortion.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Historical interpretation is influenced by available evidence, the historian's perspective, cultural and political contexts, methodological approaches, and prevailing ideologies.

Answer-2 Interpretation helps historians make sense of past events by analyzing evidence and constructing narratives. It shapes historical understanding but also introduces subjectivity into historical writing.

Answer-3 Edward Gibbon and Voltaire are two Enlightenment Historians.

Answer-4 Three conditions for writing historiography are- Records, a Historical Sense and Critical Methodology.

4.9 Suggested Readings

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4.10 Terminal Questions

Q1. What is historical truth, and why is it difficult to establish?

Q2. Discuss the role of interpretation in shaping historical narratives.

Q3. Define Historiography and discuss how it has evolved over the years.

Q4. Explain the importance of cross-referencing in verifying historical facts.

UNIT-5

HISTORY, SOCIETY AND IDEOLOGY

STRUCTURE

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Learning Objectives

5.3 The Interplay of History, Society, and Ideology

5.3.1 History as a Reflection of Society

5.3.2 The Role of Ideology in Historical Narratives

5.3.3 Social Change and Historical Consciousness

Self-Check Exercise-1

5.4 Theoretical Approaches to History and Ideology

5.4.1 Structuralism and Historical Interpretation

5.4.2 Marxist Historiography and Class Struggles

5.4.3 Postmodernism and the Challenge to Objective History

Self-Check Exercise-2

5.5 History as a Tool for Social and Political Change

5.5.1 Nationalism and Historical Memory

5.5.2 Feminist Historiography and Gender Perspectives

5.5.3 The Role of History in Policy Making

Self-Check Exercise-3

5.6 Summary

5.7 Glossary

5.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

5.9 Suggested Readings

5.10 Terminal Questions

5.1 Introduction

History, society, and ideology are deeply interconnected, shaping human civilization through time. Historical narratives are influenced by societal structures and ideological frameworks, which, in turn, affect historical interpretation and understanding. This unit explores the intricate relationship between history, societal changes, and ideological influences.

5.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Understand the role of history in shaping and being shaped by society.
- Analyze the impact of ideological perspectives on historical narratives and Identify key ideological influences on historiography.
- Evaluate the ways in which historical interpretations evolve over time.

5.3 The Interplay of History, Society, and Ideology

History, society, and ideology are deeply interconnected, shaping and influencing each other over time. History is not merely a record of past events but a reflection of societal structures, cultural norms, and dominant ideologies. Social conditions determine how history is written, who gets to tell the story, and what is emphasized or omitted. Ideologies—whether political, religious, or philosophical—frame historical narratives, influencing how events are interpreted and remembered. In turn, historical consciousness impacts societal values and collective identity, often fuelling debates about memory, heritage, and truth. Understanding this interplay helps us critically engage with history and recognize its role in shaping contemporary perspectives.

5.3.1 History as a Reflection of Society

History is not just an objective chronicle of events; it is deeply embedded within the social structures, cultural norms, and values of the time in which it is written. The way history is recorded and interpreted is shaped by prevailing societal beliefs, power dynamics, and the priorities of different groups.

- **Social Structures and Class Divisions:** Different classes and social groups experience history differently. While dominant classes often control the historical narrative, marginalized groups may struggle to have their experiences recorded. For instance, much of early historical writing focused on kings and elites, neglecting the lives of common people. The rise of social history in the 20th century sought to correct this imbalance by including perspectives of peasants, workers, and women.
- **Cultural Norms and Historical Documentation:** The moral and ethical standards of a society shape historical interpretation. In many ancient civilizations, actions of rulers were recorded in ways that justified their legitimacy

and reinforced societal values. For example, medieval European chronicles often depicted monarchs as divinely ordained, reflecting the religious values of that time.

- **Historical Revisionism and Changing Social Perspectives:** As societies change, historical interpretations are revised to reflect new understandings. The civil rights movement in the United States led to a re-evaluation of history, bringing greater attention to the experiences of African Americans, women, and indigenous communities. This demonstrates how history is a mirror of the evolving concerns and ideologies of a society.

5.3.2 The Role of Ideology in Historical Narratives

Ideology—whether political, religious, or philosophical—profoundly influences historical narratives. Historians interpret past events through particular ideological lenses, shaping how history is recorded and understood.

- **Political Ideologies and History:** Different political movements have influenced historical writing. Nationalist histories often glorify the past to foster a sense of unity and pride. For example, nationalist historiography in post-colonial countries often emphasizes struggles for independence and resistance against imperial rule. Conversely, Marxist historians analyze history through the framework of class struggle, emphasizing economic and social factors rather than individual heroism.
- **Religious Ideologies in History:** Many historical narratives have been shaped by religious worldviews. Medieval European histories were written largely by church scholars who interpreted events as part of divine providence. Similarly, Islamic historiography often contextualized history within theological frameworks, such as the rise and fall of civilizations being linked to moral and religious virtues.
- **Philosophical and Intellectual Influences:** The Enlightenment brought about a shift in historical thinking by emphasizing reason and empirical evidence over religious explanations. Thinkers like Voltaire and Edward Gibbon criticized religious influence in history and sought to explain historical events through rational, secular frameworks. Postmodern historians, influenced by thinkers like Michel Foucault, argue that all historical narratives are socially constructed and serve particular power structures.

Thus, ideology determines what is emphasized, omitted, or contested in historical writing, making history not merely a record of the past but also a battleground of ideas.

5.3.3 Social Change and Historical Consciousness

Historical consciousness refers to the way societies understand and engage with their past. As societies undergo transformations, their historical consciousness evolves, influencing the way history is written, interpreted, and remembered.

- **Impact of Social and Economic Transformations:** Major societal changes, such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, significantly alter historical perspectives. For example, in medieval Europe, history was often written by monks and focused on religious themes. However, with the rise of industrial capitalism, new historical approaches emerged that examined economic structures, labor movements, and technological progress.
- **Shifts in Historical Perspective Due to Social Movements:** Social movements challenge dominant historical narratives and introduce new interpretations. The feminist movement, for instance, led to the development of women's history, which reexamines historical events from the perspectives of women rather than just male political leaders. Similarly, the civil rights movement in the U.S. influenced historical research by highlighting African American experiences and contributions that had previously been ignored.
- **The Influence of Memory and Collective Identity:** Societies construct collective identities through their interpretations of history. National history is often taught in a way that fosters a shared sense of identity, but this historical consciousness can change over time. In post-apartheid South Africa, for example, historical consciousness shifted to include the struggles and perspectives of the previously marginalized black majority. Similarly, debates over historical monuments and textbooks reflect how history is contested and reinterpreted in response to changing social values.

Historical consciousness is not static; it evolves as new perspectives, ideologies, and social conditions emerge, shaping the way societies engage with their past.

Self-Check Exercise 1

Q1. How does society shape historical narratives?

Q2. Can history be completely free of ideological influence? Why or why not?

5.4 Theoretical Approaches to History and Ideology

Various theoretical approaches help historians analyze the relationship between history and ideology. Marxist historiography, for example, views history through the lens of class struggle and economic forces, emphasizing material conditions as drivers of historical change. Postmodernist approaches challenge the idea of objective history, arguing that all historical narratives are shaped by language, power, and perspective. The Annales School focuses on long-term social structures rather than political events, while feminist historiography highlights the role of gender and marginalized voices in

history. Each approach offers a distinct way of interpreting the past, showing how ideology influences historical writing and understanding.

5.4.1 Structuralism and Historical Interpretation

Structuralist historians argue that history is shaped by deep-seated structures such as language, culture, and institutions rather than by the actions of individuals alone. This approach, influenced by thinkers like Claude Lévi-Strauss and Ferdinand de Saussure, suggests that human behavior and historical events are governed by underlying systems of meaning and organization. Structuralists analyze patterns in history to understand how societies function over time, emphasizing continuity rather than individual agency. By studying social structures, they reveal how cultural norms and institutions shape historical developments.

5.4.2 Marxist Historiography and Class Struggles

Marxist historiography, rooted in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, views history as a continuous struggle between different social classes. According to this perspective, historical change is driven by material conditions, economic forces, and labor relations. Marxist historians analyze historical events through the lens of capitalism, feudalism, and socialism, emphasizing the exploitation of the working class and the role of economic systems in shaping history. Key figures like E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm contributed significantly to this school of thought by examining how class struggles influence revolutions, social movements, and political transformations.

5.4.3 Postmodernism and the Challenge to Objective History

Postmodernist historians challenge the notion of objective historical truth, arguing that history is not a fixed reality but a constructed narrative influenced by language, power, and subjectivity. Thinkers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida emphasize that historical accounts are shaped by dominant ideologies and cultural perspectives. Postmodernist historiography questions traditional sources and methods, arguing that history is inherently biased and shaped by those in power. This perspective has led to a greater focus on marginalized voices and alternative narratives, challenging grand historical metanarratives and highlighting the complexities of historical interpretation.

Self-Check Exercise 2

Q1. What are the main arguments of Marxist historiography?

Q2. How does postmodernism challenge traditional historical narratives?

5.5 History as a Tool for Social and Political Change

History has long been used as a means to shape societies, legitimize political authority, and influence social movements. Governments, intellectuals, and activists

often use historical narratives to foster national identity, advocate for social justice, or challenge dominant ideologies. By analyzing historical events, societies gain insights into present-day issues and develop strategies for change.

5.5.1 Nationalism and Historical Memory

Nationalist movements often use history to create a sense of collective identity by emphasizing shared traditions, cultural heritage, and historical achievements. This can serve to unify a nation, but it can also lead to the exclusion or distortion of certain historical narratives, particularly those of marginalized groups. National histories sometimes glorify past events while downplaying uncomfortable truths such as colonialism, war crimes, or oppression. Governments and institutions often manipulate historical memory to reinforce national pride and justify political agendas.

5.5.2 Feminist Historiography and Gender Perspectives

Feminist historiography seeks to address the historical exclusion of women and other gendered perspectives from mainstream narratives. Scholars in this field analyze how gender roles have evolved over time and highlight the contributions of women in various social, political, and economic contexts. Feminist historians challenge the male-centric focus of traditional history, bringing attention to issues such as patriarchy, gender-based discrimination, and the role of women in revolutions, labor movements, and intellectual history. This approach has led to a more inclusive and diverse understanding of the past.

5.5.3 The Role of History in Policy Making

History plays a crucial role in shaping government policies and legal frameworks. Policymakers use historical precedents to justify decisions, influence public opinion, and craft national policies. For example, historical knowledge of economic depressions informs financial regulations, while past conflicts shape diplomatic strategies. However, the selective use of history in policymaking can lead to biased interpretations that serve political interests rather than objective understanding. Therefore, critical engagement with historical sources is necessary to ensure responsible and ethical policymaking.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1. Why is History often used to foster national identity?

Q2. How does Feminist Historiography contribute to our understanding of the past?

5.6 Summary

History, society, and ideology are deeply interconnected, shaping how historical narratives are constructed and understood. Structuralist, Marxist, and postmodernist approaches provide different frameworks for interpreting history, revealing the influence of social structures, economic forces, and power dynamics. History is also a tool for

political and social change, influencing nationalism, gender perspectives, and policymaking. Understanding these diverse approaches helps in critically analyzing historical narratives and their impact on contemporary society.

5.7 Glossary

- **Historiography:** The study of how history is written and interpreted.
- **Structuralism:** A theory that emphasizes underlying social structures in historical interpretation.
- **Marxist Historiography:** An approach that views history through class struggles and economic forces.
- **Postmodernism:** A critical approach that questions objective historical narratives.
- **Nationalism:** A political ideology that emphasizes a shared national identity.

5.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Society influences historical narratives through cultural values, political ideologies, and social structures. The way history is written reflects contemporary concerns, dominant perspectives, and the availability of sources.

Answer-2 No, history cannot be entirely free of ideological influence because historians interpret events through their perspectives, biases, and cultural contexts. Ideologies shape the selection, analysis, and presentation of historical facts.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Marxist historiography argues that history is shaped by economic forces and class struggles. It views historical change as driven by conflicts between the ruling and oppressed classes, emphasizing material conditions and labor relations.

Answer-2 Postmodernism challenges the idea of absolute historical truth, arguing that history is a subjective construction influenced by language, power, and perspective. It questions grand narratives and highlights marginalized voices.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 History is used to build national identity by highlighting shared traditions, cultural achievements, and historical events that unite people. Governments shape historical narratives to promote patriotism and social cohesion.

Answer-2 Feminist historiography broadens historical understanding by uncovering the roles and contributions of women, challenging male-dominated narratives, and analyzing gender dynamics in historical events and societies.

5.9 Suggested Readings

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5.10 Terminal Questions

- Q1. Discuss how societal changes influence historical interpretation.
- Q2. Explain the impact of ideology on historical narratives with examples.
- Q3. Compare and contrast structuralist and Marxist approaches to history.
- Q4. Analyze the role of history in shaping national identity and public policy.

UNIT-6

PRE-MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITIONS

STRUCTURE

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Learning Objectives

6.3 Understanding of Pre- Modern Historiography

6.3.1 Classification of Pre-Modern Historiographic Traditions

Self-Check Exercise-1

6.4 Expanding Perspectives in Premodern Historiography

6.4.1 Historiography and Myth-Making

6.4.2 The Influence of Geography and Environment on Historiography

6.4.3 Cross-Cultural Influences in Premodern Historiography

Self-Check Exercise-2

6.5 Summary

6.6 Glossary

6.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

6.8 Suggested Readings

6.9 Terminal Questions

6.1 Introduction

Understanding the theory and methodology of history becomes clearer when one examines how historical writing has evolved over time. A thorough study of history's development across different eras and regions enables researchers to gain deeper insights into the discipline. Such an exploration allows scholars to assess their own work against the standards set by esteemed historians of the past. Just as aspiring painters begin by studying masterpieces in galleries and studios to refine their technique, young historians can benefit immensely from analyzing exemplary historical writings.

It is not enough for a researcher to simply understand what history is and how to write it; they must also be familiar with how history has been written through the ages. This practical understanding often proves more valuable than theoretical knowledge

alone. The vast expanse of historical literature, in both quality and quantity, is second only to pure literature. The sheer scale and complexity of historical scholarship can be overwhelming—consider that Livy, one of ancient Rome’s greatest historians, wrote his *History of Rome* in 142 volumes. Given that history is one of the oldest disciplines, with its primary objective being the detailed depiction of human actions and events, the enormity of its literature is hardly surprising.

A solid grasp of the works of a few distinguished historians serves as excellent training for scholars. Just as other disciplines begin their study with an examination of their own historical development, it is only natural that the study of history should commence with an exploration of the history of historical writing itself.

6.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Understand how ancient worlds preserved and wrote history and what they derived out of their understanding of the past
- Explain how historical writing and historiography has evolved over the years and how these traditions have changed and what elements of them have sustained today

6.3 Understanding of Pre-Modern Historiography

Premodern historiographical traditions refer to the methods, perspectives, and themes of historical writing before the emergence of modern scientific and critical approaches to history. These traditions were shaped by cultural, religious, and political influences, and they often served purposes beyond mere documentation—such as legitimizing rulers, reinforcing religious beliefs, or providing moral lessons.

Broadly, premodern historiography can be classified into several traditions, including classical historiography (Greek and Roman), religious historiography (Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu), dynastic and court historiography (China, Persia, and medieval Europe), and folk and oral traditions. Below is an exploration of some of the most influential historiographical traditions in the premodern world.

6.3.1 Classification of Pre-Modern Historiographical Traditions

The Pre-modern historiographical traditions are mainly classified into four broader types- all of them have been discussed as below:

1. Classical Historiography

Classical historiography laid the foundation for historical inquiry, shifting from mythological storytelling to rational analysis. Greek historians pioneered this transition, with Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE), known as the “Father of History,” blending facts with myths in *The Histories*, which chronicled the Greco-Persian Wars. Thucydides (c. 460–

400 BCE) took a more analytical approach in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, emphasizing human agency and primary sources. Polybius (c. 200–118 BCE) introduced the concept of cyclical history in *Histories*, analyzing Rome's rise through cause-and-effect reasoning. Roman historiography built upon Greek methods but focused more on moral instruction and statecraft. Livy (c. 59 BCE–17 CE) celebrated Rome's virtues in *Ab Urbe Condita*, while Tacitus (c. 56–120 CE) critically examined political corruption in *Annals* and *Histories*. Suetonius (c. 69–122 CE) provided scandalous yet insightful imperial biographies in *The Twelve Caesars*.

2. Religious Historiography

Religious historiography played a crucial role in shaping historical narratives by interpreting events through a divine lens. Christian historians sought to document religious growth, with Eusebius (c. 260–340 CE) chronicling early Christianity in *Ecclesiastical History*. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) provided a theological perspective in *The City of God*, contrasting secular history with divine salvation. Bede (672–735 CE) recorded the spread of Christianity in England in *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Islamic historiography combined religious, legal, and political narratives, relying on oral traditions and written chronicles. Ibn Ishaq (c. 704–767 CE) wrote one of the earliest biographies of the Prophet Muhammad in *Sirat Rasul Allah*, while Al-Tabari (839–923 CE) compiled a vast chronological world history in *History of Prophets and Kings*. Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406 CE) introduced a new historiographical approach in *Muqaddimah*, analyzing the rise and fall of civilizations through social cohesion (*Asabiyyah*) and economic factors. Similarly, Buddhist and Hindu historiography emphasized religious themes, with Buddhist chronicles like *Mahavamsa* documenting the spread of Buddhism and Hindu Puranas preserving genealogies of rulers and sages.

3. Dynastic and Court Historiography

Dynastic and court historiography was often written to legitimize rulers and their authority. Chinese historians systematically preserved imperial records, with Sima Qian (145–86 BCE) documenting China's history in *Records of the Grand Historian*, blending biography with moral lessons. Sima Guang's *Zizhi Tongjian* (11th century CE) provided a chronological account for rulers to learn from past governance. In the Persian and Islamic world, Al-Baladhuri (d. 892 CE) detailed Arab-Muslim conquests in *Futuh al-Buldan*, while Rashid al-Din (1247–1318 CE) compiled *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, one of the earliest attempts at a global history. In medieval Europe, Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100–1155 CE) blended history with legend in *History of the Kings of Britain*, while Jean Froissart (c. 1337–1405 CE) vividly chronicled the Hundred Years' War.

4. Folk and Oral Histories

Many cultures preserved history through oral traditions, storytelling, and epics. These histories, though often embellished, provided insights into collective memory, cultural values, and historical consciousness. Lastly, folk and oral traditions remained vital in preserving collective memory and cultural values. Works like *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Mesopotamia, c. 2000 BCE), *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (Greece, c. 8th century BCE), and the oral traditions of West African griots ensured that history was passed down through generations, blending facts with legend.

Premodern historiography was diverse, influenced by religion, politics, and culture. While early historians often combined history with myth, morality, and ideology, they laid the foundation for more critical and analytical historical methods in later centuries. Understanding these traditions provides insight into how societies have recorded and interpreted their past, shaping modern historical inquiry.

Self-Check Exercise-1

- Q1. Who is considered the "Father of History," and what did he write?
- Q2. What was Ibn Khaldun's key contribution to historiography?
- Q3. Which Chinese historian wrote *Records of the Grand Historian*?
- Q4. How did religious historiography influence historical writing?

6.4 Expanding Perspectives in Premodern Historiography

Premodern historiography was shaped by diverse influences, from myth-making and religious traditions to geographic conditions and cross-cultural exchanges. Unlike modern historical methods, which emphasize critical analysis and empirical evidence, premodern historical writing often blended facts with folklore, moral lessons, and political propaganda. Many early civilizations used history as a tool for legitimizing rulers, preserving cultural memory, or explaining the divine order of the world. Additionally, the geographical environment played a crucial role in shaping historical narratives, as seen in the works of Ibn Khaldun and Chinese dynastic historians who linked societal development to environmental factors. Furthermore, as civilizations interacted through trade, conquest, and intellectual exchanges, historiographical traditions evolved, incorporating diverse influences. Understanding these aspects offers deeper insights into how history was recorded and interpreted before the emergence of modern historical methods.

6.4.1 Historiography and Myth-Making

Premodern historiography often intertwined history with myths and legends, blending fact with fiction to create compelling narratives. This approach was common in ancient civilizations, where history served both as a record of past events and a means of reinforcing cultural identity and values.

Mythical and Legendary Histories: Mythical and legendary histories played a crucial role in shaping early historiography by blending historical events with mythological themes to reinforce cultural identity and legitimacy. Texts like *The Epic of Gilgamesh* from Mesopotamia and the *Mahabharata* from India incorporated mythic elements alongside historical references, creating narratives that transcended mere record-keeping. Similarly, ancient Egyptian and Chinese dynastic histories often traced rulers' legitimacy to divine origins, portraying kings as chosen by the gods to rule. In medieval Europe, chronicles frequently mixed history with folklore, as seen in the legendary tales of King Arthur, which merged historical events with mythical heroism. Additionally, historical writing was often influenced by political propaganda, as rulers used historical records to justify their authority. Roman emperors, for instance, were glorified in Suetonius' *The Twelve Caesars*, which depicted them with both heroic and scandalous qualities. Court historians also exaggerated military victories and divine Favor in dynastic histories, reinforcing the power and legitimacy of their patrons. Through mythology and propaganda, premodern historiography not only recorded events but also shaped historical consciousness to serve political and cultural purposes.

6.4.2 The Influence of Geography and Environment on Historiography

Different civilizations recorded history in ways shaped by their geographic and environmental contexts. Societies that experienced constant warfare, nomadic movements, or natural disasters developed unique historiographical traditions.

Nomadic and oral histories: played a vital role in preserving the past, especially among societies without a strong written tradition. The Mongols and early Arab tribes relied on oral storytelling to maintain historical records, which were later compiled by historians like Rashid al-Din in his *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, providing a comprehensive history of multiple civilizations. Similarly, African griots served as oral historians, preserving genealogies and heroic tales through spoken word, ensuring that cultural memory and ancestral knowledge were passed down through generations. In addition to oral traditions, environmental factors also played a significant role in shaping historical narratives. Ibn Khaldun, in his *Muqaddimah*, emphasized how geography and climate influenced the development, prosperity, and decline of civilizations, arguing that environmental conditions shaped social structures and governance. Likewise, Chinese historiography often linked dynastic cycles to natural disasters, such as floods and famines, interpreting these events as signs of divine approval or disapproval. Together, oral traditions and environmental determinism reveal how different societies conceptualized history, whether through the spoken word or through the lens of nature's influence on human destiny.

6.4.3 Cross-Cultural Influences in Premodern Historiography

Premodern historiography was not isolated within specific civilizations but often shaped by cross-cultural exchanges through trade, conquest, and intellectual movements.

The transmission of historical knowledge: This transmission across civilizations played a crucial role in shaping historiographical traditions. Greek and Roman historical methods significantly influenced Islamic scholars like Al-Tabari, who incorporated their analytical approaches into his extensive chronicles. Similarly, Buddhist historical writing in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia was deeply shaped by Indian narratives, reflecting both religious and historical influences from the subcontinent. In medieval Europe, history writing evolved through interactions with Arab scholarship, particularly during the Crusades, as European historians adapted Islamic intellectual traditions. This exchange of knowledge was further enriched by the translation and adaptation of historical works. Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, for example, merged Persian and Islamic historical traditions, preserving Persian cultural identity while integrating Islamic themes. Meanwhile, Byzantine historians blended Christian perspectives with Greco-Roman historiographical traditions, creating a unique synthesis of religious and classical influences. These cross-cultural interactions highlight the fluidity of historical knowledge and its continuous evolution through adaptation, translation, and intellectual exchange.

Self-Check Exercise-2

- Q1. How did Greek and Roman traditions influence Islamic historiography?
- Q2. What was the impact of Arab scholarship on medieval European history writing?
- Q3. How did Byzantine historians blend different historiographical influences?

6.5 Summary

Premodern historiographical traditions evolved across various civilizations, shaping the way history was recorded and interpreted. Mythical and legendary histories, such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Mahabharata*, combined historical references with divine narratives, while medieval chronicles often blended folklore with recorded events. Many rulers used historical writing as a tool for propaganda, legitimizing their power through exaggerated military victories or divine favor. Oral traditions played a significant role in preserving history among nomadic societies, with African griots and Mongol storytellers passing down genealogies and heroic tales. Environmental determinism also influenced historiography, as seen in Ibn Khaldun's analysis of geography's impact on civilizations and Chinese interpretations of natural disasters as signs of dynastic change. The transmission of historical knowledge across cultures was crucial, with Greek and Roman historiography influencing Islamic scholars like Al-Tabari, while Buddhist chronicles in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia adapted Indian narratives. The

translation and adaptation of histories, such as Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Byzantine historical writings, reflect the cross-cultural exchange of historiographical traditions.

6.6 Glossary

- **Historiography:** The study of historical writing and methods.
- **Mythical History:** A blend of legend and historical references in storytelling.
- **Propaganda:** The use of historical records to justify political power or influence public perception.
- **Oral Tradition:** The transmission of history through spoken word rather than written records.
- **Translation and Adaptation:** The process of modifying historical narratives to fit cultural or ideological contexts.

6.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Herodotus; *The Histories*, chronicling the Greco-Persian Wars.

Answer-2 He introduced *Asabiyyah* (social cohesion) and analyzed the rise and fall of civilizations.

Answer-3 Sima Qian

Answer-4 It interpreted events through a divine lens, affirming religious beliefs.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Islamic scholars like Al-Tabari adopted analytical methods from Greek and Romans

Answer-2 European historians incorporated Arab intellectual traditions, especially during the Crusades.

Answer-3 They combined Christian perspectives with Greco-Roman historical traditions.

6.8 Suggested Readings

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6.9 Terminal Questions

Q1. How did mythical and legendary histories contribute to premodern historiography?

Q2. How did oral traditions help preserve historical knowledge in non-literate societies?

Q3. Explain the concept of environmental determinism in historical writing with examples.

UNIT-7

GREEK AND ROMAN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITIONS

STRUCTURE

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Learning Objectives

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7.1 Introduction

A deeper understanding of the theory and methodology of history requires an examination of how history has been recorded across different periods and cultures. Studying the evolution of historical writing provides valuable insights for researchers, allowing them to assess their own work in the context of established traditions. Just as an aspiring artist studies masterpieces in galleries to gain inspiration and refine their technique, young historians benefit from analyzing the works of past masters. It is not enough for a researcher to know what history is and how to write it; they must also

understand how it has been written over time, as this practical knowledge often surpasses theoretical learning. Historical literature, in both quality and volume, stands second only to pure literature, reflecting its depth, diversity, and complexity. The sheer scale of historical scholarship is exemplified by Livy, who composed his *History of Rome* in 142 books. Given that history is one of the oldest intellectual disciplines, dedicated to the detailed portrayal of people and events, an understanding of key historiographical works serves as essential training for scholars. Just as other disciplines begin with a study of their own histories, so too must the study of history begin with an exploration of its own historiography.

7.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Describe salient features of Greco Roman historical writings and Discuss their historiography in depth

7.3 Greek Historiography

Historiography is a product of the Greek intellect, which elevated it to the same level of significance as literature and philosophy. However, historical writing did not emerge in Greece until the fifth or sixth century BCE, as the Greeks had previously shown little inclination to preserve records of their past. Their historical interest largely centered on the Trojan War, with little concern for their origins. Herodotus, regarded as the "Father of History," revolutionized historical writing by giving it a narrative structure, presenting it in simple prose, and freeing it from the constraints of poetry, making it as engaging as a romance. Earlier writers, influenced by the epic tradition, often incorporated poetic elements and were known as logographers. It was only after Herodotus that history was written in straightforward prose, documenting legends and traditions related to cities, rulers, and temples. Even in ancient times, the Greek mind displayed a keen curiosity about people, their lives, and their conditions.

History emerged in the sixth century BCE under the dual influence of poetry and rhetoric, first taking root in Ionia—the birthplace of both the Greek epic and the world's first great historical writing. This century was a transformative period in global history, marked by profound intellectual movements in both Greece and India. While Greece transitioned from poetic expression to philosophical inquiry, India experienced a religious and philosophical awakening under the influence of the Buddha. In Ionia, a critical and rationalist spirit led to the evolution of history from genealogical and geographical epics, with Herodotus heralding this new era.

The early Greeks wrote history encompassing diverse themes and characters. Poetry and philosophy were the two dominant forces shaping their historical narratives—poetry made history captivating, while philosophy gave it depth. Dionysius

of Halicarnassus, a Greek historian, famously defined history as "philosophy teaching by examples." The very word *history* originates from the Greek term meaning inquiry, research, and exploration, reflecting the Greeks' broad intellectual curiosity. They wrote about nations and city-states, wars and conquests, political institutions and social conditions, literary advancements, and military campaigns. Their contributions set the foundation for historical writing, and their finest historian, Thucydides, achieved such a level of objectivity and analytical depth that his work remains relevant even today. The Greeks were true pioneers in the art of historical writing, understanding its purpose, functions, and significance. They named history *Clio*, after the Muse of epic poetry and history, one of the nine goddesses presiding over the arts. A visit to the Louvre Museum in Paris highlights Clio's prominence among the Muses, underscoring the Greeks' unparalleled contributions to both history and poetry.

7.3.1 Herodotus

Herodotus is rightfully regarded as the Father of History, serving as the crucial link between the logographers and the historians. Born in Ionia, a region renowned for producing great writers and thinkers of the classical era, he contributed significantly to Greek historiography. Unlike Attica—home to illustrious philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—which did not produce any historian of notable repute, Herodotus distinguished himself through his comprehensive account of the Persian Wars. His work extends beyond a mere chronicle of battles, offering a detailed historical narrative of the period.

A storyteller at heart, Herodotus infused his historical accounts with engaging anecdotes, making his work both informative and entertaining. He begins his history with Croesus, the first Asian ruler to challenge the Greeks, narrating his genealogy, rise, and fall. This leads into an extensive account of the Median Empire and the reign of Cyrus the Great. His narrative seamlessly transitions from one event to another, ultimately presenting a cohesive history of both Greece and Persia. Without Herodotus, our knowledge of Persian history would be significantly limited. He meticulously records the events following the death of Cyrus, detailing the reigns of Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes, culminating in their ambitions to conquer Greece.

The last two books of Herodotus' work were written between 456 and 445 B.C., before his travels to Egypt and Babylonia. Like later Arab historians, he believed in obtaining firsthand information by traveling extensively, allowing him to witness events himself. Though this contributed to the accuracy of his accounts, his penchant for elaborate storytelling sometimes compromised the precision of his facts. Nevertheless, his work is notable for its unity and continuity, demonstrating remarkable consistency throughout. His energetic and engaging style enhances the appeal of his narrative.

However, Herodotus was not without his flaws. One limitation was his inability to speak the languages of the people he studied, restricting his depth of understanding. This was understandable given the challenges of learning new languages at a time when he was already deeply involved in his historical work. Another shortcoming was his tendency to believe unverified accounts, a weakness that could lead to inaccuracies. A critical historian must differentiate between fact and fiction, but Herodotus' enthusiasm for storytelling sometimes overshadowed rigorous fact-checking. His desire for a compelling style occasionally took precedence over the accuracy of his data.

Despite these weaknesses, Herodotus possessed admirable qualities: an insatiable curiosity, a sincere pursuit of knowledge, and a clear understanding of historical events. He should be evaluated within the context of his own time rather than by modern historical standards. Apart from his historical contributions, Herodotus excelled as a storyteller, captivating readers with his vivid and engaging prose. His writing maintains the simplicity, charm, and spontaneity of poetry while integrating the analytical depth of history. As both the Father of History and the pioneer of prose composition, he established history as a distinct discipline, characterized by a compelling narrative style and a deep curiosity for knowledge.

Herodotus' history consists of nine books, each named after one of the nine Muses, with Clio, the muse of history and poetry, taking precedence. His work weaves together traditions, songs, and stories from the Greek world, maintaining a rhythmic and engaging flow throughout. While he laid the foundation for Greek historiography, those seeking meticulous accuracy must turn to his successor, Thucydides.

7.3.2 Thucydides

Thucydides stands as one of history's greatest figures, surpassing Herodotus in accuracy and analytical depth. While Herodotus' strength lay in his engaging storytelling, sometimes at the expense of factual precision, Thucydides took a more methodical and critical approach. He was rigorous in verifying his sources, making him a precursor to modern historians like Leopold von Ranke.

Unlike Herodotus, who primarily focused on narrating events, Thucydides was more concerned with understanding their causes and consequences. He was particularly interested in analyzing historical processes, examining not just what happened but why and how it occurred. This fundamental approach introduced a systematic and rational perspective to historical writing, which later influenced modern historiography.

Thucydides also pioneered innovative historical methodologies. When direct sources were unavailable, he applied logical reasoning, reconstructing events by inferring probable causes. This technique, later employed by German historians such as

Niebuhr, Ranke, and Mommsen, allowed him to interpret history with a critical and scientific approach.

Additionally, Thucydides adopted a sceptical attitude toward myths, legends, and unreliable accounts. Unlike Herodotus, who often accepted oral traditions without scrutiny, Thucydides rigorously evaluated the credibility of his sources. His rejection of superstition and reliance on rational analysis set him apart from his predecessors. He dismissed myths and oracles with the scepticism of an Enlightenment thinker and criticized individuals who adhered to irrational beliefs, such as Nicias, whom he censured for placing faith in a lunar eclipse.

Thucydides also broadened the scope of historical inquiry, incorporating economic, social, and military history. He offered detailed analyses of Athenian wealth and resources, providing insights into the economic stability of Greece. His accounts of social life and military strategies highlight the broader implications of war, including its moral and psychological effects. His emphasis on these themes anticipated later historians like Buckle, Comte, Hegel, and Marx. A defining aspect of Thucydides' work is his ability to synthesize historical facts to derive general principles. His moral and philosophical reflections elevate him beyond a mere chronicler of events, making him a historian with deep intellectual insight. Unlike Roman historians who wrote with a utilitarian or didactic agenda, Thucydides remained committed to reason and objectivity. His work stands as a testament to the power of rational analysis in historical writing.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Who were the main Greek historians?

Q2. What was Thucydides known for?

7.4 Roman Historiography

Greek and Roman historiography differ significantly. Greek historians set a high standard with their critical analysis, philosophical depth, and literary excellence. In contrast, Roman historians were often pragmatic, politically driven, and imitative of Greek traditions. While the Greeks pursued history as a branch of philosophy, the Romans viewed it primarily as a tool for political and moral instruction.

Roman historical writing emerged late, as Rome was preoccupied with military conquests and governance. For the first five centuries of its existence, Rome had no historians. Only after the Second Punic War, influenced by Greek historians such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius, did the Romans begin recording their own history. Initially, they adopted Greek techniques and even wrote in Greek, reflecting the intellectual dominance of Greek culture over Rome.

7.4.1 Livy

Livy and Tacitus are regarded as the preeminent Roman historians, often compared to Herodotus and Thucydides. Livy's first book appeared in 27 B.C., during the early years of the Roman Empire. He was deeply influenced by the grandeur of Rome and saw history as a means to instill patriotism, moral values, and civic responsibility.

Livy's history, originally composed of 142 books, provides a comprehensive account of Rome's past. Unfortunately, only 35 books have survived. He focused primarily on Italy, as reliable sources for Rome's external wars were scarce. Like Herodotus, Livy excelled in crafting compelling narratives, and like Thucydides, he believed history should serve a moral purpose.

7.4.2 Tacitus

Tacitus, the greatest of Roman historians, is often compared to Thucydides. His major works include *Dialogue on Orators*, *Life of Agricola*, *Germania*, *Histories*, and *Annals*. He approached history critically, analyzing motives, psychology, and character with penetrating insight.

However, Tacitus tended to prioritize literary flair over factual accuracy, a common flaw in Roman historiography. While he conducted independent research, some scholars believe he relied heavily on Greek sources such as Plutarch. His work, though engaging, requires careful scrutiny for historical accuracy.

Tacitus' critical approach and sharp observations make his work invaluable. However, like Macaulay, he occasionally exaggerated events for dramatic effect. Despite this, his contributions to historiography remain significant, as he skillfully combined historical inquiry with literary artistry.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. How did Greek and Roman historiography differ?

Q2. Who were key Roman historians?

Q3. What did Livy write about?

Q4. How did Tacitus depict Rome?

7.5 Summary

Research suggests that while our anthropoid ancestors had the ability to communicate, their verbal communication was quite basic. Historians believe that writing systems gradually developed over time alongside the evolution of society. The emergence of writing in settled societies was largely driven by the need to record property, including land, livestock, and food supplies. By the early third century, three stages of writing and learning had evolved in Greco-Roman history: the primary,

secondary, and tertiary stages. During the tertiary stage, writing became the primary function.

Greek historiography, pioneered by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, focused on analysis, inquiry, and factual recording. Thucydides, in particular, introduced a critical and analytical approach in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. In contrast, Roman historiography, represented by figures like Livy, Tacitus, and Suetonius, emphasized moral lessons and Rome's grandeur. Livy chronicled Rome's history in *Ab Urbe Condita*, while Tacitus critiqued corruption and tyranny in *Annals* and *Histories*. The Greek tradition laid the foundation for historical writing, while the Romans adapted it to serve political and moral narratives.

7.6 Glossary

- **Progymnasmata:** They are preliminary rhetorical exercises that introduce students to basic rhetorical concepts and strategies.
- **Biographical:** It refers to data or written work dealing with a particular person's life.
- **Anecdote:** A short and interesting story about a real person or event, often used to illustrate a point.
- **Annals:** A chronological record of events, year by year, often used in historical writing.
- **Chronicler:** A person who writes historical events in the order they happened.
- **Didactic:** Intended to teach, particularly in a moral or instructive manner.
- **Genealogy:** The study of family lineage and ancestral history.
- **Logographers:** Early Greek writers who recorded history before the development of historiography as a discipline.
- **Meticulous:** Extremely careful and precise in attention to detail.
- **Pantheon:** A group of particularly respected or influential people, often used for deities in mythology.
- **Penchant:** A strong inclination or preference for something.
- **Pragmatic:** Dealing with things sensibly and realistically, rather than based on theories or ideals.

7.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon.

Answer-2 Thucydides was known for his critical and analytical approach in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Greek historians focused on analysis, Romans emphasized moral lessons.

Answer-2 Livy, Tacitus, and Suetonius.

Answer-3 The history of Rome from its founding in Ab Urbe Condita.

Answer-4 He criticized corruption and tyranny in Annals and Histories.

7.8 Suggested Readings

- Bentley, Michael. 2005. *Modern Historiography: An Introduction*. London's
- Fea, John. 2013. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.
- Tosh, John. 2015. *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of History*. New York: Routledge.
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- Pocock, J.G.A. 2009. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7.9 Terminal Questions

Q1. How was the early historical method developed?

Q2. Discuss in length the Greek and Roman historiography.

Q3. Highlight the main differences between Greek and Roman Historians?

UNIT-8

CHRISTIAN AND ARAB HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITIONS

STRUCTURE

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Learning Objectives

8.3 Christian Historiography

8.3.1 St. Augustine

Self-Check Exercise-1

8.4 Arabs Historiography

8.4.1 Ibn Khaldun

Self-Check Exercise-2

8.5 Summary

8.6 Glossary

8.7 Answers to the Self-check Exercises

8.8 Suggested Readings

8.9 Terminal Questions

8.1 Introduction

Christian and Arab historiography represent two distinct yet influential traditions in the development of historical writing. Emerging in different cultural and religious contexts, both played a crucial role in preserving and interpreting historical events.

Christian historiography, rooted in theological perspectives, viewed history as a divine plan guided by God's will. Early Christian historians like **Eusebius of Caesarea** and **Augustine of Hippo** sought to explain historical events within a moral and spiritual framework, emphasizing the struggle between good and evil. Medieval Christian historiography, often recorded by monks and clergy, continued this tradition, blending religious doctrine with historical narratives. In contrast, Arab historiography, deeply influenced by Islamic teachings and Greek historical methods, took a more analytical and empirical approach. Historians like **al-Tabari** and **Ibn Khaldun** introduced critical methodologies, emphasizing source verification and social dynamics in shaping history. Unlike their Christian counterparts, Arab historians often adopted a more systematic approach, incorporating economic, political, and cultural factors into their narratives.

Despite their differences, both historiographical traditions significantly contributed to historical thought. Christian historians preserved and interpreted European history, while Arab historians advanced historiographical methods that later influenced the Renaissance and modern historical analysis. Understanding these two traditions provides valuable insight into how history has been recorded and interpreted across different civilizations.

8.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Analyze Key Historians and Examine the works of major Christian historians like Eusebius, Augustine, and Bede, and Arab historians like al-Tabari, Ibn Khaldun, and al-Mas'udi.
- Compare Historical Approaches – Contrast the theological and providential nature of Christian historiography with the analytical and empirical methods of Arab historians.

8.3 Christian Historiography

The emergence of Christianity as a distinct religion significantly influenced the course of human history. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, Christianity differed markedly from other religious sects. According to Christian belief, Jesus Christ is both human and divine. The majority of Christians adhere to the doctrine of the Trinity, which comprises the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Over time, theological disputes and schisms led to the formation of multiple branches of Christianity, the largest being the Roman Catholic Church, followed by the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Christian teachings first originated in Jerusalem and quickly spread to neighboring eastern regions. By 301 CE, Christianity had become the dominant religion in Armenia, followed by its establishment in Georgia, Ethiopia, and Rome. By the Middle Ages, Christianity had become the predominant faith across Europe. Over time, it expanded further, becoming one of the world's largest religions.

Overview of Christian Historiography

As Christianity spread, there arose a critical need for individuals who could teach and preserve its doctrines. This led to the emergence of bishops in Christian society, responsible for imparting theological and apologetic teachings. Apologetics aimed at defending the Christian faith by employing reasoned arguments to counter challenges to its legitimacy. Christian historiography developed along different lines compared to Roman and Greek historiography. Its origins can be traced to Jewish traditions, where remembering and recording the past was considered a religious duty. Jewish historical narratives typically reflected God's divine plan for His people, as seen in the Old Testament. According to first-century Jewish historian Josephus, unwritten traditions were preserved through collective memory, particularly by the priesthood.

One of the most renowned early Christian historians was **Eusebius**, a fourth-century scholar whose work *Historia Ecclesiastica* (written between 312 and 324 CE) is

considered a foundational text in Christian historiography. His writings provided a historical account of the Church's development and its struggles against persecution.

8.3.1 St. Augustine

Another influential figure in Christian historiography was **St. Augustine**, a Latin Church Father. In his seminal work, *The City of God*, Augustine explored historical evidence to demonstrate the decline of Christian societies. He also encouraged his disciple Orosius to expand upon his ideas, particularly in addressing the challenges posed by paganism. Augustine's perspectives on divine and earthly cities profoundly influenced medieval Christian thought and historiography.

St. Augustine's historiography was deeply rooted in his theological beliefs. He saw history as a divine plan unfolding under God's guidance, rather than a series of random events or purely human endeavours. His central thesis in *The City of God* is that human history is a struggle between two cities:

- **The City of God** (*Civitas Dei*), representing divine truth, faith, and the eternal kingdom of God.
- **The City of Man** (*Civitas Terrena*), symbolizing worldly ambitions, pride, and material desires.

He argued that earthly kingdoms, including the Roman Empire, were temporary and subject to decay, while the City of God was eternal. His perspective provided a moral and spiritual interpretation of history, emphasizing the role of divine providence in shaping human affairs.

Influence on Medieval Historiography

St. Augustine's approach to history laid the foundation for medieval Christian historiography. Unlike classical historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides, who focused on political and military events, Augustine placed religious and moral themes at the centre of historical interpretation. His vision inspired medieval chroniclers to view history as a continuous struggle between good and evil, shaping historical narratives around the idea of salvation. He also introduced the concept of **linear history**, where history progresses toward a divine purpose, rather than the cyclical view of history common in Greco-Roman thought. This linear perspective influenced later historians, particularly those of the Middle Ages, who saw historical events as part of God's ultimate plan for humanity.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Question: How did Christian historiography differ from Greek and Roman historiography?

Q2. What was St. Augustine's key contribution to Christian historiography?

Q3. Who was Eusebius, and why is he significant in Christian historiography?

8.4 Arab Historiography

Arab historiography served as a crucial bridge between Greco-Roman traditions and modern historical thought. Although both Christian and Arab historiographies were influenced by the concept of divine will, they diverged significantly in their approach. Unlike Christianity, Islam did not establish an organized church structure. Islamic teachings emphasized both worldly and spiritual life, placing great importance on righteousness as the key to salvation. While Christianity viewed history as part of a divine plan centered around Jesus Christ, Islam emphasized human actions and moral responsibility in shaping historical events. Arab historiography was heavily influenced by Greek intellectual traditions, particularly in its emphasis on rational inquiry. This perspective led to the emergence of scholars like **Ibn Khaldun**, who is widely regarded as one of history's greatest minds.

Contributions of Arab Historiography

Arab historians made significant contributions to the study of history in three key areas:

1. **Critical Evaluation of Sources** – Arab scholars developed a meticulous method of verifying historical accuracy known as **isnād**, which involved tracing the chain of transmission of information.
2. **Travel Accounts** – Many Arab historians and geographers recorded detailed observations of their journeys, producing vivid and informative travelogues.
3. **Philosophy of History** – Arab intellectuals such as **Ibn Rushd (Averroes)** and **Ibn Khaldun** contributed to the development of historical philosophy, with the latter pioneering the study of culture and civilization.

8.4.1 Ibn Khaldun

The most prominent medieval Arab historian was **Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406 CE)**, often regarded as the father of modern historiography and sociology. Born in Tunis and later residing in Cairo, Ibn Khaldun's contributions to historical thought were groundbreaking. His work *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomena) introduced a systematic approach to studying historical processes, analyzing social structures, political stability, and economic influences on civilizations.

Ibn Khaldun's historiographical methodology emphasized the following key principles:

1. **Environmental and Social Influences** – He examined the impact of climate, geography, and economic activities on societal development.
2. **Cyclical Nature of History** – He proposed that civilizations rise and fall in predictable cycles.
3. **Historical Causation** – He stressed the importance of understanding the underlying causes of historical events rather than merely documenting occurrences.
4. **Integration of History and Political Philosophy** – Ibn Khaldun believed that historical knowledge was essential for effective governance and leadership.

His ideas were so influential that modern scholars such as **Arnold Toynbee** and **George Sarton** praised his contributions, with Toynbee describing his philosophy of history as one of the greatest ever conceived. Ibn Khaldun's insights anticipated many aspects of modern sociology, economics, and historiography, making him a pivotal figure in the development of historical thought.

Self-Check Exercise-2

- Q1. How did Arab historiography differ from Christian historiography?
- Q2. What were the three major contributions of Arab historians to historiography?
- Q3. Why is Ibn Khaldun considered a significant figure in Arab historiography?

8.5 Summary

Christian and Arab historiographical traditions evolved under distinct religious and cultural influences. While Christian historiography was deeply rooted in theological narratives and religious apologetics, Arab historiography embraced a more analytical and empirical approach, influenced by Greek rationalism. The works of historians like **Eusebius, St. Augustine, and Ibn Khaldun** continue to shape modern historical studies, underscoring the enduring significance of their contributions.

8.6 Glossary

- **Apologetics:** A branch of Christian historiography aimed at defending the faith against critics and justifying Christian beliefs.
- **Gospels:** The first four books of the New Testament, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, containing narratives of Jesus' life and teachings.
- **Hellenistic Influence:** The impact of Greek philosophical and historical methods on early Christian writers, shaping their historiographical approach.
- **Old Testament:** The Jewish scriptures that form the first part of the Christian Bible, which played a significant role in shaping Christian historiography.
- **Hadith:** The recorded sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, often used as historical sources in Islamic historiography.
- **Isnad:** A method of verifying historical information in Islamic tradition by tracing the chain of transmission of a source.
- **Muqaddimah:** The introductory volume of Ibn Khaldun's *Universal History*, which presents a scientific approach to studying civilizations.

8.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Christian historiography focused on divine providence and the role of God in human history, unlike Greek and Roman historiography, which emphasized political and military events. Christian historians, such as Eusebius and St. Augustine, saw history as a linear progression guided by God's will rather than a cyclical process.

Answer-2 St. Augustine's City of God introduced the concept of history as a struggle between the City of God (representing faith and divine truth) and the City of Man

(representing earthly desires and corruption). He emphasized that history follows a divine plan and progresses toward an ultimate spiritual fulfillment.

Answer-3 Eusebius was a 4th-century Christian historian known as the "Father of Church History." His most famous work, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Ecclesiastical History), documented the early history of Christianity, including the lives of martyrs, church leaders, and theological developments, making it a foundational text in Christian historiography.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Arab historiography did not separate secular and religious history as Christian historiography did. While Christian historians emphasized divine intervention in history, Arab historians focused on empirical evidence, rational analysis, and a strong tradition of historical criticism, as seen in the *isnad* system, which verified the authenticity of historical sources.

Answer-2 Arab historians contributed to historiography by (1) developing the *isnad* system for verifying historical sources, (2) producing rich travel accounts that provided detailed observations of different societies, and (3) advancing historical philosophy through scholars like Ibn Khaldun, who introduced a scientific approach to studying civilizations.

Answer-3 Ibn Khaldun is regarded as a pioneer in historiography because of his work *Muqaddimah*, where he analyzed historical patterns, the rise and fall of civilizations, and the influence of social, economic, and environmental factors on history. His emphasis on cause-and-effect relationships and systematic historical methodology made him a forerunner of modern sociology and historical analysis.

8.8 Suggested Readings

- Bentley, Michael. 2005. *Modern Historiography: An Introduction*. London's
- Fea, John. 2013. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.
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- Pocock, J.G.A. 2009. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

8.9 Terminal Questions

Q1. How did early Christian historiography differ from Greco-Roman historical traditions, and what role did religious doctrine play in shaping Christian historical narratives?

Q2. What were the key contributions of Arab historians like Ibn Khaldun to the field of historiography, and how did their methods influence later historical writing?

Q3. Compare and contrast the historiographical approaches of St. Augustine and Ibn Khaldun. How did their philosophical and religious beliefs shape their understanding of history?

Q4. What role did apologetics and theological debates play in the development of Christian historiography, and how did they influence the writing of church history?

UNIT-9

EARLY INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITIONS

STRUCTURE

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Learning Objectives

9.3 Ancient Indian Historiographical Traditions

9.3.1 Itihasa Purana Tradition

9.3.2 Kashmir Chronicle of Kalhan

9.3.3 Genealogy Writing Tradition

Self-Check Exercise-1

9.3.4 Vanshawali of Chamba

9.4 Summary

9.5 Glossary

9.6 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

9.7 Suggested Readings

9.8 Terminal Questions

9.1 Introduction

Historiography, the study of historical writing, plays a crucial role in understanding how the past has been recorded and interpreted. Ancient India developed unique historiographical traditions that blended mythology, genealogy, and regional chronicles to preserve history. This unit explores the various traditions of historical writing in ancient India, emphasizing their significance in shaping historical narratives.

9.2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- Understand the major traditions of historiography in ancient India

- Analyze the role of the Itihasa-Purana tradition, Kalhana's *Rajtaringini*'s importance as a historical source in recording history and learn about Chamba's *Vanshavali* as an example of local historiography
- Explore genealogical traditions and their role in preserving historical continuity.

9.3 Ancient Indian Historiographical Traditions

Ancient Indian historiographical traditions were distinct from Western historical writing, as they integrated mythology, oral traditions, and genealogical records to document history. These traditions aimed not only to record events but also to convey moral, religious, and cultural values. The *Itihasa-Purana* tradition, exemplified by the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Puranas*, combined history with legends. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* is one of the earliest examples of a critical historical chronicle in India. Genealogies, inscriptions, and local chronicles like the *Vanshavali* of Chamba also played a crucial role in preserving regional histories. These diverse traditions collectively shaped India's historical consciousness.

9.3.1 Itihasa-Purana Tradition

The Itihasa-Purana tradition is one of the oldest methods of recording history in India. It combines mythological narratives, legendary accounts, and genealogies to provide a continuous historical record. The two great epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, along with the *Puranas*, serve as prime examples of this tradition. These texts not only recount historical events but also integrate religious and ethical teachings.

Earliest Records of History: The Vedic Danastutis

If we define history as the documentation of events deemed significant by those who recorded them, some of the earliest examples can be found in the *Rigveda* (c. 2nd millennium BCE). Among these are verses known as *Danastutis* (literally, "in praise of gifts"), composed by priests who received generous offerings. These verses not only acknowledged the donor but also prayed for their well-being. A typical example from the second hymn of the eighth *mandala* of the *Rigveda* illustrates this tradition:

"Skilled is Yadu's son in giving precious wealth, he who is rich in herds of cattle. May he, Asanga's son, Svanadratha, obtain all joy and happiness. Asanga, the son of Playoga, has surpassed others by giving ten thousand. I have received ten bright-coloured oxen..."

Such verses were often part of grand rituals like the *Ashvamedha* (horse sacrifice). During this ceremony, a sacrificial horse was left to roam freely for a year, while a Brahmin priest would sing praises of the patron's generosity each morning, and a *Kshatriya* would recount his valorous deeds each evening. Over time, such narrative practices likely evolved into the epic and *Purana* traditions. However, it is important to consider what was recorded and why. The historical narratives primarily highlighted what was deemed desirable by the Brahmins or Kshatriyas, often omitting failures or unfavourable events. Additionally, these proclamations were not mere records but served as a means of reinforcing the patron's continued adherence to societal expectations, linking these early histories to a broader system of patronage.

9.3.2 Kashmir Chronicle of Kalhana

Kalhana, a 12th-century historian from Kashmir, authored *Rajatarangini* ("The River of Kings"), which is considered one of the earliest attempts at an objective historical chronicle in India. Unlike the *Itihasa-Purana* tradition, Kalhana's work employs a critical approach to historical events, relying on royal records, folklore, and personal observation. It provides a detailed account of Kashmir's dynastic history from ancient times to the 12th century CE.

One of the most celebrated historical works of ancient India is *Rajatarangini* ("The River of Kings"), composed by Kalhana in the 12th century CE. This text, considered the first true historical chronicle of India, narrates the history of Kashmir from its legendary origins to Kalhana's own time. Written in verse, it consists of eight books (*tarangas*), with the first three covering events until the 7th century CE, the middle three extending to the 11th century, and the final two focusing on the 12th century. Kalhana, a Brahmin scholar and the son of a minister, initially describes an idealized world where dynastic succession was orderly, and traditional Brahminical norms were upheld. However, in later sections, he critiques the decline of these norms, including what he perceives as "horrors" such as female rulers. While modern readers may not share his biases, his work remains a valuable historical source.

What sets *Rajatarangini* apart is Kalhana's methodological approach. He explicitly mentions his sources, including royal proclamations (*sasanas*), inscriptions (*prasastis*), and scriptures (*sastras*). He also attempts to differentiate between plausible events and exaggerated legends, often attributing shifts in fortune to fate. Additionally, he criticizes earlier historical works for their inaccuracies and lack of literary sophistication. Though we cannot verify these claims since those earlier texts have not survived, *Rajatarangini* set a precedent for later chroniclers who continued his narrative up to the Sultanate period in Kashmir.

Despite his connections to the royal court, Kalhana was not a court poet but saw himself as a historian and poet. He believed that a poet should possess *divyadrishti* (divine insight) and serve a didactic function, especially in educating rulers. He aimed for impartiality and detachment, aligning his work with the *shanta rasa* (mood of tranquillity), though heroic and tragic elements also appear. His accounts of war and its devastating consequences remain particularly vivid, making his chronicle a remarkable contribution to Indian historiography.

9.3.3 Genealogy Writing Tradition

The tradition of genealogical writing in India served as a means of preserving royal and noble lineages. These records, often maintained by court poets and temple scribes, provided legitimacy to ruling dynasties. Genealogies were compiled in texts such as the *Puranas*, copper plate inscriptions, and temple records. These documents played a crucial role in establishing succession claims and preserving the historical memory of ruling families.

By the mid-1st millennium CE, another significant historical tradition emerged—the compilation of genealogies, prominently featured in the *Puranas*. The origins of these genealogies date back centuries, with *sutas* (bards) playing a key role in narrating and preserving them. In early Indian society, *sutas* were highly regarded; they accompanied kings in battle, served as royal messengers, and documented heroic exploits. However, over time, the *Dharmashastras* (legal texts) relegated them to a lower status, possibly reflecting Brahminical efforts to control historical narratives.

The *Puranic* genealogies are of two types:

1. **Lineages of sages** – These served to establish the legitimacy of knowledge transmission and are found in texts such as the *Upanishads* and *Dharmashastras*.
2. **Royal genealogies** – These are further divided into pre-*Kaliyuga* and post-*Kaliyuga* rulers. The former includes epic heroes such as those from the *Mahabharata*, which marks the onset of the *Kaliyuga* (age of decline). The latter, covering rulers up to the 5th century CE, is curiously written in the future tense, suggesting an effort to legitimize rule by portraying it as preordained.

The final compilation of these genealogies likely took place during the Gupta period, with later rulers receiving minimal mention. Their purpose remains debated, but they may have served to create an illusion of political stability. Interestingly, many rulers mentioned in the *Puranas* are corroborated by inscriptions and coins, while others remain absent from these records. This suggests that genealogies were selectively recorded to support claims of continuity and legitimacy, especially during periods of political instability. Moreover, genealogies reflect principles of inclusion and exclusion. They highlight kinship structures—whether lineage was traced bilaterally, patrilineally, or matrilineally—and establish hierarchical positions for elder and younger siblings. Thus, beyond their historical significance, genealogies provide valuable insights into the socio-political structures of early Indian states.

9.3.4 Vanshawali of Chamba

The Vanshawali (genealogical records) of Chamba is a significant example of local historiography in Himachal Pradesh. These records trace the lineage of rulers, document important historical events, and provide insights into the socio-political history of the region. Maintained by local scholars and temple priests, the Vanshawali tradition has been instrumental in preserving Chamba's historical continuity.

Chamba, one of the oldest princely states in India, was founded in the 6th century CE by Rajput rulers of the Solar dynasty. The first ruler, Raja Maruth, traced his lineage to Kusha, the younger son of Lord Rama. The original capital was Brahmaur (*Bramhapura*) in the Ravi Valley. Around 900 CE, Raja Sahil Varman expanded his kingdom by conquering the lower Ravi valley from the indigenous *Ranas* and *Thakurs* and established a new capital at Chamba, named after his daughter Champavati.

Chamba's historical records, known as *Vanshawali*, meticulously document the lineage of its rulers. Raja Sahil Varman, a key figure, not only expanded the kingdom but

also constructed significant temples, including the *Champavati Temple*, *Lakshmi Narayan Temple*, and the Chamba Palace.

During the modern period, Raja Charat Singh (1808–1844) initiated administrative reforms, followed by Raja Sri Singh, who ruled efficiently until his death in 1870. His brother, Gopal Singh, briefly ruled from 1870 to 1873 before abdicating in favor of his son, Sham Singh, at the age of seven.

Raja Sham Singh, known as "the architect of Chamba," played a vital role in the city's beautification. He expanded the *Chaugan* (central green ground), constructed key buildings like the Court, Post Office, and Jail, and built a suspension bridge over the Ravi River after floods destroyed the earlier one in 1894. His contributions significantly shaped Chamba's cultural and architectural heritage. Sham Singh passed away in 1935, and his son, Raja Lakshman Singh, succeeded him, continuing Chamba's legacy. The *Vanshavali* tradition remains an invaluable source for reconstructing the region's political and cultural history.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Why did writing develop in early settled societies?

Q2. What were the three stages of writing and learning in Greco-Roman history?

Q3. What was Polybius' view on Rome's future as a great power?

9.4 Summary

This unit explored various historiographical traditions in ancient India, including the Itihasa-Purana tradition, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, genealogical writing, and the *Vanshavali* of Chamba. These traditions collectively contributed to the preservation of historical narratives, shaping India's understanding of its past. Anthropoid ancestors had only a basic form of verbal communication. Over time, writing evolved alongside societal changes, primarily to record property such as land, cattle, and food. The development of Greco-Roman scripts began after Alexander the Great's conquests, and by the 3rd century, Greco-Roman education had three stages: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The tertiary stage emphasized writing beyond speeches, including narratives, fables, and other literary forms that improved rhetorical skills. Greco-Roman historiography influenced writers like Timacus and Philinus, who documented the Mediterranean past. Polybius (200–118 BC) recorded Rome's rise, from its victory over Carthage to its eastern conquests. However, in his later years, he questioned Rome's invincibility, believing that power and prosperity would eventually lead to its decline. He viewed fortune not as a neutral force but as the upholder of moral law.

9.5 Glossary

- **Itihasa-Purana Tradition** – A historiographical method blending mythology and history.
- **Rajatarangini** – A historical chronicle of Kashmir written by Kalhana.
- **Genealogy** – The study and recording of family lineages and royal successions.

- **Vanshavali** – Genealogical records used for historical documentation in Chamba and other regions.

9.6 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Writing mainly developed to record property, including land, cattle, and food stocks, helping people maintain accurate records.

Answer-2 The three stages were the primary, secondary, and tertiary stages, with the tertiary stage focusing on writing beyond speeches, including narratives and fables.

Answer-3 Polybius believed that Rome, like other great powers, would eventually decline due to the consequences of power and prosperity.

9.7 Suggested Readings

- Warren, John. 1998. *The Past and Its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.
- Ferro. Marc. 2003. *The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past is Taught to Children*. Abingdon: Routledge.
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- Fea. John. 2013. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.

9.8 Terminal Questions

Q1. Discuss the significance of the Itihasa-Purana tradition in ancient Indian historiography.

Q2. How does Kalhana's Rajatarangini differ from other historical traditions of ancient India?

Q3. Explain the role of genealogical records in preserving history.

Q4. What is the importance of the Vanshavali tradition in Chamba's historical documentation?

UNIT-10

MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HISTORIANS

STRUCTURE

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Learning Objectives
- 10.3 Evolution of Modern Historiography
 - 10.3.1 Influences on Modern Historiography
 - 10.3.2 Key Approaches in Modern Historiography
 - 10.3.3 Major Themes in Modern Historiography
- Self-Check Exercise-1
- 10.4 Historians on Modern Historiography
 - 10.4.1 Ranke and Empiricism
 - 10.4.2 Auguste Comte and Positivism
- Self-Check Exercise-2
- 10.5 Summary
- 10.6 Glossary
- 10.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises
- 10.8 Suggested Readings
- 10.9 Terminal Questions

10.1 Introduction

The early modern period was one of the most innovative moments in Western philosophy, during which new theories of mind and matter, of the divine and of civic society – among others – were proposed. The Early Renaissance is often considered less modern and more medieval compared to the later High Renaissance. By the 17th and 18th centuries, the major figures in philosophy of mind, epistemology, and metaphysics were roughly divided into two main groups – the rationalists and the empiricists.

Positivism describes an approach to the study of society that specifically utilizes scientific evidence such as experiments, statistics, and qualitative results to reveal a truth about the way society functions. Comte theorized that the knowledge gleaned from positivism can be used to affect the course of social change and improve the human condition.

10.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Understand the evolution of modern historiography and Identify key historiographical approaches and schools of thought.
- Learn about historians of modern historiography, key concepts of positivism and empiricism and recognize the challenges and debates in modern historiography.

10.3 Evolution of Modern Historiography

Modern historiography has evolved through various intellectual, social, and political transformations. The development of historical writing has been shaped by shifts in methodology, ideology, and sources of knowledge. From traditional narrative history to analytical and critical perspectives, modern historiography reflects a diverse range of approaches that aim to understand the past with greater accuracy and depth.

10.3.1 Influences on Modern Historiography

Several key movements and intellectual developments have influenced modern historiography, shaping how historians interpret and analyze the past:

- **The Renaissance and Enlightenment:** These intellectual movements played a crucial role in redefining historical writing. The Renaissance revived interest in classical texts, promoting humanism and secular perspectives. The Enlightenment further encouraged rational inquiry, scepticism towards religious dogma, and the use of reason in historical analysis. Thinkers like Voltaire and Montesquieu advocated for history based on critical examination rather than myth or legend.
- **The Scientific Revolution:** The rise of scientific thinking in the 16th and 17th centuries influenced historiography by encouraging empirical research and systematic observation. Historians began using primary sources, documents, and archaeological evidence to construct factual narratives. This shift laid the foundation for **positivist historiography**, emphasizing objectivity and factual accuracy.
- **Nationalism and Political Ideologies:** The 19th and 20th centuries saw the rise of nationalism, socialism, and other political ideologies that influenced historical narratives. Historians often wrote history to support national identities or political movements, leading to the creation of national histories that reinforced cultural and ideological perspectives. Marxist historiography, for example, emerged as a critique of capitalist societies, focusing on economic and class struggles.

10.3.2 Key Approaches in Modern Historiography

Modern historiography is characterized by various methodological approaches that offer distinct perspectives on historical interpretation:

1. **Positivist Historiography:**

- Founded by **Leopold von Ranke**, this approach insists on rigorous use of primary sources and the idea that history should be written "as it actually happened" (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*).
- It emphasizes empirical evidence, factual accuracy, and objective interpretation without the historian's personal biases.

- This method laid the groundwork for history as an academic discipline, influencing later historical methodologies.

2. **Marxist Historiography:**

- Developed from **Karl Marx's theories**, it views history through the lens of **class struggle**, economic systems, and material conditions.
- Historians such as **E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm** expanded on this approach, analyzing the impact of capitalism, industrialization, and social movements on historical development.
- This approach critiques traditional histories that focus only on political elites, emphasizing the experiences of the working class and marginalized groups.

3. **Annales School:**

- Founded by **Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel**, this school of thought focuses on **long-term social structures** rather than just political events or individual leaders.
- It incorporates interdisciplinary methods, including geography, sociology, and anthropology, to understand historical change over extended periods.
- This approach revolutionized historical studies by shifting attention to everyday life, mentalities, and economic structures.

4. **Postmodernist Historiography:**

- Challenges the **notion of absolute historical truth**, arguing that history is shaped by language, discourse, and interpretation.
- Influenced by thinkers like **Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida**, postmodernist historians argue that history is not purely objective but is constructed through narratives and perspectives.
- This approach emphasizes subjectivity, questioning dominant historical narratives and highlighting marginalized voices.

10.3.3 Major Themes in Modern Historiography

Modern historiography has broadened its scope to include diverse themes, moving beyond traditional political history:

• **Social and Economic History:**

- Focuses on the lives of common people, labor movements, economic structures, and everyday life.
- Challenges elite-centered narratives by highlighting the role of peasants, workers, and marginalized communities in shaping history.

• **Gender History and Feminist Historiography:**

- Examines the **roles, representations, and contributions of women in history**, as well as the construction of gender identities over time.

- Feminist historians such as **Joan Scott and Gerda Lerner** have critiqued traditional histories that excluded women's experiences, advocating for inclusive historical narratives.
- **Cultural and Intellectual History:**
 - Explores the evolution of **ideas, traditions, art, literature, and scientific thought** across different historical periods.
 - Studies how cultural movements, religious beliefs, and intellectual discourses have shaped societies and historical consciousness.
- **Postcolonial Historiography:**
 - Critiques **Eurocentric narratives** and emphasizes the histories of colonized societies from their own perspectives.
 - Historians such as **Edward Said and Ranajit Guha** have examined the impacts of imperialism, colonial resistance, and the construction of history through a colonial lens.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Who is considered the father of Positivist Historiography?

Q2. What is the primary focus of Marxist Historiography?

10.4 Historians of Modern Historiography

10.4.1 Ranke and Empiricism

Ranke is the foremost historian Germany has produced, who inaugurated a new era in historiography and has been rightly called the father or Columbus of modern history. He was born on December 20, 1795, at Wiehe in Thuringia, in the kingdom of Saxony. He studied classics and theology at Halle and Berlin and began to teach history in a school at Frankfurt in 1818, thereby entering the service of the Prussian Government. In 1825, he came to Berlin as a professor of history and trained generations of scholars, being the first to establish a historical seminar. At Frankfurt, he wrote his first book, which included a critical dissertation on the historians of the period from 1494 to 1514, exposing the untrustworthiness of much of traditional history. This dissertation is as important for modern history as the critical work of Niebuhr had been for ancient history. He visited Vienna, where the recommendation of Metternich helped him to consult all records available. For some time, he was the editor of a periodical that earned him the suspicion of the liberals. He was ennobled in 1865 and died on May 23, 1885, in Berlin.

Niebuhr and Ranke had launched scientific history. But by 'scientific' history, they meant objective or unbiased history, or history strictly in accordance with facts and uninfluenced by subjective feelings or prejudice. This was the sense in which Lord Acton thought of scientific history and called upon the contributors to the Cambridge Modern History for complete objectivity and impartiality. It was, again, the sense in which J.B. Bury asserted that history was "simply a science no less and no more." The avowed aim of the Rankean scientific approach to history was the attainment of positive knowledge of the events of the past. For Ranke, the function of scientific history

was to lay bare the events of the past as nearly as they were, without any subjective influence bearing on them. For him, ascertaining new facts about the past was an ideal in itself.

When this Rankean positive, particular approach to history was making progress, a different positivist approach to history was being pioneered in the 1830s by the French thinker Auguste Comte. Comte looked upon the scrupulous study of the sources and the ascertainment of facts as only the first stage of the process of understanding history; the second was necessarily the framing of laws analogous to the laws of the natural sciences.

10.4.2 Auguste Comte and Positivism

Positivism, as applied to historical knowledge but different from the Rankean type, can be traced back in its origin to Francis Bacon. With the thinkers and historians of the Enlightenment like Hume, Montesquieu, and Condorcet, it became an attempt to construct a Newtonian 'science of society.' In the nineteenth century, Henri de Saint Simon, the French radical, endeavoured to discredit all so-called metaphysical approaches and to establish instead a 'positive philosophy' wherein gravitation would serve as the model of systematic comprehension and ultimate unity across every branch of knowledge.

It was St. Simon's secretary, Auguste Comte, who became the high priest of Positivism. Born in Montpellier, Comte grew into a precocious rebel. After working as a teacher for some time, he became secretary to St. Simon, against whom, after seven years, his independent spirit revolted. In an authoritarian religious strain, he proclaimed himself a high priest of humanity. He drove out his own long-suffering wife and, after her death, worshiped another as his 'virgin mother.' Unstable, isolated, and ridiculed, but ever optimistic, the founder of positivism and modern sociology died in 1857 in his celebrated rooms at 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince.

Collingwood defines positivism as "philosophy acting in the service of natural science, as in the Middle Ages philosophy acted in the service of theology." Comtean positivism and its impact on historiography were the direct results of the great strides the natural sciences were making in the nineteenth century. A mathematician, Comte put the sciences in order, coined the word 'positivism,' and strove to introduce into the study of society the same method as the natural sciences like physics and chemistry: firstly, ascertaining facts, and secondly, framing laws. Facts were immediately ascertained by sensuous perception; the laws were framed by generalizing these facts by induction. The positivist philosophy would use historical facts as raw materials to yield general laws of human society. The Comtean system, like any natural science, must go on to discover their causal connections—the causal connections between the ascertained facts. The sociologist, writes Collingwood, would thus be a kind of super historian, raising history to the rank of a science.

Comte explained the aims and principles of his philosophy in two works—the *Course Positivist Philosophy* (1830-42) in six volumes, and the *System of Positivist Politics* (1851-54) in four volumes. The basic view presented in these works is that "all

phenomena being subject to invariable natural laws, whose precise discovery and reduction to the smallest number possible is the aim of all our effort.”

Comte’s system is called positivism by reason of the definite, explicit, absolute quality asserted in its name—just those qualities that mark laws in the physical sciences. The French philosopher claimed for his positivist approach two things: first, that it was possible to study man in society just the same way as scientists’ studies natural phenomena; and second, that it was possible to discover definite laws of historical and social behavior. In a triumphant spirit, Comte proposed his law of three stages. The law states that the history of all human societies and branches of experience must pass through three stages, each with its corresponding historical epoch: the theological-military (ancient), the metaphysical-legalistic (medieval), and the positive scientific-industrial (modern).

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. Name two individuals who developed historical methods which analyse source materials with microscopic criticism.

Q2. Match the following correctly.

10.5 Summary

Positivism represents actual, absolute, and reliable knowledge derived from scientific methods, similar to those used in the natural sciences. While Romanticism had dismissed moralizing and instructive history, positivism emphasized the interdependence of social factors and claimed to transform history into a science. The origins of positivism in historical knowledge, distinct from the Rankean tradition, can be traced back to Francis Bacon. Enlightenment thinkers such as Hume, Montesquieu, and Condorcet sought to construct a Newtonian science of society, which later influenced Auguste Comte’s positivism. The rise of positivism in historiography was closely linked to the rapid advancements in the natural sciences during the 19th century. Comte’s system was named positivism due to its emphasis on definite, explicit, and absolute qualities, similar to the laws governing the physical sciences. Its impact on historiography is evident in the emergence of a new approach to history that prioritized meticulous attention to detail. Both Rankean and Comtean positivists viewed historical facts as distinct entities, each ascertainable through a separate act of cognition, leading to an emphasis on infinite minute details. The term "philosophy of history" has three main meanings, primarily referring to the underlying forces that shape historical development and research. There are two main categories of philosophies of history: speculative and critical (or analytical). The critical philosophy of history, developed in the 19th century and gaining prominence in the 20th century, focuses on the methodologies and frameworks employed by historians in processing historical material.

10.6 Glossary

- **Empiricism:** A philosophical approach that emphasizes knowledge derived from sensory experience and observation rather than purely theoretical reasoning.

- **Historiography:** The study of historical writing, methods, and interpretations of the past by historians.
- **Positivism:** A philosophical system that asserts that only scientific knowledge—based on empirical evidence and logical reasoning—is valid, rejecting metaphysics and speculation.
- **Rankean History:** A historical method developed by Leopold von Ranke that emphasizes objective analysis of historical sources to depict history "as it actually happened."
- **Romanticism:** An intellectual movement that emphasized emotion, individualism, and the glorification of the past, often contrasting with the empirical and scientific approaches of positivism.
- **Speculative Philosophy of History:** A branch of historical philosophy that attempts to identify overarching patterns, purposes, or meanings in history.
- **Critical Philosophy of History:** A methodological approach that examines the processes, biases, and frameworks historians use in interpreting historical events.
- **Scientific History:** A method of historiography that applies rigorous, objective, and evidence-based techniques to reconstruct past events, often associated with Ranke and positivist historians.
- **The Enlightenment:** An intellectual movement in the 17th and 18th centuries that promoted reason, science, and critical thinking as the basis for knowledge, influencing historiographical methods.

10.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 The father of positivist historiography is Auguste Comte.

Answer-2 Developed from Karl Marx's theories, it focuses on class struggle, economic structures, and materialist interpretation of history.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Niebuhr and Ranke

Answer-	Positivist	–	Comte	2
	Spiritualism	–	Hegel	
	Materialism	–	Marx	
	Idealism	-	Croce	

10.8 Suggested Readings

- Warren, John. 1998. *The Past and Its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Educational .
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- Fea. John. 2013. *Why Study History Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.

10.9 Terminal Questions

Q1. Analyse the philosophy of Ranke and Comte.

Q2. Difference between Rankean and Comtean Positivism?

UNIT- 11

MARXIST APPROACHES TO HISTORY

STRUCTURE

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Learning Objectives
- 11.3 Marxist Theory: The Dynamics of Dialectical and Historical Materialism
 - 11.3.1 Dialectical Materialism
 - 11.3.2 Historical Materialism
- Self-Check Exercise-1
- 11.4 Marxist Historiography and Themes
- Self-Check Exercise-2
- 11.5 Impact of Marxism on Historiography
- Self-Check Exercise-3
- 11.6 Marxist Historians
- Self-Check Exercise-4
- 11.7 Summary
- 11.8 Glossary
- 11.9 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises
- 11.10 Suggested Readings
- 11.11 Terminal Questions

11.1 Introduction

Karl Marx was a pioneering thinker who developed an approach to history based on general laws and broad patterns, known as historical materialism. Born in Trier, Germany, he studied law at the University of Berlin but was also deeply interested in history and philosophy. After leaving university in 1841, he became a vocal critic of the economic and political systems of his time, which led to his exile—first to France, then Belgium, and finally England. Marx played a key role in founding the First International (1864) and remained a dominant figure in the socialist movement.

Two significant influences in his life were his wife, Jenny von Westphalen, whom he married in 1843, and his close friendship with Friedrich Engels, also formed that year. Jenny was a devoted partner and assistant in his work, while Engels became his invaluable collaborator. Together, they produced *The Holy Family* (1845) and *The German Ideology* (1846), which first articulated the materialist conception of history. In 1848, they co-authored *The Communist Manifesto*, providing the first systematic explanation of Marxist thought. Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* (1859) was another groundbreaking work, prompting Engels to compare his discovery of historical

development to Darwin's discovery of evolution. His most significant work, *Das Kapital* (1867-1894), became the foundation of scientific communism. Upon Marx's death, Engels honored him with the words: "Mankind is shorter by a head, and that the greatest head of our time."

11.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the students will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and importance of dialectical materialism
- Evaluate Marx's writing style of history.

11.3 Marxist Theory: The Dynamics of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

11.3.1 Dialectical Materialism

The philosophy that underpins Marxism and unifies its theories into a dynamic and compelling doctrine is dialectical materialism, developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This philosophy explains history and society through changing material conditions, emphasizing that historical development is driven by material forces rather than abstract ideas.

Marx was influenced by the 'Young Hegelians' and initially attracted to Hegel's dialectical method, which interpreted reality as a process governed by intrinsic regularities. The dialectic, as understood by both Hegel and Marx, describes the world as constantly evolving through the conflict of opposing forces. However, while Hegel viewed ideas as the primary force driving history, Marx rejected this idealistic approach. He argued that material conditions—specifically economic factors—shape human consciousness, not the other way around. Drawing inspiration from Ludwig Feuerbach's materialist philosophy, Marx asserted that existence determines consciousness, not vice versa. He famously stated in *The German Ideology*, "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life."

11.3.2 Historical Materialism

Building upon the material foundations of human existence, Marx and Engels developed what they called *historical materialism* or the *materialist conception of history*.

Economic Determinism

Marx and Engels argued that economic activity is the root of historical development. They believed that all aspects of society—including religion, philosophy, law, and governance—are shaped by the economic structure of a given period. In *The Holy Family*, they wrote that "history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims," with economic factors being the primary driver. In *The Critique of Political Economy*, Marx elaborated on this concept, stating that the mode of production determines social, political, and intellectual life. In other words, human consciousness is shaped by material conditions, not the other way around.

Stages of History

Marx outlined a theory of historical progression, arguing that society has evolved through distinct stages, each defined by its mode of wealth production:

1. **Asiatic mode of production**
2. **Ancient (slave-based) society** – Wealth derived from slave ownership.
3. **Feudal society** – Wealth came from land ownership.
4. **Capitalist society** – Wealth is generated through ownership of factories and industrial production.

Each historical stage develops an ideology and social structure suited to its economic system.

Class Struggle as the Engine of Social Change

The transition from one historical stage to another is driven by class struggle. Marx described history as a continuous struggle between conflicting economic classes created by the dominant mode of production. He famously stated in *The Communist Manifesto* that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.”

Class struggle arises because society is divided into two opposing groups: the exploiters and the exploited. Throughout history, different forms of economic organization have given rise to these class conflicts:

- **Ancient society:** Slave owners vs. slaves
- **Feudal society:** Landowning lords vs. serfs
- **Capitalist society:** Bourgeoisie (capitalists) vs. proletariat (workers)

Class membership is determined by one's relationship to the means of production. The ruling class controls economic production and, in turn, shapes laws, politics, and ideology to maintain its dominance.

Theory of Surplus Value

In *Das Kapital*, Marx identified *surplus value* as the root of the antagonism between labor and capital. He argued that labor is the sole source of value, yet workers receive only a fraction of what they produce. The capitalist class, through ownership of the means of production, extracts surplus value from workers, leading to their exploitation. According to Marx, the modern state functions as an instrument of the bourgeoisie, designed to suppress the working class and prevent rebellion.

Social Revolution

Marx saw revolution as a necessary catalyst for social progress. He argued that each historical stage reaches a point where productive forces come into conflict with existing class relations, leading to revolution. Historical examples include:

- Slave revolts in ancient societies
- Peasant uprisings in feudal Europe
- The bourgeois revolutions in England (1642), France (1789), and Germany (1848)

As capitalism develops, the proletariat (working class) grows larger and more organized. This increasing class conflict will ultimately lead to a socialist revolution, in which the workers overthrow the bourgeoisie, seize control of the means of production,

and abolish private property. Marx believed that such a revolution was inevitable due to the contradictions inherent in capitalism.

The New Society: Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Withering Away of the State

Following the revolution, the working class will establish a *dictatorship of the proletariat* to consolidate its power and dismantle capitalist structures. Eventually, as class divisions disappear, the state itself will “wither away,” leading to a classless, stateless society. *The Communist Manifesto* envisions this future as one in which social wealth is distributed based on the principle: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

Marx’s vision was of a society where exploitation and class divisions would be abolished, allowing for true human freedom and equality.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What is the main difference between Hegel and Marx’s dialectical approach?

Q2. How does Marx explain the transition between different historical stages?

Q3. What role does surplus value play in Marx’s critique of capitalism?

11.4 Marxist Historiography and It’s Themes

Marxist historiography examines history through the impact of social events and economic structures, emphasizing production and industrial relations. While Marx’s influence on social history was longstanding, the post-World War II period saw the emergence of openly Marxist historians in the Communist Party Historians Group, which played a key role in founding the *Past and Present*. Though the group dissolved in 1956, its members continued publishing in the same vein. Marxist approaches gained mainstream acceptance in the 1960s and 1970s but declined with the fall of communist regimes and the shift away from economic determinism.

Key Themes in Marxist Historiography

- **Economic History:** Emerging as a distinct discipline in Britain in the late 19th century, economic history gained momentum after World War II, with the rise of cliometrics in the 1960s. Though its popularity declined, its methods have been integrated into mainstream history.
- **History from Below:** Focuses on ordinary people’s experiences rather than elite figures. Rooted in the Communist Party Historians Group, it later expanded to include women’s and oral history.
- **Labour History:** Initially promoted by activists to support trade unions, it later shifted towards social history, particularly after E.P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). Challenges arose from critiques of class homogeneity and new international perspectives.
- **Revisionist History:** Opposing Marxist and liberal metanarratives, revisionists rejected ideological interpretations and favoured archival sources, emphasizing continuity over change.

- **Social History:** Popular after World War II as an alternative to political history, it emphasized economic and social factors in historical change. It later faced challenges from postmodernist critiques of class-based analysis.
- **Whig History:** Criticized by Herbert Butterfield in *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931) for justifying the present through selective historical narratives. Though professional research replaced grand nationalistic histories, Marxist interpretations persisted.

While Marxist historiography remains influential, it has shifted to the margins due to evolving historical methodologies.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. What is the primary focus of Marxist historiography?

Q2. How did the Communist Party Historians Group influence Marxist historiography?

Q3. What challenges did Marxist historiography face in later decades?

11.5 Impact of Marxism on Historiography

Marx's approach to history has been criticized for prioritizing theoretical frameworks over empirical research. At Trier High School, history was reportedly his weakest subject. The German historian Treitschke accused Marx of lacking scholarly integrity, claiming he predetermined his conclusions before conducting research—a view echoed by A.J.P. Taylor. Arthur Marwick argues that Marxist historiography is fundamentally unhistorical, as it imposes a grand pattern of historical development rather than studying events on their own terms. He questions whether Marxism truly examines history from within or merely uses historical events to illustrate its theory.

Marx's historical materialism, influenced by positivism, sought to establish general laws of social development and predict historical change. However, John Whittam highlights several failed predictions. Marx expected the proletariat to grow poorer, yet capitalism adapted and improved living conditions. Revolutions occurred not in industrialized nations like Britain or the U.S. but in largely agrarian societies like Russia, China, and Cuba. His belief that free trade would foster internationalism also proved incorrect, as protectionism and nationalism intensified. Whittam asserts that history is too complex for precise predictions.

Despite such critiques, Marx and Engels have profoundly shaped historical thought. A.J.P. Taylor acknowledged that *The Communist Manifesto* altered the way people perceive politics and society. Similarly, Edmund Wilson praised *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Marxism not only critiqued capitalism but also offered a broader theory of historical development. Engels's *Condition of the English Working Class* (1845) reflected Marx's accurate observations of capitalism's injustices. While Marx was not a conventional historian, his works *The Class Struggle in France* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire* demonstrated historical insight.

Both Marxist and positivist approaches provided a necessary counterbalance to the Rankean emphasis on accumulating facts without analyzing their interconnections.

Lenin praised Marx's historical materialism as a scientific achievement that replaced arbitrary historical interpretations with a systematic theory. It explained how each stage of social development emerged from economic forces, leading to higher forms of social organization. Regardless of its flaws, Marxist historiography remains a crucial challenge to traditional historical narratives.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1. What are some criticisms of Marx's approach to history?

Q2. Despite its flaws, how has Marxist historiography influenced historical thought?

11.6 Marxist Historians

Marx and Engels, like many European thinkers between the Enlightenment and World War I, believed in human progress. However, they uniquely identified the mode of production as the driving force behind historical change. Through dialectical materialism, they argued that human productive activity and shifts in economic structures lead to class conflicts, shaping societal development.

Their two fundamental contributions to historical studies are **the analysis of the mode of production and class-based historical inquiry**. These insights have influenced both Marxist and non-Marxist scholars, including sociologist Max Weber and historian C.A. Beard. Today, these methods are so widely used in historical research that their Marxist origins are often overlooked.

A key extension of these theories is **the concept of surplus value**, which has been employed to explain political and social transformations throughout history. While a critical and flexible application of Marxist principles can be highly productive, historical materialism ultimately offers a valuable analytical framework. The **base-superstructure model** remains a significant tool for understanding historical processes, providing historians with useful organizing principles for research and interpretation.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Q1. What are the two fundamental contributions of Marx and Engels to historical studies?

11.7 Summary

Postmodernist historiography closely examines fundamental elements of history writing, such as facts, sources, and archival records. Marx and Engels, basing their philosophy on the material conditions of human life, developed concepts like dialectical and historical materialism, asserting that economic forces shape religion, philosophy, government, and moral values. Marx identified historical progress through distinct stages—Asiatic, antique, feudal, and bourgeois—each defined by the prevailing economic conditions. Central to his theory is the notion of class struggle as the driving force of historical change. He argued that capitalism fosters conflict between labor and capital, as capitalists appropriate the surplus value created by workers. While Arthur Marwick criticized Marxist historiography for prioritizing overarching historical patterns over detailed event analysis, Marx believed in the possibility of predicting social change through laws of development. His dialectical materialism has profoundly influenced

historiography, shifting the focus from political narratives to societal structures and economic history. This perspective encouraged historians to analyze history through the lens of social and economic forces rather than solely political events. The rise of economic history, aided by growing access to statistical data, further demonstrates Marxism's impact. Ultimately, Marxism has played a significant role in shaping modern historiography by emphasizing the role of the masses in historical change.

11.8 Glossary

- **Social Revolution:** A social revolution is a fundamental change in society. It involves a shift in power in a society.
- **Class struggle:** Class conflict, frequently referred to as class warfare or class struggle, is the tension or antagonism which exists in society due to competing socio economic interests and desires between people of different classes.
- **Surplus value:** It is the excess of value produced by the labour of workers over the wages they are paid.
- **Dialectical Materialism:** A Marxist philosophy that explains historical and social change through material conditions and economic forces rather than abstract ideas. It emphasizes contradictions and conflicts as drivers of progress.
- **Historical Materialism:** Marx and Engels' theory that economic factors shape historical development, arguing that society evolves through stages based on the mode of production.
- **Surplus Value:** A concept from Das Kapital stating that workers produce more value than they are paid, with capitalists extracting the difference as profit, leading to exploitation.
- **Marxist Historiography:** An approach to history that focuses on economic structures and class struggles, emphasizing the experiences of the working class rather than elites.

11.9 Answers to Self-Check exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Hegel's dialectical approach was idealistic, meaning he believed that ideas drive historical change. In contrast, Marx rejected this view and argued that material conditions—specifically economic factors—shape human consciousness and determine historical development. This perspective forms the basis of Marx's theory of dialectical materialism.

Answer-2 Marx explains historical transitions through the concept of class struggle. He argues that each stage of history (such as slavery, feudalism, and capitalism) is defined by its mode of production, which creates conflicting economic classes (e.g., slave owners vs. slaves, lords vs. serfs, capitalists vs. workers). When class conflict reaches a breaking point, it leads to a revolution that ushers in a new economic and social system.

Answer-3 Marx argues that surplus value is the root of worker exploitation in capitalism. Workers create value through their labor, but they receive only a portion of it as wages, while capitalists appropriate the surplus value for profit. This economic exploitation fuels class struggle, which Marx believed would eventually lead to a proletarian revolution against capitalism.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Marxist historiography examines history through the lens of social and economic structures, emphasizing the impact of production and industrial relations on historical events. It prioritizes class struggle and economic factors over political or individual narratives.

Answer-2 The Communist Party Historians Group, active after World War II, played a crucial role in promoting Marxist historiography. It helped establish *Past and Present*, a journal that became a major platform for Marxist historians. Although the group dissolved in 1956, its members continued shaping historical research, particularly in areas like social and labor history.

Answer-3 Marxist historiography declined with the fall of communist regimes and the shift away from economic determinism. It also faced criticism from revisionist historians who rejected ideological interpretations in favor of archival research, and from postmodernists who challenged class-based analysis.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Marx's historical approach has been criticized for prioritizing theoretical frameworks over empirical research. Historians like Treitschke and A.J.P. Taylor accused him of predetermining conclusions rather than conducting objective research. Arthur Marwick argued that Marxist historiography is unhistorical because it imposes a grand historical pattern rather than analysing events independently. Additionally, John Whittam pointed out that several of Marx's predictions—such as the growing impoverishment of the proletariat and revolutions occurring in industrialized nations—proved incorrect.

Answer-2 Marxist historiography has profoundly shaped historical analysis by providing a systematic theory of social development. A.J.P. Taylor and Edmund Wilson acknowledged the impact of Marx's works, such as *The Communist Manifesto* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in transforming perspectives on politics and society. Marx's critique of capitalism, as seen in Engels's *Condition of the English Working Class*, highlighted economic injustices. Additionally, Lenin praised Marx's historical materialism for introducing a scientific approach to history that emphasized economic forces as the driving factor behind social progress.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Answer-1 Marx and Engels' two fundamental contributions to historical studies are the analysis of the mode of production and class-based historical inquiry. They argued that

human productive activity and shifts in economic structures drive historical change through class conflicts. These insights have influenced both Marxist and non-Marxist scholars, including sociologist Max Weber and historian C.A. Beard. Today, these methods are widely used in historical research, often without explicit recognition of their Marxist origins.

11.11 Suggested Readings

- Bentley, Michael. 2005. *Modern Historiography: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Fea, John. 2013. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.
- Tosh, John. 2015. *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of History*. New York: Routledge.
- Tucker, Aviezer. 2008. *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
- Pocock, J.G.A. 2009. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

11.12 Terminal Questions

- Q1. Elaborate and explain in detail the Marxist history perspective and its thoughts.
Q2. How were the subalterns different from the Marxists? Explain?

UNIT-12

ANNALES AND BEYOND: SOCIAL HISTORY

STRUCTURE

12.1 Introduction

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12.1 Introduction

The study of history has evolved considerably over the centuries, with scholars constantly seeking new approaches to understand the complexities of human societies. One of the most significant shifts in historical writing came with the rise of the *Annales School* in the early 20th century, led by historians like Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre. This school of thought challenged traditional political history, which focused primarily on political events, rulers, and elites, by introducing a broader focus on long-term social, economic, and cultural factors. The Annales School's innovative approach emphasized "la longue durée," which examined the slow, enduring transformations in societies over time, rather than isolated political incidents.

Building on the foundations laid by the Annales School, social history emerged as a distinct field of historical research, expanding its focus to include the lives of ordinary people—workers, peasants, women, and marginalized communities—who had traditionally been overlooked in historical narratives. This shift in focus allowed historians to explore the intricacies of everyday life, power dynamics, and social structures, giving voice to those who were often left out of the official records. In this lesson, we will explore the evolution of social history, tracing its roots from the Annales School to its later developments, particularly through the influence of Marxist and cultural theories. Through these lenses, historians began to question traditional historical methods and offer more inclusive, comprehensive interpretations of the past.

12.2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Understand the basic principles of the Annales School of historical writing.
- Recognize key historians associated with the Annales School and their contributions.
- Discuss the impact of Annales on social history and its shift from traditional political narratives.
- Explore how social history evolved beyond the Annales framework and its contemporary relevance.

12.3 The Annales School and the Birth of Social History

The Annales School, founded in France in the early 20th century by historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, revolutionized historical writing by shifting the focus away from traditional political history towards broader social, economic, and cultural forces. At its core, the Annales School sought to understand the deep structures of history, emphasizing long-term, large-scale trends rather than individual events or political leaders. This approach, often referred to as *la longue durée* (the long term), marked a fundamental break from the conventional narrative style of history that focused primarily on political developments.

The Annales historians argued that history should not just be the story of kings, wars, and battles, but a study of the forces that shaped the everyday lives of ordinary people. In doing so, they looked at patterns in areas like agriculture, climate, economic systems, and social structures over centuries. By examining these elements, historians could better understand the forces behind historical change, which were often less visible but more influential than political events themselves.

The birth of social history, as an extension of the Annales School, emerged from this broader approach. Social history focused on the lives of ordinary people—peasants, workers, women, and marginalized groups—whose experiences had often been neglected in traditional political history. Rather than focusing solely on the actions of elites, social history explored how communities functioned, how people interacted with their environment, and how cultural and social practices evolved over time. Historians who followed the Annales model sought to bring to light the experiences and perspectives of those who had previously been overlooked, thereby creating a more inclusive and comprehensive narrative of the past.

This shift towards social history allowed historians to analyze how various elements of society—like family structures, class relations, and economic systems—shaped historical events and developments. The Annales School's focus on long-term structures provided a deeper, more holistic understanding of the past, enabling historians to explain change not just through immediate political causes, but also through the complex interactions of social and economic forces that worked behind the scenes.

Thus, the Annales School played a crucial role in the birth and development of social history, which has since become an essential part of the field, influencing how history is written today.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Who were the founders of the Annales School of history, and what were their main contributions?

Q2. Explain the concept of *la longue durée* and its significance in historical analysis.

12.4 The Key Figures in the Annales School

The Annales School revolutionized historical writing through its collective approach, with major figures contributing significantly to its development:

1. **Marc Bloch:** A founding member, Bloch emphasized the importance of social structures, focusing on mentalities, collective memory, and long-term historical processes. He argued against the dominance of political history and highlighted the role of peasants, workers, and everyday life in shaping historical events.
2. **Lucien Febvre:** Another co-founder, Febvre was known for his focus on geography, culture, and psychology in history. He promoted the idea that

historical events could be better understood through the broader context of human experience, rejecting the narrow, event-based approaches of traditional historiography.

3. **Fernand Braudel:** A central figure in the Annales School, Braudel's groundbreaking work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, exemplified the *la longue durée* approach. Braudel examined the Mediterranean world over centuries, focusing on geographical, social, and economic structures that influenced historical events, rather than focusing solely on political history.

Collective Approach to History

The Annales School collectively shifted the focus of history from political events and individuals to the broader social, economic, and geographical forces that shaped history. They challenged traditional methods by prioritizing long-term structural analysis and emphasizing collective memory and social consciousness over individual actions or isolated events.

Self-Check Exercise- 2

Q1. Who were the key figures in the Annales School of history, and what was their collective approach to history?

12.5 The Rise of Social History

Social history emerged as a significant shift away from traditional political history, which had predominantly centered on the actions of political elites and major events. Instead, social history focused on the lives of ordinary people—peasants, workers, women, and marginalized groups—whose experiences were often excluded from conventional historical narratives. This approach gained traction particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, as new historical methodologies and social movements, such as the feminist and labor movements, became more prominent.

The development of social history built upon the foundations of the Annales School, but it expanded its scope to include a variety of social groups and experiences. Social historians sought to examine the histories of labor movements, women's rights, and the daily lives of individuals, offering a broader and more inclusive understanding of the past. For example, labor history focused on the struggles and contributions of workers, while women's history brought attention to the gendered experiences often overlooked in traditional narratives.

A major critique of traditional political history is that it often ignored the experiences of the majority of people and presented a top-down view of history, which emphasized elite figures and major political events. Social history, in contrast, offered a more democratic and comprehensive approach, showing that history is not just the story of rulers and wars, but also the story of the lives of ordinary people. Through this inclusive lens, social history provides a fuller, richer account of the past that highlights the experiences of previously marginalized groups.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q1. What is the focus of social history, and how did it differ from traditional political history?

12.6 Marxist and Cultural Influences on Social History

Marxist theory had a significant influence on the development of social history, particularly through its emphasis on class struggles, economic structures, and power dynamics. Marxist historians like E.P. Thompson helped broaden the scope of social history by highlighting the role of the working class in shaping historical events. They focused on understanding history through the lens of economic relations, labor, and class conflict, providing a new perspective on societal developments. At the same time, cultural history enriched social history by examining how everyday practices, symbols, beliefs, and ideas shaped the course of history. Cultural historians sought to understand the ways in which culture, identity, and ideology influenced historical change, expanding the scope of social history to include not just economic factors but also the importance of collective memory and cultural expression.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Q1. How did Marxist and cultural influences contribute to the development of social history?

12.7 Summary

The study of social history underwent significant transformation from the early 20th century, beginning with the founding of the Annales School. Founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, the Annales School sought to shift the focus of historical research from political events and elites to long-term social structures, economic forces, and collective memory. This approach emphasized "*la longue durée*"—the long term of historical analysis—which examined the slow, enduring changes in societies over centuries rather than focusing on short-term political events.

The Annales School's focus on social history set the foundation for later developments, particularly the rise of social movements and new methodologies in the 1960s and 1970s. Social history broadened its scope to include marginalized groups such as workers, peasants, women, and other everyday people, challenging the traditional top-down approach of political history. The integration of Marxist theory, with its focus on class struggles and economic power dynamics, and cultural history, which examined the role of symbols and everyday practices, further expanded the field.

These developments led to critiques of traditional historical writing, which had largely been dominated by elite perspectives, emphasizing the experiences and contributions of ordinary people. Social history, influenced by both Marxist and cultural approaches, opened up new areas of research, such as labor history, women's history, and the history of everyday life.

The Annales School's contributions to social history reshaped historical inquiry, emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches and the importance of understanding the past through the lens of long-term social structures. Contemporary historical research continues to build on these foundations, incorporating diverse methodologies and perspectives to create a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of history.

12.8 Glossary

- **Annales School:** A school of historical writing that emphasized long-term social, economic, and cultural structures over short-term political events.
- **La Longue Durée:** The concept of studying long-term historical structures and processes rather than focusing on individual events or short-term changes.

- **Social History:** A branch of history that focuses on the experiences of ordinary people, including their social, economic, and cultural lives.
- **Marxist Historiography:** A historical approach that emphasizes the role of class struggles, economic forces, and material conditions in shaping historical events.

12.9 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 The Annales School was founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in the early 20th century.

- Marc Bloch contributed to social history and emphasized economic and social factors over political events in understanding history.
- Lucien Febvre focused on cultural history and the importance of geography and mentalities in shaping historical developments.

Their main contribution was shifting historical study away from politics and rulers to broader social, economic, and cultural factors, leading to the development of the *Annales* journal.

Answer-2 **La longue durée** refers to studying historical processes over long periods, focusing on enduring structures rather than short-term events.

Its significance lies in revealing deep-rooted social, economic, and cultural forces that shape history over time, offering a broader, more comprehensive understanding of historical developments beyond isolated political events.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 The key figures in the Annales School include **Marc Bloch**, **Lucien Febvre**, and **Fernand Braudel**. They focused on social structures, collective memory, and long-term historical processes, moving away from traditional event-based history. Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* exemplified their approach by examining historical events through the lens of geography, economics, and social forces.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Social history focuses on the lives of ordinary people, such as peasants, workers, women, and marginalized groups, rather than political elites or major events. It differs from traditional political history by offering a more inclusive narrative that emphasizes everyday life and social movements, providing a broader understanding of history beyond political power and major historical events.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Answer-1 Marxist theory contributed to social history by focusing on class struggles and economic power dynamics, while cultural history expanded the field by examining how everyday practices, symbols, and ideas shaped historical events. Both approaches offered a more inclusive view of history by highlighting the roles of ordinary people and cultural influences.

12.10 Suggested Readings

- Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1972).
- Bloch, Marc. *The Historian's Craft* (1949).

- Febvre, Lucien. *The Problem of Unbelief in the 16th Century* (1942).
- Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963).
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution* (1962).
- Baker, Chris. *The Social History of Modern Art* (2003).

12.11 Terminal Questions

Q1. What are the key principles of the Annales School, and how did it transform the writing of history?

Q2. How did Marxist and cultural history influence the development of social history?

Q3. Compare and contrast the approaches of the Annales School and traditional political history. How did social history address the limitations of political history?

UNIT-13

APPROACHES TO INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Learning Objectives
- 13.3 The Orientalist Effort and The Indological Quest in India
- Self-Check Exercise-1
- 13.4 British Imperialist Historiography in India
- Self-Check Exercise-2
- 13.5 Nationalist Historiography and Early Indian Historians
- Self-Check Exercise-3
- 13.6 Marxist Influence on Indian Historiography
- Self-Check Exercise-4
- 13.7 Summary
- 13.8 Glossary
- 13.9 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises
- 13.10 Suggested Readings
- 13.11 Terminal Questions

13.1 Introduction

The study of India's history began during British rule, with colonial historians emphasizing religious identities to create societal divisions. However, these British historians were the first to write Indian history and should be acknowledged as such. After independence, Indian historians challenged these colonial assumptions, moving away from religious identities and adopting a more multifaceted view that included social and economic factors.

One major issue with Indian history writing is that the official narratives in textbooks often feel disconnected from the realities of most Indians. For example, terms like "Indian Shakespeare" for Kalidas or "Indian Napoleon" for Samudragupta reflect colonial biases rather than genuine admiration. These terms were not meant as accolades but as subtle reminders of British superiority. Post-independence historians have sometimes continued these colonial misinterpretations.

Another problem is the disregard for new evidence. History is not static, and new discoveries from archaeology, genetics, and other sciences regularly challenge old narratives. However, historical narratives are often stubbornly upheld, and primary evidence is sometimes ignored, leading to incomplete or lost archaeological reports. In ancient India, historical traditions like the gatha, narasamsi, akhyana, and itivrtta existed, but they were not fully developed into a coherent historical past. These oral traditions, which celebrated heroes and recorded events, evolved over time. Vamsa (royal genealogies) and vamsanucharita (records of lineages) were key components of

early historical records. These accounts, often blending myth and history, formed a quasi-historical tradition.

During the later Vedic period (1000-600 BC), sutas or magadhas were responsible for preserving royal and priestly genealogies. By 400 BC to AD 400, this oral tradition had been formalized in written form. However, royal archives established during the Mauryan period made the sutas' role redundant, as evidenced by texts like the *Arthashastra* and accounts from foreign travelers like Hsuan Tsang and Al-Biruni.

13.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the students will be able to:

- Understand the scope and background of Indian historiography.
- Understand and colonial history writing and writers.
- Analyze Nationalist and Marxist history and writers.

13.3 The Orientalist Effort and The Indological Quest in India

The reconstruction of India's lost history was primarily undertaken by the Orientalists or Indologists. With no genuine historical texts available, their efforts relied heavily on literature, inscriptions, coins, monuments, and sculptures as sources.

Influences Behind the Indological Quest

Modern Indian historiography was shaped by the writings of English East India Company officials. According to David Kopf, these scholars, influenced by the 18th-century European Enlightenment, approached Indian history with an appreciation for cultural diversity. Men like William Jones and Henry Colebrooke were part of this intellectual climate, which emphasized that human differences stemmed from customs and culture rather than inherent nature. This perspective led to a more unified view of human history and a respect for non-European civilizations, including India. The European Enlightenment, combined with the Romantic movement, imbued ancient civilizations like Egypt, China, India, and Persia with a sense of reverence and positive value, sparking further interest in India's history.

In addition, the rise of British rule in India coincided with the scientific spirit in historical reconstruction in Europe, which had emerged from the 17th-century Scientific Revolution. This critical approach to sources was also part of the broader Enlightenment influence.

Early Indological Efforts

Indology, as a scientific study of Indian history and culture, developed with little emphasis on politics. Although missionaries, particularly the Jesuits, began Indological research before the British, their focus was more religious than historical.

William Jones (1746-1794)

Sir William Jones is regarded as the most prominent figure in the Orientalist movement. Raised in an intellectual environment, Jones excelled in languages, learning Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Persian. By 1783, he became a judge in Calcutta and, with Warren Hastings' support, founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. The Society played a crucial role in promoting scientific research and translating Sanskrit literature into English. Jones' translation of *Shakuntala* in 1789 and his later works, including translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Manusmriti*, introduced India's cultural heritage to the West.

Jones also made significant contributions to the field of historical linguistics. In 1786, he proposed that Sanskrit, Old Persian, Greek, Latin, and several European languages all shared a common origin, an idea that laid the foundation for the study of the Indo-European language family.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What was the main challenge faced by the Orientalists in reconstructing India's history?

Q2. What was William Jones' significant contribution to the study of Indian history?

13.4 British Imperialist Historiography in India

Ideological Basis of James Mill's History

James Mill, a prominent critic of the Orientalists, was the first to write a significant history of India. His work, "The History of British India," was not just an account of India's past but a product of British imperialist attitudes. Understanding Mill's historical writing requires us to explore the assumptions and ideologies behind it. After the Battle of Plassey, the British East India Company faced the challenge of governing the newly acquired empire. Three schools of thought emerged during the early years of British rule in India to shape their policy toward governance.

One school was represented by figures like Governor-General Warren Hastings and the Orientalists such as Wilkins, Jones, and Colebrooke. These men believed in a gradual transformation of Indian society, respecting the old institutions. However, their view of India was soon challenged by a more critical, Enlightenment-inspired perspective. The 18th century, marked by reason and rationality, viewed India as a static, semi-barbaric culture, needing reform. John Shore, Governor-General after Cornwallis, and Charles Grant, an evangelical missionary, believed that India could be improved through Christianity, Western education, and legal reforms. Their views were strongly influenced by missionaries, who condemned Indian society and suggested that conversion and education could transform it.

The utilitarian philosophy, promoted by thinkers like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, also influenced British attitudes. According to the utilitarians, institutions were valuable if they contributed to human welfare. Mill, a disciple of Bentham, viewed Indian culture as stagnant and degenerate, needing reform through the imposition of Western ideas and laws. His historical work was underpinned by this ideological framework, advocating a despotic government to bring about change in Indian society.

James Mill's Work and Influence

James Mill's motivation for writing the *History of British India* was to apply utilitarian principles to the governance of India. In his history, Mill critically evaluated both Hindu and Muslim rule in India, offering a sweeping condemnation of both civilizations. His work, begun in 1806 and published in 1818, was highly influential, earning him a senior post at the East India Company. Mill's *History* was praised by notable figures like Ricardo and Macaulay and was even described as "the greatest historical work since Gibbon" by Macaulay. Mill's work played a crucial role in shaping British policy towards India and was praised by his son, John Stuart Mill, as an instructive history. Though criticized by Orientalists, Mill's *History* was regarded as invaluable in shaping British perceptions of Indian history.

The book had a profound influence on British thought, going through several editions (1818, 1820, 1826, and 1840), and was even re-edited by H.H. Wilson in 1848

with additional footnotes. The book served as a foundation for British policy toward India, especially in the training of British civil servants at Haileybury College, where it was used as a textbook from 1805 to 1855. The civil servants trained under Mill's framework, influenced by his utilitarian ideas, viewed British rule in India as permanent and justified, fostering a period of imperial dogmatism.

Vincent Smith: A Shift in Perspective

Vincent Arthur Smith, an influential historian of India, came after Mill. Born in 1848 in Dublin, Smith joined the Indian Civil Service in 1869 and served in present-day Uttar Pradesh. By the time Smith began writing, many new sources and discoveries had provided a clearer understanding of Indian history. Smith's work incorporated these advances. In 1904, he published *Early History of India*, followed by *The Oxford History of India* in 1919. These works became highly regarded textbooks in Indian colleges and universities. Smith's approach differed from Mill's, and he focused on integrating new archaeological and historical evidence to offer a more nuanced understanding of India's past.

Self-Check Exercise- 2

Q1. What were the ideological influences behind James Mill's *History of British India*?

Q2. How did James Mill's *History of British India* influence British governance in India?

13.5 Nationalist Historiography and Early Indian Historians

Rise of Indian Nationalist Historiography

After a period of imitating Western life, including dress, manners, and customs, a shift began among the educated Indians towards reviving Indian culture rather than continuing to emulate English ways. This emerging intellectual class, inspired by figures like Ram Mohun Roy, sought to reform their age-old religion, society, and culture. They aimed to rejuvenate and revitalize their ancient traditions, a movement that eventually became a cultural renaissance. This movement instilled self-reliance, self-respect, and self-confidence among Indians, fostering a growing national self-consciousness. This newfound consciousness would eventually lead to a desire for freedom from colonial rule. However, to sustain this sense of national identity, it was crucial to develop a historical consciousness—the knowledge of India's past.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee highlighted the importance of history in creating unity, national pride, and a desire for independence. He asserted that India's history had not been properly described and interpreted by Indian historians, which led to a lack of national pride. In his *Bibidha Prabandha*, he argued that no nation could proclaim its glory without telling its own story. He pointed out that Romans, Greeks, and Muslims celebrated their own valor through their respective histories, while the Hindus had no such written evidence of their achievements.

Bankim's assertion led to the growth of nationalist historiography, where Indian historians sought to reclaim their national identity and combat the distortions and prejudices of British imperialist writings. Nationalist historiography, however, did not only aim at glorifying India's past but also at critically reevaluating and defending Indian history.

Meaning and Nature of Nationalist Historiography

Nationalist historiography emerged in response to colonial and imperialist attitudes towards Indian history. It aimed to present a more accurate, pride-filled narrative of India's past, countering the Western portrayal of India as a static, backward

civilization. According to historian R.C. Majumdar, nationalist historians sought to examine historical events or points of national significance that had been misrepresented or misunderstood. These historians did not necessarily engage in propaganda but aimed to present a scientifically rigorous and critical study of India's history.

Modern Indian Historians

As the British Empire advanced its rule in India, a new wave of Indian historians began to document their country's history, driven by a growing sense of nationalism. Early efforts by scholars like Bhagwanlal Indraji, Bhau Dhaji, and Rajendralal Mitra helped explore and edit core historical material. By the end of the 19th century, Indian historians started producing comprehensive works, mostly focused on politics, culture, and the dynamic aspects of Indian history. Many of these historians worked under the influence of nationalist sentiments.

Jadunath Sarkar (1870-1958)

One of the most prominent figures in early Indian historiography was Jadunath Sarkar, an exceptionally gifted historian. Sarkar excelled in English and History during his academic years, and after obtaining his M.A. degree, he went on to teach English and History. In 1926, he became the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta but soon resigned to focus on historical research.

Works: Sarkar was a prolific historian, producing around fifty significant works. His *India of Aurangzeb, its Topography, Statistics, and Roads* (1901) was a unique work, focusing on the physical aspects of the country rather than a conventional history. His magnum opus, the *History of Aurangzeb* (1912-1924), explored the complex personality and reign of the Mughal emperor. The work examined the War of Succession, Aurangzeb's policies, and the impact of his reign on India's history. Additionally, Sarkar's *Shivaji and His Times* (1919) stirred debates, particularly in Maharashtra, as it critiqued the Maratha hero's failures to establish a unified nation. In 1922, Sarkar edited and continued the work of William Irvine on the later Mughals, publishing *Nadir Shah* (1922) and *The Fall of the Mughal Empire* (1932-50), which traced the decline of the Mughal Empire from Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 to the British capture of Delhi in 1803. His *Military History of India* (1960), published posthumously, also remains an important work in Indian historiography.

Legacy: Sarkar was a highly respected historian, comparable to German historians Leopold von Ranke and Theodor Mommsen. His works established a tradition of scholarly historiography in India, combining rigorous research with an engaging and clear writing style. He is regarded as one of the greatest historians of his time, and his work continues to influence Indian historiography.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q1. What role did Bankim Chandra Chatterjee play in the development of Indian nationalist historiography?

Q2. What were the key contributions of Jadunath Sarkar to Indian historiography?

13.6 Marxist Influence on Indian Historiography

In the post-independence period, Indian historiography underwent a transformation deeply rooted in the writings of nationalist historians and influenced by Marxism. While not all historians of this phase were Marxists, they adopted a

materialistic approach to history, particularly in the study of social and economic organization and its impact on historical events. This approach was particularly influential in ancient history, where historians sought to understand the relationship between material production, social organization, and historical phenomena.

Key Elements of the Marxist Approach:

1. **Social and Economic Framework:** Marxist historiography emphasized the connection between the means of production and the structure of society. Historians used a materialist interpretation of history to study how technological and economic changes shaped human society.
2. **Dialectical Materialism:** The framework of dialectical materialism, derived from Karl Marx's historical philosophy, was applied to the study of history. This method emphasized the material conditions of life and how they shaped social relations, historical development, and human behavior.
3. **Interdisciplinary Methods:** Kosambi, the pioneer of this approach, employed a variety of methods including archaeology, anthropology, and linguistics to study ancient Indian history. He used the comparative method to analyze material relics, social structures, and cultural practices to understand ancient Indian society.

Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi:

Kosambi was a key figure in the Marxist school of Indian historiography. His major works, such as *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (1956) and *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (1965), revolutionized the way ancient Indian history was understood.

1. **New Definition of History:** Kosambi redefined history as the presentation of developments in the means and relations of production. This concept was influenced by Marxism and helped provide a method to study ancient history, where formal sources were often scarce.
2. **Comparative Method:** Kosambi applied a comparative approach to studying ancient Indian history, analyzing cultural and social structures by looking at surviving material evidence, language, and practices. He explored how tools, agriculture, and social relations evolved over time, such as the transition from tribal systems to caste-based societies.
3. **Aryan Conquest:** Kosambi's interpretation of the Aryan migration theory was more nuanced. He believed that Aryan-speaking peoples, not a superior "Aryan race," gradually spread into the Indian subcontinent, bringing with them technological advancements such as iron tools and the horse, which gave them dominance over indigenous populations.

Romila Thapar:

Romila Thapar is another influential historian who contributed significantly to the study of early Indian history, particularly focusing on the Mauryan empire and the social history of ancient India.

1. **Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas (1963):** Thapar's first major work reinterpreted Asoka's policies, suggesting that his policy of Dhamma was not just a moral or idealistic stance, but a political necessity to maintain control over the vast and diverse Mauryan Empire after its expansion.

2. **History of India (1966):** In this work, Thapar sought to present a broad, accessible view of Indian history. She emphasized the interconnection between political, social, and economic factors in the development of Indian civilization. She also argued that changes in political structures were intertwined with shifts in economic systems.
3. **Ancient Indian Social History (1978):** This collection of essays delves into the social structure of ancient India, including the evolution of caste, the role of law, and the impact of religion. Thapar challenged the view that caste was a rigid system throughout history, suggesting there was social mobility, especially among elite groups.
4. **Caste and Society:** Thapar also explored the origins and development of caste, questioning traditional views and suggesting that the caste system evolved over time due to social and economic changes, including the introduction of agriculture and the formation of more complex social structures.

Both Kosambi and Thapar shaped the landscape of Indian historiography, introducing new methods and frameworks for understanding ancient Indian society. Kosambi's Marxist approach, with its focus on material conditions and social structures, and Thapar's nuanced re-interpretations of political and social dynamics, contributed to a more complex and multifaceted understanding of India's past. Their work continues to influence how historians approach the study of ancient Indian history and society.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Q1. What was the main contribution of D.D. Kosambi and Romila Thapar to Indian historiography?

13.7 Summary

Jadunath Sarkar (1870-1958), born in a Kayastha family in Rampur, Rajshahi district (Bangladesh), was a multifaceted genius. He produced remarkable works across a wide range of subjects, including biography, topography, art, architecture, religion, economics, statistics, surveys, and military science. A product of Indian scholarship influenced by European thought, Sarkar epitomized the best of Western historical methods. Known for his critical approach, he was particularly harsh on Aurangzeb, whom he viewed as a fanatic responsible for the destruction of Hindu temples and the persistent discrimination against Hindus. His seminal work *Shivaji and His Times* (1919) was a product of his extensive research, incorporating sources in eight different languages. In this book, his analytical tone and approach marked him as a historian akin to Leopold von Ranke, as he challenged the popular, unquestioning heroization of Shivaji.

Beyond being a historian, Sarkar was also an artist, holding the belief that historians shared a closer affinity with artists than with scientists. He aimed to present history in a manner that was clear, attractive, and captivating, and he condemned superficial research methods, such as those relying solely on collating materials without critical engagement.

On the other hand, D.D. Kosambi's approach to history involved an innovative understanding of societal evolution through material production. He identified social structures, such as matriarchal or patriarchal societies, by studying practices like joint burials. Kosambi argued that early societies were often matriarchal but gradually shifted towards patriliney, and that myths reflected this transition. He also emphasized the

economic aspects behind religious developments, seeing the rise of new religious sects in the Ganga Valley as a response to social needs that older doctrines could no longer address. Technological changes, urbanization, and detribalization were critical factors in the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism, according to his interpretation.

13.8 Glossary

- **Indology:** It refers to the study of Indian history, literature, philosophy and culture.
- **Matriliney:** It is the process of tracing descent through the mother's line.
- **Orientalist (Indologist):** Scholars, primarily European, who studied India's history, culture, and languages through ancient texts, inscriptions, and monuments. Key figures include William Jones and Henry Colebrooke.
- **Utilitarianism:** A philosophical approach, championed by thinkers like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, which argues that institutions and policies should be judged based on their contribution to human welfare.
- **Nationalist Historiography:** A historical perspective that emerged in response to colonial narratives, aiming to reconstruct India's past with a sense of national pride. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and R.C. Majumdar were key contributors.
- **Marxist Historiography:** A historical method influenced by Karl Marx's theories, emphasizing class struggle, economic structures, and material conditions as the driving forces of history. Prominent historians include D.D. Kosambi and Romila Thapar.
- **Annales School:** A historiographical approach pioneered by Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel that focuses on long-term social structures rather than just political events.

13.9 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 The main challenge was the absence of genuine historical texts, which led the Orientalists to rely heavily on literature, inscriptions, coins, monuments, and sculptures for historical information.

Answer-2 William Jones' most significant contribution was his discovery of the common origin of the Indo-European languages. He proposed that Sanskrit was related to Old Persian, Greek, Latin, and other European languages, which laid the foundation for the study of the Indo-European language family.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 James Mill's *History of British India* was shaped by utilitarian philosophy, which emphasized the utility of institutions. Mill, influenced by Enlightenment thinking, viewed Indian society as stagnant and in need of reform. He advocated for the infusion of Western ideas and knowledge through laws and education to transform Indian society.

Answer-2 Mill's *History of British India* provided a framework for British rule in India, justifying imperial control. It was used as a textbook at Haileybury College, where British civil servants were trained. His work solidified the belief in the permanence of British rule and encouraged a dogmatic and complacent imperial administration in India.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Bankim Chandra Chatterjee highlighted the importance of Indians writing their own history to build national pride and unity. He argued that India's lack of written history contributed to a lack of national self-respect. By emphasizing the need for Indian historians to praise their own noble qualities, he set the stage for a nationalist approach to Indian historiography.

Answer-2 Jadunath Sarkar was a prolific historian who contributed significantly to the study of India's Mughal period. His major works include *History of Aurangazeb*, *Shivaji and His Times*, and *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*. Sarkar's writings were marked by scholarly rigor, and his analysis of historical events such as the decline of the Mughal Empire made him one of India's greatest historians, influencing future generations of scholars.

Self-Check Exercise-4

Answer-1 D.D. Kosambi introduced a Marxist materialist approach to Indian history, focusing on the relationship between production and social organization, while Romila Thapar reinterpreted ancient Indian history, emphasizing the interconnection of political, economic, and social changes, and challenging traditional views on caste and society.

13.9 Suggested Readings

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13.11 Terminal Questions

Q1. Explain the meaning culture and content of Nationalist school of history?

Q2. Comment on the work of Orientalists and colonial writers.

UNIT-14

SUBALTERN AND ORAL HISTORY

STRUCTURE

14.1 Introduction	
14.2 Learning Objectives	
14.3 Understanding Subaltern and Oral History	
Self-Check Exercise-1	
14.4 Role of Subaltern and Oral History in Reclaiming Marginalized Narratives	
Self-Check Exercise-2	
14.5 Rethinking History	
Self-Check Exercise-3	
14.6 Summary	
14.7 Glossary	
14.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises	
14.9 Suggested Readings	
14.10 Terminal Questions	

14.1 Introduction

In traditional historiography, history has often been written from the perspective of the dominant groups in society—those who held power, wealth, or influence. As a result, the stories of marginalized, oppressed, and subjugated communities have often been overlooked or misrepresented. This is where the concepts of *subaltern* and *oral history* come into play.

Subaltern history is an approach that focuses on bringing to the forefront the experiences, voices, and perspectives of these marginalized groups. The term "subaltern" refers to individuals or communities that have been socially, politically, or economically oppressed. Subaltern studies aim to challenge traditional historical narratives by offering alternative perspectives, especially from those who were excluded or silenced by the dominant powers. *Oral history*, on the other hand, involves gathering historical knowledge through the personal recollections, testimonies, and experiences of individuals. Unlike written records, oral history emphasizes lived experiences and the narratives passed down through generations. This method has proven to be crucial in preserving the histories of communities where written documentation is scarce, unreliable, or nonexistent.

Together, *subaltern* and *oral history* offer invaluable tools for historians to reconstruct a more inclusive, multifaceted understanding of the past. They provide a platform for the unheard voices, allowing us to appreciate the complexities of historical events and the people who lived through them. This lesson will explore how these two approaches reshape our understanding of history and give rise to a more comprehensive and nuanced narrative.

14.2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the students will:

- Understand the meaning and significance of *subaltern* and *oral history*.
- Appreciate the contributions of subaltern historiography to understanding marginalized communities.

- Learn the methodologies involved in oral history and its role in preserving cultural narratives.
- Analyze the relationship between subaltern voices and traditional historical records.

14.3 Understanding Subaltern and Oral History

Subaltern History

Subaltern history refers to the study of history from the perspective of marginalized and oppressed groups who have been excluded from mainstream historical narratives. The term "subaltern" comes from the idea of individuals or communities who are at the bottom of social, economic, or political hierarchies. Subaltern history aims to recover and highlight the stories, experiences, and contributions of these groups, offering an alternative to the dominant historical accounts typically focused on elites and powerful figures.

Oral History

Oral history is a method of collecting and preserving historical information through interviews, personal testimonies, and the spoken memories of individuals. Unlike traditional written history, which relies on documented records and texts, oral history gathers lived experiences that may not be captured in formal documents. This form of history often focuses on people's personal recollections, stories passed down through generations, and community traditions, making it a valuable tool for understanding the experiences of ordinary people.

Difference between Oral and Traditional Written History:

The key difference between *oral history* and *traditional written history* lies in their sources and methods. Written history depends on formal records, documents, and texts that are often produced by the ruling elite or authoritative institutions. In contrast, oral history is based on verbal accounts, interviews, and personal narratives, often providing a more intimate, first-hand perspective from those who may not have been involved in formal written records. Oral history gives voice to those who have been historically silenced or overlooked.

Key Scholars in Subaltern Studies and Oral History:

1. **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak** – A key figure in Subaltern Studies, Spivak's work in the late 20th century focused on the role of the subaltern in colonial and postcolonial contexts, particularly exploring how voices of marginalized groups were silenced in history.
2. **Ranajit Guha** – One of the founding members of the Subaltern Studies group, Guha's work helped establish the framework for understanding subaltern groups in the context of colonialism and postcolonial India.
3. **Paul Thompson** – A pioneer in oral history, Thompson's work focused on using oral interviews to reconstruct the experiences of ordinary people, emphasizing the importance of personal testimony in historical research.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What is the difference between subaltern history and traditional history?

Q2. How does oral history differ from traditional written history, and why is it important?

14.4 Role of Subaltern and Oral History in Reclaiming Marginalized Narratives

Historically, subaltern groups have often been excluded from mainstream historical narratives because these accounts were predominantly written by the dominant or ruling classes. As a result, the perspectives and experiences of the oppressed—such as lower castes, women, indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups—were often overlooked or misrepresented. The histories that shaped mainstream understanding of the past were typically framed through the lens of power and privilege, which failed to acknowledge the struggles and contributions of those at the margins of society. Subaltern history, therefore, seeks to give voice to these overlooked groups, shedding light on their histories, struggles, and lived experiences.

Oral history plays a critical role in this process by capturing personal experiences, emotions, and stories that may not be documented in traditional written records. In many societies, particularly among indigenous and rural communities, oral storytelling has been the primary method of preserving history. Through interviews, personal anecdotes, and storytelling, oral history offers a rich and detailed account of the past from the perspective of those who lived it. This method allows for a more inclusive and dynamic history, giving agency to those whose voices have been marginalized or silenced by traditional written history.

For instance, the history of Indigenous tribes in North America has been preserved largely through oral traditions. These communities have passed down their histories, values, and worldviews through generations via oral storytelling, often filling in the gaps left by written historical accounts. In these narratives, personal experiences, cultural practices, and ancestral knowledge are shared, preserving a more intimate and comprehensive history than what can be found in documents created by colonial or governmental authorities.

Oral history not only challenges the biases of written records but also emphasizes the importance of personal experience and subjective narratives. While traditional history often relies on official documents, laws, and decrees that are written by the powerful, oral history highlights the stories of everyday people—those who may have been ignored or sidelined in the historical record. This shift allows for a more diverse and multi-layered understanding of history, one that values lived experiences and the voices of the oppressed. By doing so, both subaltern and oral histories work together to reclaim and celebrate the histories of marginalized groups, offering a broader, more inclusive view of the past that encompasses multiple perspectives and experiences.

Self-Check Exercise- 2

Q1. How does oral history differ from traditional written history in representing marginalized groups?

14.5 Rethinking History

Subaltern studies and oral history challenge the traditional understanding of power dynamics in historical writing by shifting the focus from dominant, elite perspectives to those of marginalized and oppressed groups. Traditional historical narratives are often written by the ruling classes or those in power, which leads to an incomplete portrayal of events, often ignoring the voices of those who were most affected by historical changes. Subaltern studies and oral history, however, seek to give voice to the subaltern—those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, such as peasants,

workers, indigenous people, and women—by emphasizing their experiences, struggles, and contributions. These approaches disrupt the conventional power structures in history, highlighting how historical events were shaped by a broader range of societal forces than what is typically portrayed in mainstream accounts.

For example, the Indian Rebellion of 1857, often viewed in traditional history as a military revolt or an elite-led uprising, can be seen differently through subaltern and oral history approaches. By focusing on the voices of the common soldiers, peasants, and lower-caste participants who also fought in the rebellion, subaltern studies offer a new perspective on the motivations behind the uprising—rooted in deep dissatisfaction with British colonial rule and social injustices. Oral history would further enrich this narrative by preserving personal accounts of these individuals, revealing the emotional, cultural, and personal impacts of the rebellion, which are often left out in traditional historical texts.

Oral history, while essential in communities with strong oral traditions, is not limited to certain communities or events. It can be applied universally to any group or historical moment, particularly where written records are scarce or biased. Oral history provides invaluable insights into the lived experiences of people who have been marginalized in written accounts, offering a more inclusive and multifaceted understanding of history. Whether in rural communities, urban centers, or among displaced populations, oral history serves as a powerful tool for recovering lost histories and ensuring that all voices are heard in the narrative of the past.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q1 How do subaltern studies and oral history offer a new perspective on historical events?

14.6 Summary

In this lesson, we explored the concepts of *subaltern history* and *oral history*. Subaltern history is an approach that highlights the histories of marginalized groups, challenging the dominant historical narrative. Oral history allows these groups to share their experiences and perspectives, often overlooked in traditional records. Together, these methodologies enrich our understanding of history by including voices and stories that have historically been silenced.

14.7 Glossary

- **Subaltern History:** A historiographical approach that focuses on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized and oppressed groups in history.
- **Oral History:** The practice of recording and analyzing historical information through interviews and personal testimonies.
- **Historiography:** The study of historical writing and the methods used to interpret history.
- **Marginalized Groups:** Communities or individuals who have been excluded or oppressed in mainstream historical narratives

14.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Subaltern history focuses on the experiences, stories, and contributions of marginalized and oppressed groups that have been excluded from mainstream

historical narratives. It seeks to recover the histories of those who have been silenced by dominant historical discourses, often emphasizing social, economic, and political inequalities. In contrast, traditional history often centers on the perspectives of elites, powerful figures, and official institutions, overlooking the lived experiences of common people and marginalized groups

Answer-2 Oral history differs from traditional written history in that it relies on verbal accounts, interviews, and personal memories rather than formal written records or documents. Oral history captures the lived experiences of individuals, particularly those who may not have been represented in official records. It is important because it provides a platform for voices that have been historically silenced, offering a more personal and diverse understanding of history that complements and enriches the written record.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Oral history differs from traditional written history by emphasizing personal experiences and subjective narratives, often capturing the voices and perspectives of marginalized groups that are excluded from official written records. It offers a more inclusive account of history, highlighting the stories and struggles of those who have been historically oppressed or silenced.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Subaltern studies and oral history provide a new perspective by highlighting the experiences and voices of marginalized groups, challenging traditional historical narratives that are often dominated by the elite or ruling classes. These approaches offer a more inclusive understanding of history by focusing on the experiences of the oppressed, such as peasants, workers, and indigenous people.

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14.10 Terminal Questions

Q1. How does the subaltern perspective help in understanding the histories of marginalized communities?

Q2. In what ways does oral history provide a richer understanding of past events?

Q4. How can historians use subaltern studies to critique existing historical narratives?

UNIT-15

HISTORY FROM THE MARGINS

STRUCTURE

15.1 Introduction

15.2 Learning Objectives

15.3 Oral and Life History as Methods for Recovering Marginalized Voices

Self-Check Exercise-1

15.4 Feminist Historiography and the reconstruction of Women's History

Self-Check Exercise-2

15.5 Dalit History

Self-Check Exercise-3

15.6 Summary

15.7 Glossary

15.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

15.9 Suggested Readings

15.10 Terminal Questions

15.1 Introduction

Subaltern and feminist historical consciousness has significantly shifted the focus of history from merely recounting past events to examining the lived experiences of people who have often been overlooked as historical agents. It has raised important theoretical and methodological questions for historiography, particularly concerning how historical events are interpreted and what tools are considered legitimate for historical inquiry. By highlighting the politics involved in knowledge production, this approach challenges the validity of official historical narratives, pointing out that histories constructed from the top down often render the voices and experiences of the majority invisible. The exclusion of women and other marginalized groups from mainstream historical accounts deprives them of political agency. Efforts to reconstruct the histories of these excluded groups aim not only to broaden historical knowledge but also to empower these people politically. This approach challenges the dominant, monolithic view of the past and encourages the search for alternative historical sources, including oral traditions from anthropology and sociology (such as proverbs, oral histories, folk songs, etc.) and literary sources (such as fiction, autobiographies, letters, and diaries). Feminist historiography, a key strand of resistance to official historical narratives, questions the absence of women in history. It argues that this absence fosters perceptions of female passivity, which are politically charged, as they justify male dominance and deny women their socio-political and economic rights. By shifting the focus from political events to the lived experiences of individuals, feminist historiography raises new and intriguing questions. For example, what was the family structure like at a particular point in history? How were gender identities and relationships shaped? It reveals that these relationships are influenced by the socio-economic and political conditions of each era. It also underscores that women's lives are shaped by various factors, showing that women are not a homogenous group. Their identities emerge from differences in access to power, resources, belief systems, and their perspectives on the world around them.

15.2 Learning Objectives

After learning this unit, the students will be able to:

- Understand the new areas of history exploration.
- Understand the Feminist perspective of history.
- Discuss the Dalit History writing and its importance.

15.3 Oral and Life History as Methods for Recovering Marginalized Voices

Oral history is a research method that empowers the subjects of study to participate actively in the collection and analysis of their own stories. It is especially valuable for documenting the voices of the marginalized and recording their struggles. This method requires the researcher to creatively capture the socio-economic context of these lives and their challenges. Conducting oral history demands building a rapport with the subjects, often requiring several interviews to fully document their stories. The time and setting of the interviews can influence how the story is recalled; a formal setting might yield one type of response, while an informal, private setting may bring out different details. Additionally, the presence of listeners or cultural norms related to family/community honor can lead to selective narrations, where certain incidents might be downplayed or omitted.

Closely related to oral history is the life history method, which merges history and biography to examine the impact of social structures on individuals while showing how people actively shape their culture. This method provides deep insights into an individual's life over time and in their historical context, drawing from both oral and written documentation. Life histories typically involve participant observation and extensive interviews, complemented by historical and documentary sources. There is no single standard way to present these narratives, and choices must be made about narrative style, such as whether the story should be told in the first or third person. Engaging with oral and life histories can lead to a process of self-transformation, as reflecting on others' lives helps us understand our own.

Examples of notable works in this genre include:

1. Bhave, Sumitra (1988) *Pan on Fire: Eight Dalit Women Tell Their Story*
2. Vasantha, Kannabiran (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*

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What is the primary benefit of using oral history in research?

Q2. How does the life history method differ from oral history?

15.4 Feminist Historiography and the Reconstruction of Women's History

Feminist historiography emerged from the gender justice agenda of the new women's movement in the late 1960s, aiming to recover women's history. The goal of reconstructing history through the lens of women's lived experiences arises from the need to address their current invisibility in mainstream historical accounts, which in turn perpetuates their exclusion from public life. It argues that this exclusion is not accidental

but serves to reinforce the false notion that the subordination of women is natural and has always been the norm. The marginalization of women's experiences in history is seen as inevitable unless women assert their right to participate in the construction of historical knowledge.

This process of recovering women's history has involved rediscovering the foremothers of the feminist movement, whose voices of protest against the mistreatment of women were erased by patriarchal control over knowledge. This has led to the recovery of biographies, autobiographies, and writings by women such as Pandita Ramabai, Tarabai Shinde, and Lakshmibai Tilak, in order to reveal the continuous history of feminist resistance to patriarchy. These efforts have uncovered a long-standing tradition of women challenging and subverting patriarchal structures. Feminist historiography has also critically reevaluated historical narratives to challenge the politics of knowledge production. For example, feminist scholars like Uma Chakravarti have questioned the claims made by nationalist historians regarding the high status of women in the Vedic Aryan period. In her study *Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi*, Chakravarti criticizes historians like Altekar and R.K. Mukherjee for basing their claims on weak evidence while ignoring contrary evidence that also appears in the same texts. She argues that these historians' patriotic biases undermined their objectivity.

The recovery of protest and subversion has revolutionized the way we conceptualize history, transforming our understanding of:

- Periodization
- Social analysis categories
- Theories of social change

Central to this shift is the idea that gender relations are socially constructed, not natural, which challenges traditional historical thinking.

Periodization:

This requires evaluating key historical moments based on their impact on women's liberation or subordination. Joan Kelly (1986) suggests that some periods of significant human liberation, such as the Renaissance and the French Revolution, were actually times of male liberation, which placed additional constraints on women's lives. Feminist history challenges the conventional valuation of these periods, questioning whether events like the Gupta period—often considered a "Golden Age" due to advancements in art and literature—were truly periods of liberation for women, as they also saw the continuation of practices like the seclusion of women.

Categories of Social Analysis:

Feminist historiography argues that the invisibility of women in traditional history is not a reflection of their nature, but a consequence of history being conceptualized as a discipline that focuses mainly on the public sphere. By raising questions about the nature of the family, women's reproductive roles, and their participation in the workforce, feminist scholars challenge the traditional narrative. This perspective suggests that the most significant periods of historical progress might not be those associated with flourishing art and literature, but rather times when the constraints imposed on women by patriarchy were less overt.

Theories of Social Change:

Feminist historiography contends that the periods in history that restricted women's lives were those that created distinctions between the public and private

spheres. In pre-colonial societies, the economy was centered in the household, and women's productive roles were integrated into it. However, the introduction of industrial capitalism during colonial rule disrupted this integration, separating the household from the economy. This division relegated women to the private sphere, reinforcing gender inequality in society.

Self-Check Exercise- 2

Q1. What is the significance of feminist historiography in understanding history?

Q2. How does feminist historiography critique traditional periodization?

15.5 Dalit Histories

The Dalit movement began as a protest against the systemic exploitation and subjugation of Dalits by upper-caste communities in India. For centuries, Dalits were subjected to oppression and isolation by the Brahmin-dominated culture. However, with the advent of modern systems—such as new political frameworks, rational judicial systems, land reforms, taxation methods, and liberal education—the Dalit movement began to assert the rights and privileges of Dalits, emphasizing liberty, equality, and social justice. Ruman Sutradhar (2014) argues that the Dalit movement is a social revolution that seeks to replace the hierarchical caste-based society of India with a system rooted in democratic ideals.

Dalit leaders, through organizations and political parties, have worked tirelessly to mobilize Dalit masses, fostering an inclusive society. One of the significant achievements of the movement has been the mobilization of Dalits into the democratic electoral process. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) played a crucial role in empowering Dalits to participate in elections, ensuring their voices were heard in the political landscape. The movement also led to the demand for reservation in political offices, government jobs, and welfare programs—an effort that resulted in the current reservation system, which was born out of the Dalit struggle for equality and dignity.

Gandhi's Contribution to the Dalit Movement:

Mahatma Gandhi's involvement in the Dalit movement was pivotal. While in South Africa, Gandhi became acutely aware of the problem of social discrimination. He advocated for the upliftment of the untouchables (whom he called "Harijans"), viewing untouchability as a cruel and inhumane practice. Gandhi believed that the nation could only progress if it addressed the plight of the untouchables. He envisioned a "purification of Hinduism" through the removal of untouchability. To further this cause, Gandhi founded the Harijan Sevak Sang in 1932, which was independent of the Congress Party, to support the upliftment of Harijans. His efforts to eradicate untouchability were crucial in bringing national attention to the issue and challenging societal norms.

Ambedkar's Contribution to the Dalit Movement:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a key figure in the Dalit movement, took an assertive approach to social change. He started the Marathi fortnightly *Bahiskrit Bharat* in 1927 and a weekly, *Janta*, in 1930, to advocate for social equality. He also led a Satyagraha in 1927 to establish the right of Dalits to draw water from the *Chavadar Talen* tank in Mahad, Kolaba, which was denied to them by upper-caste Hindus. Ambedkar also led a movement in 1930 for the rights of Dalits to enter the Kalaram Temple in Nasik, although this satyagraha was later withdrawn. Ambedkar's efforts resulted in legal

victories, such as the Bombay High Court ruling in favor of Dalits' rights to use public water resources. His efforts to secure government jobs and education for Dalits, along with his work in drafting the Indian Constitution, were instrumental in ensuring political representation and rights for the Dalit community.

Dalit Literary Movement:

Dalit literature has become an important medium through which Dalits have expressed their struggles, experiences, and aspirations. Writers like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav, and Narayan Surve have contributed to Dalit concerns through their literature, challenging traditional social structures. Baburao Bagul, in particular, is considered a pioneer of Marathi Dalit literature, with his short story collection *Jevha Mijat Chorali* (When I Concealed My Caste), which shocked the Marathi literary world with its portrayal of social exploitation. Over time, the Dalit literary movement grew, with writers like Namdeo Dhasal, who founded the Dalit Panthers, further expanding the scope of Dalit literature and providing a platform for marginalized voices. Many Dalit writings have since been translated into English, broadening the movement's reach.

Dalit Women's Movement:

The Dalit women's movement emerged alongside the broader Dalit movement, with a particular focus on addressing the triple oppression faced by Dalit women—caste-based oppression, class-based oppression, and patriarchal oppression. In 1928, the All-India Depressed Classes Women's Association was founded with Ramabai Ambedkar, Dr. Ambedkar's wife, as its president. The movement gained momentum with the organization of the All-India Depressed Classes Women Conference in 1942, which saw the participation of 25,000 women. The National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), formed in 1993, raised its voice against violence faced by Dalit women and highlighted the intersectionality of caste and gender discrimination. Dalit women's self-representation at the Durban Conference on Racism (1993) and the International Women's Conference in Beijing (1995) marked significant milestones in the political visibility of Dalit women.

Dalit feminists have articulated the unique oppression faced by Dalit women, who experience multiple layers of discrimination. They are oppressed by upper-caste communities, face class exploitation from upper-caste landowners, and are subject to patriarchal oppression from men, including those from their own communities. The Dalit Women's Movement aims to change caste dynamics, promote female leadership, fight against all forms of violence, and ensure that Dalit women benefit from government schemes.

Impact of the Dalit Movement:

The Dalit movement has played a critical role in transforming Indian society. It has challenged the caste hierarchy and encouraged the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and social justice. The movement has raised important issues related to identity, political representation, and reservations, bringing Dalits into the mainstream political arena. Dalit literature has inspired intellectuals to assert their rights and dignity, while the Dalit movement has acted as a powerful pressure group, influencing government policies and social change. Through its multifaceted approach, the Dalit movement has contributed to a significant socio-economic and political transformation, ensuring that Dalits no longer remain on the margins of Indian society.

Self- Check Exercise-3

Q1. What role did Dr. B.R. Ambedkar play in the Dalit movement, and how did his actions contribute to the empowerment of Dalits?

Q2. How did the Dalit women's movement address the triple oppression faced by Dalit women, and what were some significant milestones of the movement?

15.6 Summary

- **Exploring Oral History:** Understanding oral history as a new approach to mainstream history that focuses on marginalized voices and experiences.
- **Feminist History:** Investigating the various forms and perspectives of feminist history, offering new ways of understanding the past through a gendered lens.
- **Dalit History:** Analyzing Dalit history as a crucial tool to amplify the voices of marginalized groups, while also exploring its intersection with Gandhian thought.
- **Gandhian Perspective:** Gaining a deeper understanding of the Gandhian perspective, particularly its views on social justice, equality, and its relevance in shaping historical narratives.

15.7 Glossary

- **Feudatory:** It refers to a person who holds land under the conditions of the feudal system.
- **Ethnology:** It is the branch of anthropology that compares and analyzes the characterizers of different peoples and the relationship between them.

15.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Oral history primarily helps recover the voices of marginalized groups, allowing them to share their struggles and experiences, which are often omitted from official historical records.

Answer-2 While oral history focuses on collecting narratives from individuals, the life history method combines personal biography with historical context to explore the effects of social structures on people's lives and how they create culture.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Feminist historiography aims to recover women's voices and experiences, challenging the traditional male-dominated historical narratives. It highlights the exclusion of women from mainstream history and demonstrates how this invisibility perpetuates their subordination in society.

Answer-2 Feminist historiography critiques traditional periodization by questioning whether periods of human liberation, such as the Renaissance or the French Revolution, were truly liberating for women. It argues that these periods often imposed greater constraints on women, highlighting the need to reconsider historical periods based on their impact on women's lives.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a pivotal figure in the Dalit movement, advocating for the rights and equality of Dalits through legal, social, and political means. He started publications like *Bahiskrit Bharat* and *Janta* to highlight social inequalities and promoted intercaste dining and marriage to bridge caste divisions. Ambedkar led significant movements, such as the Mahad Satyagraha (1927) for Dalits' rights to use public water

tanks and the Kalaram Temple Satyagraha (1930) for Dalits to enter temples. He was instrumental in securing legal victories for Dalits and later played a key role in drafting the Indian Constitution, ensuring provisions for Dalit rights, education, and government reservations.

Answer-2 The Dalit women's movement highlighted the intersectionality of caste, class, and gender oppression faced by Dalit women. It recognized that Dalit women were oppressed not only by upper-caste communities but also by patriarchal structures within their own caste. The movement gained momentum with the formation of organizations like the National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW) in 1993, which fought against violence and discrimination. Significant milestones included Dalit women's self-representation at the Durban Conference on Racism (1993) and the International Women's Conference in Beijing (1995), where Dalit women raised their voices on global platforms, advocating for justice and equality.

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15.10 Terminal Questions

Q1. Discuss in detail the new trend of oral history?

Q2. Elaborate and discuss feminists and Dalit history with suitable examples.

UNIT- 16

POSTMODERNIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Learning Objectives

16.3 Understanding the Scope of Postmodernist Historiography

Self-Check Exercise-1

16.4 Relationship of Postmodernist Historiography with Other Fields

16.4.1 Postmodernist Historiography as a Science

16.4.2 Postmodernist Historiography and Social Sciences

16.4.3 Postmodernist Historiography and Literature

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16.5 The Role of Postmodernist Historiography

Self-Check Exercise-3

16.6 Summary

16.7 Glossary

16.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

16.9 Suggested Readings

16.10 Terminal Questions

16.1 Introduction

Postmodernist historiography emerged as a response to traditional historical narratives that claim objectivity and absolute truth. Rooted in postmodernist thought, it challenges the idea that history can be told as a singular, coherent, and factual story. Instead, it emphasizes the role of language, discourse, and subjectivity in shaping historical accounts. Influenced by thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-François Lyotard, postmodernist historiography deconstructs historical narratives, questioning their authenticity and biases.

This UNIT will explore the foundational principles of postmodernist historiography, its relationship with other disciplines, and its role in contemporary historical studies.

16.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this UNIT, the Students will be able to:

- Understand the fundamental principles of postmodernist historiography.
- Analyze how postmodernist historiography challenges traditional historical methods.
- Evaluate the relationship of postmodernist historiography with science, social sciences, and literature.
- Appreciate the role of language and power structures in shaping historical narratives.
- Critically engage with postmodernist perspectives in historical studies.

16.3 Understanding the Scope of Postmodernist

Postmodernist historiography represents a radical shift from traditional approaches to history, fundamentally altering how we understand and interpret the past. While traditional historiography often seeks to construct an objective and linear narrative of events, postmodernist historians argue that history is not a neutral recounting of facts but rather a product of the cultural, political, and social forces at play during its construction. This approach to history challenges the idea of an unchanging, absolute truth and emphasizes the importance of multiple perspectives and subjective interpretations.

1. Rejection of Metanarratives

One of the most significant contributions of postmodernism to historiography is its rejection of metanarratives—grand, overarching stories or theories that claim to explain the entirety of human history. The term “metanarrative” was popularized by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, who argued that such narratives, whether they are Enlightenment ideas of progress or Marxist theories of class struggle, oversimplify the complexities of historical reality. According to Lyotard, these grand narratives often mask the diversity of experiences and the multiplicity of histories that make up the human past. By rejecting metanarratives, postmodernist historiography encourages a more fragmented, diverse, and pluralistic view of history, one that resists reductionism and acknowledges the coexistence of various truths.

2. Deconstruction of Historical Texts

Another key feature of postmodernist historiography is the deconstruction of historical texts. Drawing on the ideas of Jacques Derrida, deconstruction involves critically analyzing and exposing the underlying assumptions, biases, and power relations embedded in historical narratives. Deconstruction suggests that historical texts—whether they are official records, documents, or even oral histories—are not neutral, objective accounts but are shaped by language, context, and the historian’s own perspective. This process reveals how historical narratives are constructed, often by those in positions of power, to serve particular agendas. Deconstruction challenges historians to question whose voices are heard in the historical record and whose are silenced or marginalized.

3. Focus on Discourse and Power

Michel Foucault's work heavily influenced postmodernist historiography, particularly in its focus on the relationship between discourse and power. For Foucault, history is not simply a series of events that unfold over time, but a complex network of power relations that shape knowledge, behavior, and societal norms. Historical narratives are seen as forms of discourse—ways of speaking, writing, and thinking about the past—that reflect and reinforce power structures. For example, the history of the medical profession, the criminal justice system, or even the concept of sexuality, is deeply intertwined with the way power has been exerted over individuals and groups. By analyzing these power dynamics, postmodernist historians seek to uncover how historical narratives have been used to control and shape society. In this view, history is not only a record of events but also a tool of social and political control.

4. Emphasis on Subjectivity

Postmodernist historiography places a significant emphasis on the subjectivity of historical interpretation. Rather than seeking an objective truth, postmodernist historians recognize that all historical narratives are shaped by the historian's individual perspective, background, and cultural context. This subjectivity is not seen as a flaw but as an essential part of historical interpretation. Different historians bring different experiences, biases, and ideologies to their work, and these factors inevitably influence the way they interpret the past. For example, feminist, postcolonial, and queer historiographies all offer different interpretations of history, challenging the dominant narratives that have historically been written by white, male, and Western historians. In this way, postmodernist historiography encourages the exploration of diverse perspectives and the acknowledgment that history is always subject to reinterpretation.

5. Historical Truth as Fluid

In postmodernist historiography, historical truth is not seen as fixed or absolute. Instead, it is viewed as fluid, contingent, and constantly evolving. Because history is constructed through language and discourse, different historical narratives can coexist, each providing a different lens through which to view the past. This fluidity of historical truth is not an argument for historical relativism or nihilism, but rather a call to recognize the plurality of interpretations and the ways in which power dynamics shape our understanding of the past. History is not a single, unchanging truth, but

rather a tapestry of competing narratives, each of which reflects the values, interests, and ideologies of those who produce them.

6. The Role of the Historian

In postmodernist historiography, the historian is not simply a passive recorder of facts, but an active participant in the construction of historical knowledge. Historians are seen as storytellers who, through their choices of what to include and exclude, shape the way we understand the past. This understanding of the historian's role means that postmodernist historians are often self-reflective about their own biases and the ways in which their cultural context influences their work. Historians are encouraged to acknowledge their own position within the power structures they study and to recognize that their interpretations are always partial and provisional.

7. The Rejection of Grand Historical Objectives

Postmodernist historiography often rejects the idea that history serves a specific purpose or has a predetermined direction. In contrast to historical theories that aim to uncover universal truths or identify grand patterns (such as Marxism or the Whig interpretation of history, which sees history as a gradual progress toward modern liberal democracy), postmodernist historiography suggests that history is unpredictable, fragmented, and open to multiple interpretations. This rejection of grand historical objectives aligns with the broader postmodern critique of totalizing theories, which attempt to explain all phenomena through a single, overarching framework.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What is the main critique postmodernist historiography offers against traditional history?

Q2. How does postmodernist historiography view objectivity in historical studies?

16.4 Relationship of Postmodernist Historiography with Other Fields

Postmodernist historiography has significantly influenced various academic fields by challenging traditional notions of objectivity and embracing multiple perspectives. In literature, it emphasizes intertextuality and deconstruction, questioning stable meanings. In philosophy, it aligns with postmodern thought, rejecting universal truths and focusing on the social construction of knowledge. Sociology and cultural studies intersect with postmodern historiography in analyzing power dynamics and ideological influence on

historical narratives. Postcolonial and feminist theories benefit from its critique of dominant historical accounts, while anthropology adopts postmodernism's focus on subjectivity and the role of the researcher. Overall, postmodernist historiography encourages a more inclusive and critical approach to understanding the past.

16.4.1 Postmodernist Historiography as a Science

Traditional historiography, which aims to recount history as an objective, scientific process, operates under the assumption that historical facts can be uncovered through a systematic, empirical investigation of the past. This approach seeks to establish historical truths in a manner similar to the natural sciences. However, postmodernist historiography challenges this assumption by questioning the very nature of historical knowledge. It argues that history is inherently subjective because historians' interpretations are influenced by their cultural, ideological, and personal biases. According to postmodernism, historical facts are not objective "discoveries" but are constructed through narrative processes. Postmodernist historians emphasize that history is about creating stories or narratives that give meaning to past events, rather than uncovering a definitive, objective truth. This shift suggests that historical writing is more akin to storytelling than scientific inquiry, as it reflects the historian's perspective and is shaped by the socio-political context in which it is written.

16.4.2 Postmodernist Historiography and Social Sciences

Postmodernist historiography shares a close and mutually enriching relationship with the social sciences, particularly sociology, anthropology, and political science. The postmodern critique of objective truth, linear narratives, and grand metanarratives has found resonance in these fields, especially in their analysis of power, ideology, and societal structures. Key to this is the influence of thinkers like Michel Foucault, who argued that historical narratives are not neutral but are deeply entwined with power dynamics. Foucault's concept of power/knowledge suggests that historical accounts are shaped by dominant power structures, which in turn affect what is considered truth or knowledge in society. In sociology, postmodernism challenges the structuralist view that social structures have an objective, deterministic role in shaping society. In anthropology, postmodernism critiques ethnocentric and colonialist perspectives in the study of cultures, emphasizing the subjectivity of the anthropologist's gaze and the narratives they construct about others. Political science, similarly, grapples with the

postmodern emphasis on how political power shapes historical accounts, focusing on the ideologies and discourses that determine whose histories are told and who gets excluded.

16.4.3 Postmodernist Historiography and Literature

Postmodernist historiography is closely intertwined with literary theory, particularly in its view of history as a form of storytelling. While traditional historians might seek to present an account of the past as if it were a scientific endeavor, postmodernists argue that historical writing is just as much a constructed narrative as fiction. Historians like Hayden White have been pivotal in drawing parallels between historical writing and literature. White, for instance, argued that historians often use literary techniques such as plot structures, narrative forms, and tropes to give coherence and meaning to past events. In this view, history is not just about discovering facts but about interpreting and arranging those facts in a way that creates a meaningful narrative. This perspective aligns with postmodernism's rejection of fixed truths and its focus on the ways in which language and narrative shape our understanding of the past. The blurred boundaries between history and literature challenge the idea that history can be written purely objectively, highlighting the role of the historian's imagination and interpretation in constructing historical reality.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. How does postmodernist historiography challenge the scientific approach to history?

Q2. Explain the influence of literature on postmodernist historiography.

16.5 The Role of Postmodernist Historiography

Postmodernist historiography plays a transformative role in contemporary historical studies by radically questioning and reshaping the ways in which history is understood, written, and interpreted. It challenges conventional methodologies that prioritize objectivity, linearity, and grand narratives, offering instead a more nuanced and critical approach to the past. This shift has had a profound influence on how historians engage with the sources, the narratives they construct, and the broader social and cultural context in which history is written. Below are the key ways in which postmodernist historiography influences the field:

1. Encouraging a Critical Approach to Historical Narratives

One of the most important contributions of postmodernist historiography is its encouragement of a critical and reflective approach to historical narratives. Traditional historiography often presents history as a factual, objective account of the past. Postmodernist historiography, however, challenges this view by asserting that all historical narratives are socially and culturally constructed, influenced by the historian's own biases, ideologies, and the prevailing power structures of their time. By adopting this critical perspective, historians are encouraged to question the very assumptions that underpin historical writing, including the selection of sources, the framing of events, and the interpretation of historical "facts." This encourages a more self-aware, rigorous, and transparent approach to the writing of history, where historians actively engage with the biases and limitations inherent in their work.

2. Highlighting the Role of Power and Ideology in Shaping History

Postmodernist historiography emphasizes the importance of power dynamics and ideology in the construction of historical narratives. Influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, postmodernist historians argue that history is not simply a neutral recounting of events, but is deeply intertwined with the exercise of power. The way history is written often reflects the interests and ideologies of those in positions of authority, and historical narratives can be used to legitimize power structures, political ideologies, and social hierarchies. For example, colonial powers often shaped historical narratives to justify imperial control, while patriarchal societies have historically marginalized or erased the experiences and contributions of women. Postmodernist historiography encourages historians to uncover these power relations and to critically examine how certain historical narratives are privileged over others.

3. Promoting Inclusivity by Acknowledging Marginalized Perspectives

Postmodernist historiography is committed to promoting inclusivity by highlighting the voices and perspectives of marginalized groups. Traditional historical narratives have often been written from the perspective of the elite, the powerful, and the dominant cultural or social groups, leaving little room for the experiences of women, indigenous peoples, racial minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and others who have been historically oppressed or excluded. By questioning whose history is being told and who gets left out, postmodernist historiography seeks to reclaim and amplify these marginalized voices. This approach has led to the development of feminist historiography, postcolonial studies, queer theory, and other critical frameworks that challenge the dominant historical narratives and seek to offer a more diverse and inclusive view of the past.

4. Emphasizing the Role of Language and Discourse in Constructing History

Postmodernist historiography underscores the role of language and discourse in shaping historical knowledge. Drawing on the ideas of thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Foucault, postmodernist historians argue that history is not simply a collection of objective facts waiting to be discovered; rather, history is a narrative constructed through language, symbols, and discourses that reflect particular ways of thinking and interpreting the world. The choice of language, the framing of events, and the structures of historical writing all contribute to the way history is understood. Postmodernist historians are particularly attentive to how language can subtly reinforce power relations and ideologies, whether through the use of certain terminology or through the silences and omissions in historical accounts. By analyzing the language of historical texts, postmodernist historians aim to uncover the underlying assumptions and ideologies that shape the way history is told.

5. Enabling Historians to Approach the Past with Greater Awareness of Biases and Subjectivities

By questioning traditional historical methods, postmodernist historiography encourages historians to approach the past with greater awareness of the inherent biases and subjectivities that influence their work. Postmodernist historians do not claim that history is entirely relative or that all interpretations are equally valid. Rather, they emphasize that historical interpretations are shaped by the historian's own context, worldview, and the social, cultural, and political forces at play. This awareness of subjectivity does not mean abandoning the search for truth but instead recognizing that history is always interpreted through a particular lens. Historians are encouraged to be transparent about their own perspectives and to critically engage with the biases and assumptions that inform their interpretations. This self-reflective approach helps ensure that history is not presented as an objective, impartial account but as a complex and contested narrative shaped by both the past and the historian's present context.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1. What are the key contributions of postmodernist historiography?

Q2. How does postmodernist historiography contribute to inclusivity in historical studies?

16.6 Summary

Postmodernist historiography challenges traditional notions of history as an objective discipline. It emphasizes the role of language, discourse, and power in shaping historical narratives. By rejecting metanarratives, deconstructing historical texts, and embracing subjectivity, postmodernist historiography offers a critical approach to

studying history. Its intersections with science, social sciences, and literature further highlight its impact on contemporary historical scholarship.

16.7 Glossary

- **Metanarrative:** A grand, overarching story or theory that claims to explain historical events.
- **Deconstruction:** A critical method that analyzes texts to uncover hidden meanings and biases.
- **Discourse:** Ways of speaking or writing that shape our understanding of knowledge and power.
- **Historiography:** The study of how history is written and interpreted.

16.8 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Postmodernist historiography critiques traditional history by rejecting the idea that history can be an objective, linear account of the past, arguing instead that historical narratives are socially constructed and shaped by the historian's biases, cultural context, and ideological influences.

Answer-2 Postmodernist historiography views objectivity in historical studies as unattainable, asserting that all historical interpretations are subjective and influenced by power dynamics, language, and the historian's perspective, thus challenging the notion of a neutral, unbiased historical truth.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Postmodernist historiography challenges the scientific approach to history by rejecting the notion that history can be studied as an objective, empirical science, emphasizing instead that historical facts are subjective and interpreted through narrative, power, and ideology.

Answer-2 Literature influences postmodernist historiography by highlighting the narrative and storytelling aspects of history, with historians like Hayden White arguing that historical writing employs literary techniques such as plot structures and tropes, making it more akin to literature than to scientific inquiry.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Answer-1 Key contributions of postmodernist historiography include encouraging a critical approach to historical narratives, highlighting the role of power and ideology in shaping history, and emphasizing the subjective nature of historical interpretation.

Answer-2 Postmodernist historiography contributes to inclusivity by acknowledging marginalized perspectives, such as those of women, minorities, and oppressed groups, and challenging dominant historical narratives that often exclude these voices.

16.9 Suggested Readings

1. Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.
2. White, Hayden. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*.
3. Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.
4. Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*.

16.10 Terminal Questions

- Q1. How does postmodernist historiography differ from traditional historiography?
- Q2. Discuss the role of power and discourse in postmodernist historical narratives.
- Q3. How does postmodernist historiography contribute to the study of marginalized histories?
- Q4. Explain the significance of deconstruction in analyzing historical texts.

UNIT- 17

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

17.1 Introduction

17.2 Learning Objectives

17.3 The Origins and Institutionalization of Environmental History (as a Self-conscious Enterprise)

17.4 Critiques of Environmental History

17.5 Understanding the Scope of Environmental historiography

Self-Check Exercise-1

17.6 The Role of environmental historiography

Self-Check Exercise-3

17.7 Summary

17.8 Glossary

17.9 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

17.10 Suggested Readings

17.11 Terminal Questions

1.1 Introduction

Environmental historiography is an evolving field that seeks to understand the interaction between human societies and the environment over time. It examines how human activities have impacted the natural world, and in turn, how environmental changes have shaped historical events and processes. Unlike traditional history, which often overlooks the environment, environmental historiography recognizes the environment as a central actor in shaping human history. This unit explores the development of environmental history as a self-conscious discipline, its major contributions, critiques, and its role in understanding the past and addressing contemporary environmental issues.

17.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the students will be able to:

- Define environmental historiography and understand its scope.
- Trace the origins and institutionalization of environmental history as a self-conscious academic discipline.
- Critically assess the main critiques of environmental history.
- Analyze the role of environmental historiography in shaping contemporary environmental debates and policy-making.

17.3 The Origins and Institutionalization of Environmental History (as a Self-conscious Enterprise)

Environmental history as a field of study began to gain prominence in the late 20th century, influenced heavily by the broader environmental movement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. This movement brought increased public awareness to issues such as pollution, deforestation, and the rapid degradation of ecosystems. The rise of environmental concerns and activism was coupled with a growing understanding of the importance of examining the history of human-environment interactions to better comprehend the roots of contemporary environmental challenges.

Early Foundations and Influences

Though discussions around nature, resources, and the human-environment relationship had been present in earlier historical writing, it was during the 1960s and 1970s that environmental history began to crystallize as a distinct academic discipline. Several intellectual and societal movements played a role in the development of environmental history:

1. Environmental Movement: The environmental movement, particularly the publication of influential books like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), which brought attention to the dangers of pesticides, and the first Earth Day in 1970, made environmental concerns a central issue. These movements emphasized the need to understand the human impact on nature and the role of historical events in shaping our environmental crisis.

2. Interdisciplinary Influence: Environmental history emerged at the intersection of various disciplines, including history, ecology, geography, and anthropology. This interdisciplinary nature allowed environmental historians to draw on methodologies from multiple fields, enriching their analysis of the past.

3. Rising Ecological Consciousness: Scholars were becoming more attuned to the concept that history should not be seen purely as a series of human actions devoid of ecological context. Environmental history, therefore, sought to understand the long-term impacts of human actions on ecosystems and the environment, rather than simply presenting a narrative of human triumph over nature.

Expansion of the Field

Over time, the scope of environmental history has expanded beyond just the study of human impact on the environment to consider the agency of nature itself in shaping human history. This shift in focus has led to the inclusion of new topics, such as:

- Climate History: The exploration of past climate changes and their impact on societies, economies, and cultures, using both historical records and scientific data.

- Environmental Justice: The study of how environmental problems disproportionately affect marginalized communities, often involving issues related to race, class, and colonialism.

- Global Environmental History: The application of environmental history on a global scale, analyzing the interactions between human societies and the environment in different regions and the global interconnectedness of environmental processes.

17.4 Critiques of Environmental History

While environmental historiography has emerged as a valuable and influential field of study, offering insights into the complex relationships between human societies and the natural world, it has also faced several important critiques. These critiques focus on various aspects of the field, including its conceptual frameworks, methodologies, and the scope of its analyses. In particular, criticisms have centered around its anthropocentric bias, Eurocentric foundations, reliance on scientific data, and tendency to focus on environmental crises. These critiques highlight areas for growth and refinement within the discipline, as well as calls for broader perspectives and deeper integration of diverse viewpoints.

1. Anthropocentrism: Human-Centered View of the Environment

One of the most significant critiques of environmental history is its anthropocentric perspective. Anthropocentrism refers to a worldview that places human beings at the center of the universe, often treating the environment as a resource for human exploitation and benefit. Many environmental historians, while emphasizing human-environment interactions, still tend to view the environment primarily in terms of its utility or impact on human society. Critics argue that this human-centered approach

limits the field by reducing the natural world to a backdrop or passive entity, rather than acknowledging the environment's active role and agency in shaping historical processes.

The critique of anthropocentrism in environmental history urges scholars to consider a more holistic and ecocentric approach, which places the environment on an equal footing with human agency. This perspective emphasizes the idea that nature is not simply a passive recipient of human actions but an active force with its own dynamics, agency, and role in shaping the course of history. This shift toward an ecocentric approach would involve rethinking human interaction with the environment not as domination or control, but as interdependent and reciprocal.

2. Eurocentrism:

Another important critique is the Eurocentric nature of environmental history, especially in its early stages. Environmental history, particularly in the United States and Europe, has often been shaped by Western intellectual traditions, methodologies, and historical narratives. Critics argue that this approach tends to overlook or marginalize indigenous knowledge systems and environmental practices that have long existed outside of Western frameworks.

Indigenous peoples have historically maintained a deep and intricate relationship with their environments, often based on principles of sustainability, reciprocity, and respect for nature. Indigenous knowledge systems are grounded in centuries of experiential understanding of local ecosystems, biodiversity, and resource management. However, these perspectives are frequently excluded or undervalued in the mainstream environmental historiography, which is primarily driven by Western scientific and historical paradigms.

This critique has led to calls for decolonizing environmental history, which includes not only integrating indigenous perspectives but also challenging the dominance of Western methodologies. By broadening the field to include indigenous worldviews and practices, environmental history can offer a more inclusive and diverse understanding of human-environment relations. Such an approach would also address issues of environmental justice and the impacts of colonialism on indigenous peoples' access to land and resources.

3. Scientific Reductionism: Over-reliance on Scientific Data

Another critique leveled against environmental history is its over-reliance on scientific data, particularly from fields like climate science and ecology. Critics argue that environmental history has increasingly adopted scientific methodologies, such as the use of quantitative data and ecological models, to understand environmental change. While these tools can be incredibly valuable for tracing patterns of environmental degradation or change over time, they are not always sufficient on their own to fully capture the historical, cultural, and political contexts of environmental events.

For instance, the use of ecological data to understand environmental shifts might reveal changes in biodiversity, but it might not explain why certain human groups adopted particular agricultural practices or how political structures influenced land use decisions. As a result, environmental history runs the risk of becoming overly scientific and technical, neglecting the social, economic, and political factors that shape environmental processes. Critics argue that a purely scientific approach can overshadow the human dimensions of environmental history, which are crucial for understanding the cultural and societal implications of environmental changes.

To address this critique, environmental historians have called for a more interdisciplinary approach, integrating historical research with scientific data, but also maintaining a focus on the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence human-environment interactions.

4. Focus on Crisis: Neglecting Long-Term Environmental Change

Finally, another critique of environmental history is its tendency to focus on environmental crises—such as the Dust Bowl, the deforestation of the Amazon, or the industrial pollution of the 20th century—at the expense of examining more gradual and long-term environmental changes. The focus on dramatic environmental crises often risks framing environmental history as a narrative of catastrophe and decline, where the environment is seen as a victim of human exploitation, without giving enough attention to more incremental environmental transformations that occur over long periods.

For example, the history of soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and climate change—which are often gradual processes—can be just as important in understanding the human-environment relationship as acute environmental crises. Critics argue that the focus on crises distorts the historical narrative by portraying human-environment interactions as always leading to catastrophic outcomes, rather than acknowledging the more subtle, ongoing processes that have shaped ecosystems and societies over centuries or millennia.

This critique advocates for the inclusion of long-term environmental change in environmental history, encouraging historians to consider both dramatic events and slow-moving processes in their studies. By examining long-term patterns of environmental change, scholars can gain a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics between human societies and the natural world.

17.5 Understanding the Scope of Environmental Historiography

Environmental historiography is a rich and interdisciplinary field that seeks to explore the dynamic and often complex relationship between human societies and the natural world. Its scope is broad and encompasses various themes, methodologies, and approaches that span both the physical and social dimensions of human-environment interactions. By integrating perspectives from history, ecology, geography, anthropology, and other fields, environmental historiography provides a holistic understanding of how nature and human societies have shaped each other over time.

Here, we elaborate on the core areas within the scope of environmental historiography:

1. Human-Nature Interaction

One of the foundational themes of environmental historiography is the exploration of human-nature interaction. This aspect examines how human societies have interacted with, modified, and, in some cases, exploited the natural world. Historically, this includes a wide range of human activities that have had significant environmental impacts, such as:

- **Agriculture:** The domestication of plants and animals, the development of farming techniques, and the transformation of landscapes for food production. This

interaction has led to profound changes in ecosystems and biodiversity, from the spread of monocultures to soil depletion and irrigation practices that alter water cycles.

- Resource Extraction:** The ways in which societies extract resources from the environment, whether through mining, fishing, logging, or energy production. Resource extraction has been central to the development of economies but often results in the degradation of ecosystems and natural resources.

- Industrialization:** The rise of industrial economies led to dramatic environmental changes, including air and water pollution, deforestation, and the rise of fossil fuel consumption. The industrial revolution marked a turning point in how human societies exploited nature, with profound consequences for both human health and the environment.

- Urbanization:** The growth of cities and the expansion of infrastructure often involve significant alterations to the environment, from land reclamation to the creation of urban heat islands. Urbanization has reshaped landscapes and ecosystems, often leading to environmental degradation in the process.

In examining human-nature interaction, environmental history seeks to understand how these practices have shaped both the natural world and human societies, and how they continue to influence contemporary environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion.

2. Ecological Change

Environmental history is deeply concerned with the study of ecological change—the long-term environmental transformations that have occurred due to human activities. These changes can be gradual or abrupt, and they often result from a combination of natural and anthropogenic factors. Key areas of focus include:

- Deforestation:** The widespread clearing of forests for agriculture, urban expansion, and industrial development has had profound ecological impacts, including the loss of biodiversity, disruption of water cycles, and increased carbon emissions.

- Soil Degradation:** The intensification of agricultural practices, such as monoculture farming, the overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and poor land management, has led to soil erosion, desertification, and the loss of arable land. Soil degradation has become a major environmental issue in many parts of the world.

- Resource Depletion:** Human societies have historically over-exploited resources such as fish stocks, minerals, and freshwater, often leading to the depletion of essential resources and environmental crises. The concept of the “tragedy of the commons” often comes into play here, where shared resources are overused, ultimately leading to their collapse.

- Pollution:** Industrialization, transportation, and agriculture have introduced pollutants into the environment, including chemicals, plastics, and greenhouse gases. These pollutants affect ecosystems, human health, and contribute to climate change.

Studying ecological change within environmental historiography allows historians to trace how human activities have shaped the Earth’s ecosystems and to understand the long-term consequences of these actions.

3. Environmental Agency

Environmental historiography also seeks to explore the concept of environmental agency—the idea that nature is not simply a passive backdrop for human history, but rather that natural forces and elements play an active role in shaping historical events. The role of nature in historical processes includes:

- Climate:** Climate change, both gradual and abrupt, has shaped human history in profound ways. For example, the Little Ice Age of the 16th to 19th centuries affected agricultural productivity, migration patterns, and even geopolitical dynamics. Similarly, the study of past climates can provide insights into how societies adapted to or struggled with environmental stress.

- Geography:** Natural features such as rivers, mountains, and coastlines have influenced human settlement patterns, trade routes, and the development of civilizations.

Geography has played a central role in determining the availability of resources, the spread of agriculture, and the formation of empires.

- Natural Disasters:** Events like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions have dramatically impacted societies throughout history. These events often force societies to adapt in response to the immediate destruction and long-term environmental changes, influencing everything from urban planning to the shaping of cultural beliefs and practices.

- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:** Nature's biodiversity, the variety of species and ecosystems, provides essential services such as pollination, water purification, and carbon sequestration. The decline of these ecosystems can disrupt human societies, while maintaining biodiversity can support economic activities, especially in agriculture and medicine.

4. Environmental Narratives

Environmental historiography also plays a role in revisiting and revising historical narratives by integrating environmental factors that have traditionally been overlooked in conventional historical accounts. For much of history, environmental elements were not seen as central to the telling of past events. This often led to a skewed interpretation of history that ignored the influence of natural forces or environmental conditions. Key aspects of environmental narratives include:

- Re-examining Historical Events:** Environmental historians explore how environmental factors—such as climate conditions, resource availability, or ecological changes—have influenced key historical events. For example, the collapse of ancient civilizations, such as the Maya or the Mesopotamians, is sometimes attributed to environmental stressors like prolonged droughts or soil depletion, which contributed to social and political instability.

- Incorporating Nature in Social History:** Traditional social history often focused on human interactions, political movements, and cultural shifts, but environmental history seeks to integrate how environmental factors shaped or influenced these developments.

This can include the role of land use in shaping social hierarchies or how environmental degradation might contribute to the rise of social movements.

•**Challenging Environmental Narratives:** In many historical narratives, humans were portrayed as dominant forces over nature. Environmental historiography challenges this narrative by offering counter-narratives that recognize the interdependence between societies and the environment, while also highlighting the impact of environmental crises or changes on human development.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. Define environmental historiography and explain its importance in understanding historical events.

Q2. What are some of the key areas of focus in environmental historiography? Provide examples.

Q3. How does environmental historiography differ from traditional history in its approach to understanding the past?

17.6 The Role of Environmental Historiography

Environmental historiography plays a vital role in understanding both the historical roots and the present-day dynamics of environmental issues. By examining the long-standing relationship between humans and the natural world, environmental historians contribute significantly to how we view and address current environmental crises. The field offers insights into the ways that past human activities have shaped the natural environment and continues to influence contemporary challenges like deforestation, climate change, pollution, and resource depletion. In this context, environmental historiography provides a crucial interdisciplinary lens that integrates history, ecology, geography, and sociology, offering a richer understanding of the complex interactions between human societies and their environments. Below are some of the key contributions of environmental historiography:

1. Environmental Awareness

One of the most important roles of environmental historiography is its ability to raise awareness about environmental issues by highlighting their historical roots. Many of today's environmental problems—such as deforestation, pollution, and climate

change—are not isolated phenomena but rather are deeply rooted in human history. For instance:

- Deforestation has occurred for centuries, driven by agricultural expansion, urbanization, and the demand for timber. The history of land use and resource extraction can help explain the long-term consequences of these actions, such as soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of water cycles.

- Pollution, which today manifests in forms like air and water contamination, plastic waste, and industrial toxins, has its origins in the early stages of industrialization. By studying how different societies have approached waste management, energy use, and industrialization, environmental historians can trace the emergence of pollution as a global issue.

- Climate change, while a contemporary crisis, is also influenced by historical practices such as the widespread use of fossil fuels, the rise of agriculture, and land clearing. Environmental historians can show how these activities gradually altered the climate, providing crucial context for understanding current global warming trends.

2. Influence on Policy

Environmental history also has a significant role to play in shaping modern environmental policies. By studying historical examples of environmental management—or the lack thereof—environmental historians offer policymakers valuable lessons on what has worked and what has failed in terms of environmental governance. These lessons are critical in formulating effective policies to address ongoing issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion. For example:

- Historical Environmental Management: The study of past conservation movements, such as early national parks in the United States or the rise of sustainable farming practices, can guide contemporary policy decisions. These historical case studies offer insights into the challenges of balancing environmental protection with economic development.

- Past Failures:** Environmental history also sheds light on policy failures, such as unsustainable land use, over-exploitation of resources, or neglect of ecological consequences, which have contributed to current environmental problems. Learning from these failures can help avoid repeating the same mistakes in the present and future.

- International Agreements:** Environmental historians also contribute to understanding the development of international environmental agreements, such as the Paris Climate Accord, by examining how past diplomatic efforts and environmental policies have succeeded or faltered in addressing global challenges.

3. Rewriting Historical Narratives

A significant contribution of environmental historiography is its role in rewriting traditional historical narratives. Most historical accounts, especially in Western historiography, have historically prioritized human actions—wars, politics, and economic developments—while nature and environmental factors were often treated as background elements or passive settings. Environmental historians challenge this human-centered approach by emphasizing the active role of nature in shaping human history. This includes:

- Nature as an Agent of Change:** Environmental historians highlight how environmental forces—such as climate, geography, and natural disasters—have influenced human development. For instance, the spread of agriculture in ancient civilizations often depended on the availability of fertile land and water sources. Similarly, major climatic events like droughts or cold periods often contributed to societal collapses, such as the decline of the Maya civilization.

- Human-Nature Interactions:** Rather than seeing nature as a passive backdrop, environmental history integrates the active role of nature into historical processes. By examining how human societies have interacted with, modified, and adapted to the environment, historians can offer a more comprehensive understanding of historical events. The history of agriculture, industrialization, and urbanization, for example, cannot be fully understood without considering how humans have altered and been shaped by their environments.

- Environmental Justice:** Environmental historians also contribute to reframing narratives by exploring the intersections of environmental issues with race, class, and social justice. For example, they might examine how marginalized communities have been disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation or how indigenous knowledge and practices can offer sustainable solutions to modern environmental problems.

4. Bridging Disciplines

Environmental historiography is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing insights from a range of fields such as ecology, geography, anthropology, economics, and sociology. This interdisciplinary approach allows environmental historians to offer a more comprehensive understanding of human-environment interactions over time. Some of the key ways in which environmental historiography bridges disciplines include:

- Ecology and History:** By integrating ecological knowledge into historical analysis, environmental historians can examine how human societies have altered ecosystems and the resulting ecological changes. Ecological theories, such as those related to succession, biodiversity, and ecological balance, provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of human activities on the environment.

- Anthropology and Culture:** Anthropology provides a lens through which historians can explore how different societies have conceptualized nature, utilized resources, and adapted to environmental challenges over time.

Self-Check Exercise-3

Q1.How does environmental historiography help to raise awareness about contemporary environmental issues?

Q2.Explain the role of environmental history in informing modern environmental policies.

Q3.In what ways does environmental historiography challenge traditional historical narratives?

17.7 Summary

Environmental historiography provides a crucial perspective on the relationship between humans and the environment. By examining how humans have interacted with nature throughout history, this field challenges traditional historical narratives and

highlights the reciprocal impact of the environment on human societies. While environmental history has been critiqued for its anthropocentrism and focus on crises, it continues to grow as a self-conscious discipline that informs contemporary environmental discussions and policies. Its interdisciplinary nature allows it to offer valuable insights into both past and present environmental challenges.

17.8 Glossary

- **Environmental Historiography:** The study of the interaction between humans and the environment over time, with an emphasis on how human activities have affected nature and how nature has influenced human history.

- **Anthropocentrism:** A perspective that places humans at the center of consideration, often neglecting the roles of non-human actors and nature in historical events.

- **Ecological Change:** Alterations to ecosystems caused by human activities such as agriculture, industrialization, and urbanization.

- **Environmental Agency:** The capacity of nature to influence or shape human history, such as the impact of natural disasters, climate, or geography on human societies.

17.9 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Environmental historiography is the study of how humans have interacted with and influenced the environment throughout history. It is important because it provides a broader perspective on historical events by integrating environmental factors, offering a more holistic understanding of the past.

Answer-2 Key areas of focus include human-nature interaction (e.g., agriculture, deforestation), ecological change (e.g., climate change, soil erosion), and environmental agency (e.g., how nature influences historical events like floods or droughts).

Answer-3 Environmental historiography differs from traditional history by incorporating environmental factors as active agents in historical processes, rather than treating nature as a passive backdrop to human events.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Environmental historiography raises awareness about contemporary environmental issues by tracing the historical roots of environmental problems, such as pollution, climate change, and resource depletion, and showing how these issues have developed over time.

Answer-2 Environmental historians contribute to modern environmental policies by analyzing past environmental practices and policies, offering lessons and recommendations for contemporary governance and conservation efforts.

Answer-3 Environmental historiography challenges traditional historical narratives by focusing on the role of nature in shaping human history, rather than solely emphasizing human agency.

17.10 Suggested Readings

1. William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983)

2. Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979)

3. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967)

4. J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (2000)

5. Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (1995)

17.11 Terminal Questions

Q1. Define environmental historiography and explain why it is essential for understanding historical events.

Q2. Discuss the origins and institutionalization of environmental history as an academic discipline.

Q3. What are the main critiques of environmental history, and how can they be addressed?

Q4. How does environmental historiography contribute to modern environmental policy and sustainability?

Q5. Compare and contrast environmental historiography with traditional historiography in terms of its focus and methodology.

UNIT-18

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION

STRUCTURE

18.1 Introduction

18.2 Learning Objectives

18.3 Historical observation tools and techniques

18.3.1 Evidence

18.3.2 Criticism

18.3.3 Analysis

Self-check Exercise-1

18.4 Summary

18.5 Glossary

18.6 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

18.7 Suggested Readings

18.8 Terminal Questions

18.1 Introduction

History writing is a process that is prone to getting affected by the writer's subjectivity i.e. his personal opinions and bias regarding the subject. It prevents the writing from being objective and unbiased in its approach to give a reliable account of an event. Objectivity holds great importance when it comes to historical writing as it allows one to write from a viewpoint devoid of discrepancies stemming from partiality and subjectivity. The document can thus be trusted to be authentic in terms of the information contained.

18.2 Learning Objectives

- Discuss the tools used to explore history.
- Auxiliary sciences as a tool and guide to historical exploration.
- Importance of evidence criticism and analysis in history and observation.

18.3 Historical observation tools and techniques

The selection of topic historiography can be seen akin to the problem of selection of topic research methodology. Let us discuss the selection of topics in this context in this section. Clearly identifying and defining a research problem as the first step before beginning any investigation.

Concept of a research problem: There are a few specifications that have to be met for a research problem to exist:

- i. There must be an entity occupying a given environment and there should exist some uncontrolled values therein.
- ii. There must exist at least two courses of action namely A1 and A2 to be pursued. A course of action is defined by one or more values of the controlled variables, for example, during festival time, the purchase of certain types of items is one course of action.
- iii. There must be at least two possible results, O1 and O2 due to the course of action. At least one of the results should be of interest to the researcher for his study. Then that becomes the objective of research.

iv. The courses of action must have some bearing on the objective. Further, the person concerned does not know which course of action is the best. Then, a problem can be seen to exist. So, the elements that go into making a research problem are:

- (a) There should exist some difficulty or problem.
- (b) There must be some objective.
- (c) There must exist at least two means to reach the objective.
- (d) The relative efficiency of the two alternatives must be considered for proceeding with the inquiry.

v. There must be a given environment in which the difficulty exists and persists. A research problem is an existing problem to which the researcher wants to find out the best solution, and the course of action to be taken to attain the objective. The action has to be executed in a given context or environment. Several factors may influence the results and these have to be kept in mind, while carrying out the research.

Selecting the problem:

The research problem must be carefully selected to get dependable results. Some tips for choosing a problem are:

- Avoiding choosing a topic that has already been researched, extensively.
- Avoiding controversial topics, while starting a research career.
- Costs, time, competence, etc., need to be kept in mind.
- Carry out a small pilot study, before launching into the final investigation, if possible.
- The boundaries within which a problem to be studied should be clearly defined. This is to be followed by first posing a problem for the study then determining the processes and techniques for the study.

Steps involved in research

i. Prepare a general statement of the problem to be studied ii.

Surveying the available literature

iii. Developing ideas through intuition and discussions iv.

Formulating a working definition

Statement of the problem: Begin with a broad field and then narrow it down to specifics in order to search a limited area in terms of a specific, single problem.

Understand the problem: This is done in terms of its origin background and other factors.

Survey the available literature: This is to become familiar with the relevant theories in the field of study and all other records of research work that have been

carried out in the field so far. Knowing about the field helps one to focus on the research topic, better.

Developing ideas: Ideas can be developed through one's own intuition, reading the background literature and through discussions with others in the related field.

Phrasing the research problem: This means stating the research problem in operational terms. A statement of all technical terms should be made clearly. The basic postulates of research should be identified. A reasonable time period is to be specified for the study. The scope of the investigation and the limitations within which the study is to be carried out is to be specified.

18.3.1 Evidence

Writing is a significant part of history and history cannot be imagined without writing. A writer through his writing shares the historical knowledge which he has gained from various sources. In history, the writer proposes a thesis which presents the contention about his subject. Thus, we can say:

- In the beginning of his thesis, the writer may give an introduction as to how he would present the thesis and in which direction it will move along covering a certain topic or topics.
- In the actual body of his paper, the writer gives details of his thesis looking at it from different angles providing critical explanation of facts and theories.

Historical writing has to have a combination of consideration to structural reflections along with the finding and assessment of facts. It is not enough to write with correct grammar and style. A writer of history must be ready to raise questions and answer a number of questions already raised. He should not shy away from why and how. backgrounds of the events he is mentioning in his writings. This makes the writing of history a difficult job not just for the beginners, but also for the most experienced writers. In order to produce a historical work, the writer must master the following three basic procedures:

- Collection of data - evidence.
- Criticism of the acquired data – criticism
- Presentation of facts based upon interpretations and conclusions – Analysis

Before the writer begins writing, he should get a clear understanding of the data that he has accumulated for his work. He should reach upon clear objectives and conclusions before he begins his process. It is of great significance that the sources from which he has gathered his data are verified. Keeping these things in mind the writer is in a position to give a clear picture with criticisms based upon his personal observations.

Objectivity is therefore a vital aspect for historical writing. The writer must not let his personal bias cloud the paper he is writing. Writers should keep away from giving value judgments based upon events of the past. They must also vigilantly analyze the

conclusions they come upon. One could argue, for example, that there could have been bias in the writing of the *Akbarnama* by its author. It could be that he glorified the reign of King Akbar on purpose as the king was paying him to write the *Akbarnama* in the first place.

Another thing which needs to be considered is the interpretation of foreign writers, such as Fa-Hein and Huen Tsang. Thus, we can say that there are two things that need to be considered while analyzing any historical writing:

1. Historical objectively
2. Personal experience of the writer

Synthesis vs Analysis

There really is no conflict among the methods of synthesis and analysis as both are vital for the writers of the subject of history. They help the writers to comprehend the individuality of every historical episode and pass on this understanding to the reader. Thus, synthesis and analysis are vital for good historical writing. One cannot exist without the other.

Literary style

Just like a novel, historical writing should hold the attention of the reader; the background of the story and the characters involved should be clear; and details should be provided for every aspect. What is different here is that the writer should have enough backup of historical evidence to justify whatever he is telling to the reader. Novels are usually based upon fiction, while history is always based upon real historical facts. So, the literary style always comes secondary to the facts. The writer cannot glorify his writing by bending the facts. Historical writing must be closely tied to the place and chronology. It should be supported by thorough documentation. Nevertheless, techniques for writing do not always stem from historical procedures. In fact, their origin lies in all the material evidence gathered by human beings since the beginning of time. Although documentation is vital for historical writing, the writing is not just aligning the pieces of information gathered from different sources. Therefore, writing style becomes important as the writer must bring in his style and thought without distorting the information in any way. The finished product of the writer should be understandable for the reader as the information with improper literary style would make it impossible for the reader to understand anything on the concerned subject. So how historians are able to approach objectivity is indeed a complex scenario. Mark Bevir has expressed his ideas in his book *The Logic of the History of Ideas*, written in the year 1999. He gives the argument: An anthropological epistemology with objectivity in the historical narrative rests on the explanation of human actions / agent intentionality equating with meaning. "His narrative has been criticized on several grounds ; some historians feel that his explanations are vague and unclear, while others feel that history cannot be objective.

What Abraham Lincoln issued in 1863 through his liberation proclamation was a case in point. No historian has been able to define the works of Abraham Lincoln in his writing. This puts in doubt the claims made by Mark Bevir: 'Objective knowledge arises from a human practice in which we criticize and compare rival webs of theories in terms of agreed facts.

Furthermore, there are other challenges as well. These include overdependence on rational action theory and dependence upon evidence and its selection. The reliability of the selected evidence is in doubt of the writer at times and this problem is stretched furthermore when the work done by any previous historian is in jeopardy. Historians often indulge in criticism of each other's writings which makes the job of a new historian writing upon a particular subject even more difficult.

18.3.2 Criticism

The selection of a subject, preparation of a bibliography and the development of an outline together with the realization of the necessary requisites for research entitle a scholar to take up the main task of research. He has now a clear picture of the several activities he has to perform. It remains for him to translate all his ideas into action, put flesh and blood into the skeleton, and make it a living reality.

For this he has to do a variety of jobs which could be grouped under two or three major headings, the first of which is technically called analytical operation. The term used is very significant, for the first task of research is not merely to find fresh material but also to subject it to close scrutiny. It is analytical because the whole document is not examined en - masse, but is split up into its elemental parts, to its single idea and then its validity is tested. It is an operation because the document is cut open threadbare, just as a surgeon cuts open the human body to find out the abnormality, so also the historian throws open the document to find out its validity or otherwise. It must be borne in mind that historic methodology is negative in approach because it merely helps us to know what errors are contained in a trace so that we may eliminate those errors and regard the residue as truth. In a way that is what the surgeon also does. He does not confer health on the patient, but removes the abnormality of the body, so that it could revert back to its normal condition. The aim of the historical method is almost the same, namely, to eliminate error and thus help us to know the truth. This analytical operation is what is also known as criticism.

Internal and External Criticism

Analytical operation has been divided into two branches, namely external criticism and internal criticism. These two branches have other names as well. External criticism is called heuristics, which literally means inciting to find out or helping or guiding in discovery. It is also called lower criticism as opposed to higher criticism. Higher criticism is internal criticism, otherwise known as hermeneutics or interpretative criticism. Hermeneutics is the science or art of interpretation which was specially used for the

Scriptures. The main job of these two types of criticism is to pronounce whether a given idea is acceptable as a fact or not. Events, occurrences and happenings as presented in the records may or may not conform to reality, for they might have been distorted or twisted in calling history a science were jubilant and they exalted the work unduly. However, the truth is that this work should neither be condemned nor unduly extolled. Those who condemn the job should remember that critical scholars render a very useful service in providing sound raw material for the construction of history. If the building material is defective. The building will collapse. Moreover if the architect is also to cut stones in a quarry or burn bricks in a kiln. the building would never be complete. Likewise, the critical scholar who assumes too much importance and declares that critical scholarship has raised history to the dignity of science, that external criticism is the whole of historical criticism, and that outside purgation, emendation and classification, there is nothing else to do in history is also not correct. This is a very tall claim which is hardly justifiable, and undoubtedly an exaggeration. It is psychological criticism and not textual that deals with interpretation of the facts, and also the good faith and accuracy of authors. In a way external criticism is preparatory, however essential it may be. The moment all bricks, stones, sand, cement, timber and iron are brought to the site, they do not automatically shape themselves into a house. Likewise, the facts or the units of which history is composed would not automatically be unified and arranged in order to tell us the y of the past. A lot of reflective and interpretative faculties have to be used before the narrative becomes meaningful. Therefore, external criticism is a means and not an end by itself. It is a temporary necessity and not a permanent feature of historical writing.

This controversy of the nineteenth century as to whether a critical scholar or a historian deserves greater credit no longer holds good today. There was a division of labour and rivalry almost to the extent of a complete divorce between erudition and history in those days. (Incidentally it must be mentioned that 'erudite scholar' should not be confused with 'eminent historian'. Erudition has a technical meaning referring only to textual criticism.) The present trend is that a close relationship should exist between these two branches. Certain textual criticisms are well done by critical scholars, and certain analytical and synthetic operations are well performed by historians. If both are entrusted to the same person, they may not be so well done.

In practice, when a person takes to research, he will face three types of situations. First, he finds the sources already classified and emended. If he is a student of ancient Indian history, many of his sources will be archaeological and epigraphical which have all been edited in several volumes. Secondly, the preliminary work is only partially but not wholly done. A student of medieval Indian history would be in this predicament where some of his sources are classified whereas

Some have yet to be done. Thirdly, the sources are in a bad state and require great labour to make them fit for use. This is the case with sources referring to

contemporary history where many files are still in Government custody. The materials are so tendentious that great care has to be taken to establish their accuracy. In the first two cases, the necessity for division of labor may not arise, but in the third case where the sources are scattered, corrupt, and untrustworthy, assistance of specialized agencies such as of critical scholars becomes an imperative need. Thus, any hard and fast rule cannot be applied with respect to this problem.

A few devotees so much time and labor to preparatory works, that they dedicate their lives to editing and classifying documents. A few combine the tasks of external criticism and historical reconstruction, like Waitz, Mommsen and Haureau of Germany, and Jadunath Sarkar of India. Even the task of critical scholarship is not without its charm, and scholars find supreme satisfaction in it. It is a good thing that a few scholars devote their entire time to critical scholarship, particularly in these days of specialization, which results in more abundant, successful and better regulated production of material. Critics become professional in their task, and perform their duty with incomparable dexterity and confidence. The historical sciences have surely reached a stage in their evolution where any further advance can be made only by specialists. The answer is that it has mainly three functions to perform. The first is the establishment.

A further question is 'what exactly is the job of external criticism?' The answer is that it has mainly three functions to perform. The first is the establishment of the authorship of the document, to be definite as to who was responsible for the writing of that document. The second is the determination of the place of the document, from where it originated. The third is the fixation of the time of the document, if possible the exact date, month and year of writing. All this information is useful not merely to know the genuineness of the record but also for determining the value of the record in terms of the motives and intentions that prompted its writing. The motives, concepts, ideas and inclinations of the author are central to higher criticism, where the good faith and accuracy of the author are very minutely examined in order to eliminate all possibilities of error. As all historical data is only obtained through the observation of some author or agent in the past, it becomes very necessary to know his psychology. If the author is not trustworthy, the information we possess would also be untrustworthy. Therefore, the first step in this direction is to obtain a clear proof that the author is the same person as claimed in this record. If no mention is made of the author at all, it becomes the essential duty of the scholar to find out who the author was. It is not necessary at this stage to examine what is contained in this record, which we do at a later stage when we have ascertained everything about the author. His training, nature, aptitude and the source of his information depends entirely upon the records of the past for his information and these records might contain both true and false statements. It is his business to detect which of those events are true and which of them are false. The sources we use might have been the result of either observation or experience or hearsay recorded by some author in the past. Naturally this information has to be

carefully tested and scrutinized before we can use it. This is ascertained by a process of scientific investigation which is the main job of internal criticism which establishes the value of a document. Many of the documents are written with inadequate knowledge or with motivation or prejudice. The court historians of the past have written accounts, mostly to praise their patrons either because they were employed for that purpose or because they were personally impressed by the good or bad deeds of the rulers that they could not resist the temptation of writing what they genuinely thought to be reality. Abul Fazal wrote the *Akbarnamah* not so much for any monetary gains but because of his genuine interest in Akbar. Here the personal element which affects truth must be inquired into. Likewise, a foreign traveler might have been guided more by rumors and hearsay than by honest efforts to find out the truth or by his own personal experiences. The British administrators, civil servants and military commanders, who have written histories of India were generally influenced by a particular standpoint in their writing. The job of a historian is to check very carefully the records that appear authentic, and internal criticism helps him in the process of finding out errors and eliminating them.

Positive Interpretative Criticism

As indicated above, there are two types of operations to be performed under internal criticism, positive and negative. Positive interpretative criticism aims at knowing the literal meaning of the document. The study of every document should begin with an analysis of its contents, made with the sole aim of determining the real meaning of the author. This analysis is a preliminary operation, which is distinct and independent of the other operation where the matter is probed further. In positive analysis the general sense of the text is first studied, and then we proceed to the object and views of the author. To analyze a document is to discern and isolate all the ideas expressed by the author. Analysis thus reduces itself to interpretative criticism. Interpretation passes through two stages, the first concerns self with the language of the document to know the literal meaning of the document, and the second deals with its real meaning. To understand a text, the language should be known. Historical material lies scattered in different languages, and hence it is necessary first to get at the literal meaning of the text. A general knowledge of the language is not enough. Each language will have its own finer shades of meaning, and research requires that one should have great proficiency in the language in order to know the real meaning. Usually the same meaning is attributed to the same word where it occurs. But in ordinary language in which documents are written, meaning fluctuates from passage to passage. We generally understand what is meant by the term 'honorable' but when Mark Antony is using the term 'honourable' in respect of Brutus, it conveys a different meaning altogether. Each word expresses a complex and ill-defined idea, and its meaning may be manifold. It could be relative and it is subject to variation. The word 'bill' could be used to convey various meanings. Your doctor expects his 'bill' to be paid after he treats you. When you introduce a 'bill' in the legislature, there is a chance of its acceptance or

rejection. When you have a ten-dollar bill, it means currency. When you stand for elections, you distribute bills, or public notices or advertisements of your candidacy. A bill of exchange is a promissory note. Under Scottish Law, a bill is a petition to the court of sessions. A bill is the beak of a bird. Bill in popular language is diminutive of William. President Jimmy Carter's younger brother is Billy Carter, sometimes affectionately called Bill. Bill is a hook-shaped instrument used by gardeners in pruning. Thus, a single word gives us several meanings depending upon the context in which it is used.

Mere superficial knowledge of a language would confuse the issue, and a historian would land himself in trouble. There are many, many words in every language with a plurality of meaning. Sometimes the same word gives different meanings at different times in different places. The same language, English, is spoken and understood both in England and in America, but they have different terms for a film, petrol, a motor - car or a host of other things. Even in England there are Variations from region to region. Queen's English is quite different from ordinary folks' English. How they speak at Oxford or Cambridge is different from in Wales or Scotland. The same thing is true of Indian languages, whether it is Kannada, Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam. In Mysore or Bangalore, the Kannada is different from that of Hubli or Belgaum Kannada.

The vocabulary of a city dweller is different from that of a villager. Difficulties may arise from profession to profession, from ignorant masses to enlightened elite, from age-group to age-group and so on. What is written at present may be different from the practice that existed in the past. Hale-Kannada of the tenth or eleventh century is quite different from what it is today. Therefore, the first job of positive interpretative criticism is to know the literal or dictionary meaning of the document, and secondly to know the special or real meaning of the words in the document.

Positive criticism requires that a few principles be remembered. First, all languages are subject to change by a continuous process of evolution. Each epoch has a language of its own, which must be treated as a separate system of signs. Familiarity with the language of that period is necessary to read a particular document. Secondly, linguistic usage may vary from country to country and from one social class to another. The language of a sophisticated person in a city is different from that of a rustic person in a village. Thirdly, each author has his own manner of writing and unless his style is closely studied, errors are likely to occur. Fourthly, an expression changes its meaning from passage to passage, and the meaning should be determined with reference to the general sense of the context. When a hawker selling mangoes cries 'here are ladus', the word lady should not be taken for sweetmeat, but merely indicative of being as sweet as the sweetmeat. The rule of the context is a fundamental rule of interpretation which should be judged in the correct perspective of the entire situation.

In politics, war and administration, where changes occur quickly, decisions are taken which appear to be conflicting, but in the interpretation of those ideas or decisions, circumstances and context should never be forgotten. A confession drawn under duress

is entirely different from the expression of free will. A remark made in excitement or in the poetic sense should never be taken literally. When Shakespeare desires to convey the idea of Lady Macbeth's gravity of offence, he chooses his own dramatic expression. 'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'. When he wants to say Duncan was a noble king, he says that he was 'too full of the milk of human kindness'. His philosophy of life should not be taken literally when we are warned, 'life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing'. They are all literary artifices used to convey the intensity of feeling or the depth of thought. Any hasty judgment on a logical and literal basis would result in wrong conclusions.

When Charles IX took upon himself the responsibility for having brought about the slaughter of St. Bartholomew, although he was not responsible for it, we have to judge in what context he took the blame. For the propagation of faith even a crime was not regarded as undesirable in those days, but was considered meritorious, and hence the king took upon himself the blame, despite the fact that he was innocent. That is why the starting point of all historical research is doubt. Although going to jail is not an act of pride, in India a few people may announce with great pride that they had been sentenced to jail. Their pride would be justified only in the context of their suffering for the national cause, and no person would publicly announce his term of sentence if it was for any criminal offence. Therefore, before making use of a phrase taken from a text we must read it in its entirety, and ascertain the background in which the whole idea is expressed. The modern meaning must not be imposed on words that belong to another period and another country. Positive criticism thus requires an enormous expenditure of time in order to know the full and real meaning of a term. Every word has to be determined with reference to the language of the time, the country of origin, the author of the composition, and the proper context of the situation. This is the labor demanded of a good research scholar who has to reconstruct all the operations which the author would have performed. The task becomes easy as all words do not change their meaning frequently, and it is enough if special attention is paid to certain expressions which from their nature are liable to take on different meanings.

Readymade expressions which are fixed do not follow the evolution of the words of which they are composed. Words denoting things which are in their nature subject to evolution, such as classes of men, institution usages, feelings and common objects are certain examples of this class which do not have a fixed meaning and the sense in which they are used must be ascertained in the text to be interpreted.

The second stage in positive interpretative criticism knowing the literal meaning is to determine the real meaning. The author might have concealed the real meaning under the cover of an allegory, symbolism, hoax, allusion, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, or an analogy. Medieval miniatures show persons lying in bed with crowns on their heads. It does not mean that the monarchs of those days were in the habit of going to bed with their crowns on their heads. It is merely a symbol in the picture to indicate who

the king is, and what his rank is. It is necessary to pierce through the literal meaning to get at the real meaning which the author has purposely disguised under an inexact form. When Rousseau says in *Social Contract* that man is born free but everywhere he is in chains, he is merely trying to emphasize the importance of liberty and the advocacy of the cause of democracy. It should not be inferred that a chain is hanging round the neck of every individual.

Even when Karl Marx says that in course of time the State would wither away, it should not be taken too literally, but understood that it merely shows that the importance of the State would vastly decrease in proportion to the realization by every individual that he exists for others. The question of law and order, safety and security, management and administration would all be resolved, if the given society is free of capitalism, exploitation and class-struggle. If in a passage we come across a statement that the prosperity of a country has reached such a high level that the wealthy used golden gates outside their houses, we should not literally interpret it as a situation of that kind. On the other hand, the only legitimate inference to be drawn from it is that the use of both gates and gold was known to the people, and not that gold was so plentiful in supply at any time that it could be cast into gates. Nor was it likely that human nature was ever to be trusted in such a manner as to throw gold outside the houses in the form of gates. When we call the English king who fought the Crusades 'Richard the Lionhearted', it simply means he was brave. Golda Meir is credited to be 'the only man' in her cabinet in the sense that despite her sex, she was very fierce and bold. The same thing could be said of Sultana Razia, Chand Bibi, Ahalya Bai, or Rani Laxmibai. Thus, the researcher should absorb the real meaning of the text.

The problem of extracting the real meaning is not simple. It is very complicated and embarrassing as there is no rigid law to do this job. In official documents we do not meet with such difficulties, nor is it to be seen in historical charters and narratives. But when we deal with private papers, diaries, letters, literary works and poetic compositions, the possibility is very great where the authors have hidden their ideas and have expressed them only in the oblique sense. The historians of the Romantic period are well known for this style of writing, where being led by fancy, sentiment and impulsive spontaneity, they adopt an allegorical style the real meaning of which is totally different. The authors did this particularly when they had other interests or when they wrote for a public which understood their allusions, symbols and figures of speech. This is the case with religious texts, private letters and other literary works. Those who wish to write history from the Puranas have to be very careful in drawing inferences and should know the context well. When time is divided into various great periods in the Puranas and some figures are quoted, they should not be taken literally. A passage in the Purana reads: 'A human year is a day and night of the gods, and the divine year consists of 300 human years. Of divine years, 12,000 i.e. 43,20,000 human years constitute a, "four age" period (Chatur Yuga) in which the four ages (yuga) are, first, the

Karta of 1,440,000 human years, then the Treta of 1,080,000 years, the Dvapara of 720,000 and lastly the Kali of 300,000 years. The only inference to be drawn from the passage is about the immensity of the Hindu conception of the evolution of the world which is vastly superior to the orthodox Christian conception of evolution, where the world is supposed to have come into existence only a few thousand years ago, and where the Biblical date assigned to Adam is no more than five or six thousand years ago. Instead of this if we regard the figures quoted above in any literal sense, we are surely in for a shock.

Religious texts often indulge in parables and other allusions and often their commentaries are longer than the original texts themselves. Without their commentaries it may not be possible to understand their real meaning. For example, the scope of the Puranas, eighteen in number, is very wide indeed, almost a popular encyclopedia of ancient and medieval Hinduism dealing with religious, philosophical, historical, personal, social and political matters. These books contain accounts of kings and rishis, religious beliefs, worship, observances and philosophy. personal, social and political ordinances about all kinds of miscellaneous matters. To make proper use of this rich material, superficial knowledge of Sanskrit will not help; we need great proficiency. If this is the case with only one single source of historical material in India, how about the hundreds and thousands of lithic records , copper plates, literary sources of varied types and so on? In short, we can hardly exaggerate the importance of sound knowledge of a language for historical writing. Thus the art of knowing the literal and the real meaning has occupied a large space in the theory of hermeneutics or interpretative criticism. Only one general principle can be laid down to detect the real meaning. When the literal sense is absurd, incoherent, obscure or contradictory, then there is an oblique sense. To determine this, we have to know the language well. Such oblique passages with other passages and guess whether the real meaning can be known from the context. But even when we have discovered the hidden meaning, we should not draw a full inference from necessarily conjectural interpretations. We must not take for allegorical meanings called hyper- hermeneutics. When we get at the real meaning, the operation of positive analysis is concluded. It gives us the author's concepts, the images of his mind and his general notions. This information forms an important branch of knowledge from which is constructed the whole group of historical sciences , the history of art, literature, science, the history of art, literature, sciences, philosophy, law and so on. Internal criticism at the positive stage helps us to know both the literal and the real meaning of a document. Ancient documents were not written in the medium in which we write them now, nor were the authors of those documents aware that we would use them for our own purpose of writing history. They have been transcribed from age to age by different hands, some scholarly and some very immature, and hence their original meaning might have been distorted over the period. It is the business of criticism to reconstruct the real meaning. Internal criticism deals with the contents of the

documents, their probability and the author's veracity. At first the text must be studied thoroughly, contemporary word meanings must be determined, anachronisms must be detected, the author's bias and character must be discovered and taken into account in evaluating the text. Positive criticism is interpretative and its results must be positive in throwing more light on obscure corners.

The first is the way the author designs our understanding of the event, or his own version for our information although what he has seen, heard or known might be different from what he wants us to know. Secondly, what the author believed might be altogether different from what really happened, although he might have been sincere in saying what he honestly believed. Here there is no variation in his statement and belief, but reality appears to be quite different from the knowledge and expression of the author. Thirdly, what the author says and believes may exactly be true in reality, and hence the author is quite sincere and accurate in his statement. Thus several possibilities exist which make historical facts complicated. What the author expresses is not always what he believed, for he may have lied; what he believed and said is not necessarily what might have happened, for he may have been mistaken. But the general tendency is to believe in everything the document relates as though the author never lied or was never deceived. But this is far from true, and hence errors have been very common.

Negative interpretative criticism is the measure to ward off this danger of falling into errors, and it has appeared as a practical necessity for the purpose of eliminating statements which are obviously false or erroneous. As in every science, so in history the starting point must be methodical doubt. All that has not been proved must be regarded as doubtful. Methodical doubt becomes methodical distrust. The historian must distrust at first every statement of the author, owing to the possibilities of errors indicated above. A statement at best offers only a presumption, at worst it might be a pack of lies. The researcher has to accept every fact as true only after he finds good reasons to do so. We must not postpone doubt till it is forced upon us by conflicting statements in documents. The word authentic should not be used in the sense that it refers to the events as they actually happened. It simply means that its origin is certain, not that its contents are free from error. The natural impulse which compels us to believe a document must be resisted. A document may contain both false and correct statements. Therefore, each of its statements must be examined separately. Internal criticism leads us to two general rules. The first is that a scientific truth is not established by testimony. A candidate who possesses a very good certificate from his Professor need not necessarily be worthy of all the good points indicated in the certificate, which might have been given on extra academic grounds. Likewise, in order to affirm a proposition we must have special reasons for believing it to be true. The rule is to examine each separate statement to confirm the truth. Secondly, criticism should not be performed enbloc. It must be analyzed into its elements to isolate and examine it separately. If a

few inaccuracies are perceptible in Bana's *Harsha Charita*, we cannot condemn the whole work. The aim here is to find out whether the author has reported the events correctly or not.

18.3.3 Analysis

Analysis Subjectivity refers to the preconceived ideas, feelings, opinions, notions, and so on, of the historian. It is the direct opposite of objectivity. Every historian has his own tastes, likes, aptitude and preferences. He may prefer either social or political or economic or military or constitutional or art-history and because he or she is specially inclined towards that particular subject, he or she is liable to be affected by it.

Let us take the example of the revolt of 1857 in India. The Indian historians think that it was the first war of Indian independence and the historians from Britain would not agree with either of these views. An element of subjectivity enters at every step in the process of historical investigation. The present influences our knowledge of the past because past events do not any longer exist anywhere except in the mind of the historian, who has now become both subject and object. He rebuilds or reenacts the past in his own mind and in the process super imposes at least some of his ideas on past events. While discussing King Asoka's pronouncement of war, the historian cannot resist the temptation of assessing Asoka in the light of present probable danger to peace because of nuclear weapons. The historian would fail to accomplish his main goal of narrating an event as it actually happened. However, subjectivity and bias are not synonymous. Bias refers to historian's proclivity. It refers to the feeling that strongly favors one side in an analysis of a historical problem or one item in a group or series of facts or events.

Bias is the breeding of subjectivity. Bias and subjectivity are like the Siamese twins. A historian works under certain limitations. All the facts or events are not well preserved or stored for him. The source material might have been destroyed, or those who recorded the events might not have observed very well or even if they observed, intentionally omitted to record them.

Subjectivity appears to be unavoidable and is inherent in the art of writing stories. The greatest historians from Thucydides to Toynbee are all subjective. Banabhatta's *Harsha Charita*, St. Augustine's *The City of God*. Abul Fazal's *Babarnama*. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, J.S. Mill's *History of British India*, V.D. Savarkar's motivated *First War of Independence*, K.P. Jayaswal's *Hindu Polity* and a host of illustrious historians and their works are affected by the virus of subjectivity. When Zia-ud-din Barani or Abul Fazal wrote their *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* and *Akbarnama* respectively, they were not free from their political considerations or loyalty to their master. Many other factors might stand in the way of objectivity such as religious fanaticism, political pressure, party loyalties etc. To permit the full scope for imagination would be to reduce history to the level of fiction.

To reconcile ourselves to the presence of subjectivity, which enters at every spin the process of investigation; the present can and does influence our knowledge of the past. Some people have gone to the extent to say that the closest we can get to what actually happened is to believe what the records say actually happened. According to R.G Collingwood, historical thought about the past and all history, consequently, is the history of thought. However, this is to over emphasize the element of subjectivity. It is not possible for us to know something about the world outside the human mind even if our knowledge of it cannot be absolute. Thus, the historian would consciously endeavour to be objective as far as possible. He should aim at presenting facts with as much accuracy and faithfulness as possible.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q1. What is external criticism called?

Q2. What is Internal Criticism called?

18.4 Summary

- Analytical operation has been divided into two branches, namely external criticism and internal criticism. These two branches have other names as well. External criticism is called heuristics, which literally means inciting to find out or helping or guiding in discovery.
- The facts or the units of which history is composed would not automatically be unified and arranged in order to tell us the story of the past. A lot of reflective and interpretative faculties have to be used before the narrative becomes meaningful.
- A few devotees so much time and labor to preparatory works, that they dedicate their lives to editing and classifying documents. A few combine the tasks of external criticism and historical reconstruction, like Waitz, Mommsen and Bureau of Germany, and Jadunath Sarkar of India.
- The motives, concepts, ideas and inclinations of the author are central to higher criticism, where the good faith and accuracy of the author are very difficult to eliminate all possibilities of error.
- The court historians of the past have written accounts, mostly to praise their patrons either because they were employed for that purpose or because or because they were personally impressed by the good or bad deeds of the rulers that they could not resist the temptation of writing what they genuinely thought to be reality.
- Positive interpretative criticism aims at knowing the literal meaning of the document. The study of every document should begin with an analysis of its contents, made with the sole aim of determining the real meaning of the author.
- Each language will have its own finer shades of meaning, and research requires that one should have great proficiency in the language in order to know the real meaning. Usually the same meaning is attributed to the same word where it occurs.

But in ordinary language in which documents are written, the meaning fluctuates from passage to passage.

- All languages are subject to change by a continuous process of evolutions. Each epoch has a language of its own, which must be treated as a separate system of signs. Familiarity with the language of that period is necessary to read a particular document.
- In politics, war and administration, where changes occur quickly, decisions are taken which appear to be conflicting, but in the interpretation of those ideas or decisions, circumstances and context should never be forgotten.

18.5 Glossary

- **Heuristics:** It is any approach to problem solving or self-discovery that employs a practical method that is not guaranteed to be optimal, perfect or rational, but nevertheless sufficient for reaching an immediate short-term goal or approximation.
- **Hermeneutics:** It is the theory and methodology of interpretation especially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature and philosophical texts.

18.6 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Answer-1 Heuristics

Answer-2 Hermeneutics

18.7 Suggested Readings

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- Fea, John. 2013. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.

18.8 Terminal Questions

Q1. Discuss in detail the tools and techniques of historical observation

Q2. Describe the importance of Auxiliary science in history?

UNIT- 19

WRITING HISTORY

STRUCTURE

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19.1 Introduction

Research in history is carried out through the historical method. The historical method is a technique developed to present past events in their correct perspective. It helps us to know how to write history, which is not an easy job, because of the nature of historical facts. As history is both a science and an art, the methods to be used in writing history would be different from those of all other disciplines. Diligent collection of all relevant sources, great care in sifting the material, very critical examination of the literal and real meaning of the text, a thorough inquiry into the motives and intentions of the author in making his observations, and a penetrating scrutiny to eliminate all possible errors require a systematic step by step approach, to arrive at the truth. The historian would be lost in the wilderness and he has to perform the journey and reach his destiny unguided in the midst of obstacles all around. For this purpose, he requires both reason and imagination, skill and foresight, logic and intuition. The historian is confronted with a situation, which does not exist now. He is investigating a case that took place decades or even hundreds or thousands of years ago, and on many occasions without any trace of evidence. Even if some traces are available, they may be biased reports. In some cases the material may be flimsy such as myths, legends and traditions, and even if official records, diaries, letters, proceedings, chronicles, journals and other literary sources are available, the subjectivity in them will be so great that unless the historian is on guard, he is likely to slip into fiction.

19.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Understanding the importance of various functions involved in research writings.
- Detailed discussion of footnotes bibliography, synopsis writing and research ethics.

19.3 Research Process and Writing Framework

The research process in writing history involves several key steps to ensure a thorough and accurate account of the past. First, historians must identify a research question or topic that addresses a gap or issue in the historical record. They then proceed to gather primary sources—documents, artifacts, and testimonies from the time being studied—which are crucial for constructing an authentic narrative. Secondary

sources, such as books and articles by other historians, help provide context and interpretation.

Once the research is gathered, historians engage in analysis and synthesis, examining sources critically to identify biases, perspectives, and reliability. This stage is key in understanding how various historical narratives have been shaped. Following analysis, historians organize their findings into a coherent structure, often employing chronological, thematic, or comparative frameworks, depending on the nature of the topic.

19.3.1 Selection of Topic

All writing begins with a topic. If you have some freedom in choosing what to write about, look for a subject that interests you and that will maintain your interest throughout the various stages of research and writing. Some preliminary reading in the library will help you determine the extent of your interest. A library visit can also reveal whether enough serious work has been done on the subject to permit adequate research and whether the pertinent source materials are readily available.

In selecting a topic, keep in mind the time allotted to you and the expected length of the research paper. “Twentieth-Century World Politics” would obviously be too broad a subject for a ten-page term paper. Students commonly begin with fairly general topics and then refine them, by research and thought, into more specific ones. Here again, preliminary reading will be helpful. Consult books and articles as well as some general reference works, such as encyclopaedias, and try to narrow your topic by focusing on a particular aspect or a particular approach. A student initially interested in writing on Shakespeare’s imagery, for instance, might decide, after some careful thought and reading, to focus on the blood imagery in *Macbeth*; the topic “Modern Technology and Human Procreation” could likewise be narrowed to “The Future of Surrogate Motherhood.”

Before beginning the project, make sure you understand the amount and depth of research required, the degree of subjectivity permitted, and the type of paper expected. Confer with your instructor if you need help in understanding the assignment or in choosing an appropriate topic.

19.3.2 Note Taking

After you have verified the publication information for a source, the next step is to read and evaluate the material. You should not assume, of course, that something is truthful or trustworthy just because it is in print. Some material may be based on incorrect or outdated information, on poor logic, or on the author's own narrow opinions. Weigh what you read against your own knowledge and intelligence as well as against other treatments of the subject.

When you find material that you consider reliable and useful to your purpose, you will want to take notes on it. Although everyone agrees that note-taking is essential to research, probably no two researchers use exactly the same methods. Some take notes on a second set of index cards; others write in notebooks, beginning each new entry on a fresh page; still others favor loose-leaf or legal-size pages clipped together according to one system or another.

Whatever your preferences, take down first, at the very top of the page or card, the author's full name and the complete title of the source-enough information to enable you to locate the corresponding bibliography card easily when you need it. There are, generally speaking, three methods of note-taking: summary, paraphrase, and quotation. Summarize if you want to record only the general idea of large amounts of material. If you require detailed notes on specific sentences and passages, but not the exact wording, you may wish to paraphrase-that is, to restate the material in your own words. But when you believe that some sentence or passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to your paper, transcribe that material exactly as it appears, word for word, comma for comma. Whenever you quote from a work, be sure to use quotation marks scrupulously in your notes to distinguish between verbatim quotation and summary or paraphrase. Keep an accurate record, preferably in the left-hand margin, of the page numbers of all material you summarize, paraphrase, or quote. When a quotation continues to another page, be careful to note where the page break occurs, since only a small portion of what you transcribe may ultimately find its way into your paper.

In taking notes, try to be both concise and thorough. Above all, however, strive for accuracy, not only in copying words for direct quotation but also in summarizing and paraphrasing authors' ideas. Careful note-taking will help you avoid the problem of plagiarism.

19.3.3 Research ethics

Research ethics are **moral principles that guide researchers to conduct and report research without deception** or intention to harm the participants of the study or members of the society as a whole, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Research ethics **involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to research activities which include** the design and implementation of research, respect towards society and others, the use of resources and research outputs, scientific misconduct and the regulation of research.

Research ethics **govern the standards of conduct for scientific researchers**. It is important to adhere to ethical principles in order to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants.

Principles of research ethics

- Respect for persons - autonomy and protecting those with diminished autonomy
- Beneficence and non-male faience.
- Justice
- Informed consent
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Integrity
- Conflict of interest.
- Given the importance of ethics for the conduct of research, it should come as no surprise that many different professional associations, government agencies, and universities have adopted specific codes, rules, and policies relating to research ethics. Many government agencies have ethics rules for funded researchers.

19.3.4 Quotation and paraphrase

While quotations are common and often effective in research papers, use them selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Over quotation can bore your readers and might lead them to conclude that you are neither an original thinker nor a skilful writer.

In general, a quotation-whether a word, phrase, sentence, or more-should correspond exactly to its source in spelling, capitalization, and interior punctuation. If you change it in any way, make the alteration clear to the reader, following the rules and recommendations explained below.

19.3.5 Synopsis

The third main job after the selection of the subject and the preparation of a bibliography is the development of an outline, a framework or a synopsis which would give him a rough idea of the whole project. It is an outline of his entire work. The synopsis fixes the contours of the research field and provides a format to work upon. However, no outline should be regarded as complete until the research work has been finished. As you take notes, you will probably revise your original outline frequently, adding subheadings to it, changing the sub-headings to major headings or perhaps dropping some headings altogether. It should be remembered that an outline is a working plan. It is the blueprint of the entire research project. Just as the carpenter or the engineer follows his blueprint to the letter in order to avoid costly structural blunders, so also the research scholar follows his outline carefully so that he may arrange his ideas effectively. However, blueprints are not rigid or irrevocable iron frameworks. They could always be changed and improved as and when the need arises. The point is that the scholar should make the outline his aid and not become its slave. He should keep the outline of a growing and developing plan which he need not hesitate to change if necessary. The aim is naturally to perfect his outline before he starts writing the UNITS, but the actual writing will almost certainly suggest a few desirable changes in the arrangement of details.

How to prepare a synopsis is a persistent question. The study of secondary sources will give the scholar an idea of what remains to be done, and he will jot down these ideas on the topic. Keeping the purpose of his research in view (exposition, argument, narration, description, report and thesis), the scholar should jot down as many ideas as they occur to him; and he should do it rapidly, without much concern for the proper order. It is like a cow grazing quickly in the field in order to ruminate later at leisure. Suppose, his subject is 'New Light on the Events of 1857'; he already has strong opinions on the subject, and he decides to argue that it was essentially a popular movement. The purpose of his research will be critical and he will adopt

argument as his main tool all along with the thesis. To prove his point he jots down ideas related to his central theme. Some of the ideas he jots Research Methodology down may overlap, some may be general and some may be specific. He then classifies these ideas into groups, categories and sub-headings, training the important ones and rejecting the weaker ones. He then uses these groups or subheadings for main headings in a logical order. The outline will contain an introductory and a concluding UNIT. In between, the main theme will be discussed under several main headings and subheadings.

A few more points must be noted in drawing the outline. The scholar must make sure that the outline covers the whole subject. The major headings or UNITs must be sufficient in number and scope to satisfy the opinions aroused by the title of the subject. They need not be too long. Normally the UNITs will be between five to ten or twelve. They can be simply one or two, or twenty or thirty. Each of the UNITs must have subheadings, and each subheading need not be unduly detailed. They should include only basic points to be brought out in the project. In reality, making an outline is a process of thinking through the entire research programme. The outline may help to give a focus to the research and sometimes may show the need for further limitation of the topic.

Another point to note is that a scholar should make sure that the parts of the outline are logically arranged. If the outline is disorganized and ineffective, the research that follows will also be disorganized and ineffective. For this purpose all related ideas must be grouped together under major headings. The division of the readings into major UNITs must be according to a natural or logical order either of time or space or topic. Overlapping often occurs when the scholar attempts an arrangement based on more than one principle. One should not coordinate any heading that should be subordinated, and likewise one should not subordinate any heading that should be coordinated. Thus, the outline follows a logical pattern dealing with fundamental ideas to be covered in the thesis. The outline is a bare skeleton of the whole body which takes shape as the research scholar proceeds to work on the main theme.

Certain Useful Concepts

Even with the equipment of moral, mental and practical knowledge of historical research, a scholar would still be lacking in necessary skills if he is not aware of the real

significance of certain concepts which have a technical meaning. They are criticism, analysis, imagination, doubt, certitude and interrogation. The term criticism has great significance in history writing, for it is the touchstone that tests the veracity of statements. It is not used in the ordinary connotation of the term, to mean finding fault or passing strictures or striking a discordant note. It has a special meaning in a historical method to indicate that it is a very helpful apparatus to establish the truth. It is an instrument to distinguish the right from the wrong, the genuine from the spurious. It is a tool in the hands of scholars to eliminate errors and fallacies, and determine the truth or veracity of a document. It is simply a critical faculty which enables a scholar to judge how far what is stated is really the case.

Analysis is also a very helpful instrument that supplements the task of criticism. If criticism sifts the data and presents to us a valid fact, analysis takes it up at that stage and throws intense light on all aspects of that problem. History is not merely the collection of data but its full utilization in order to explain, evaluate and interpret events to bring out their true significance. Analysis does that job. Whatever type of research we may undertake, whether descriptive or narrative or critical or expository, analysis would have to play its role in each of them. Its main task is to expand and explain in depth the implication of that idea. Rousseau merely made a single statement that man is born free but everywhere he is in chains. An analysis of this statement would take volumes, as the main purpose would be to probe the causes for such an unhappy situation, the consequences of such a situation or to see whether there is any truth at all in such a statement. It is not enough merely to say that Asoka renounced war but a full analysis of his policy would elevate Asoka's position sky-high among the hundreds of monarchs. It is one thing to say that Gandhiji advocated ahimsa, but altogether a different thing if a proper analysis of Gandhi's ahimsa is furnished. Thus, every important point in history requires a critical analysis which is a process of resolving a problem into its first elements, and then explaining them fully.

Imagination is a constructive or creative faculty related to mental activity. It goes to the heart of a thing, and it is deep, earnest and serious. It seeks always and everywhere for essential truth. The nature of history is such that without imagination neither criticism nor analysis can play its legitimate part. Historical data is never fully exhaustive. It is imagination that provides the missing links to complete the story. But historical

imagination has to be conditioned within the framework of reason and logic. Inferences could be drawn only from the premises, but without imagination the spirit of history can never be brought out. What might have been the plight of Marie Antoinette in the prison cell or of Napoleon in St. Helena cannot be fully perceived through records only unless imagination re-enacts the entire picture. History comes close to literature because imagination is vital in both.

Doubt is yet another instrument with which a historian keeps himself on guard from committing errors. In a court of law everyone charged with an offense is innocent until proven guilty, but in history every trace is doubtful unless proved otherwise. The probability of error is so great in history that the starting point of a researcher is methodical doubt. We suspect prejudice, falsehood and a partisan outlook on the part of those who have left behind historical evidence. Very few observers have undertaken to record events objectively, and they were not aware that their records would be subject to historical scrutiny. If Abul Fazal had written the Akbarnamah, it was not to paint the events exactly as they were, but to give Research Methodology praise to his great patron, and hence the element of subjectivity cannot be eliminated. If the servants of the East India Company were informing their masters about political conditions in India, they were giving only biased reports with the ulterior purpose of British expansion, but not to present the correct political picture. We have to know the purpose, the motive and the intentions with which the authors committed their thoughts to writing. A political party will issue only such a manifesto in which its own achievements are sketched in glowing terms and those of its rivals are painted in darkest colours. Therefore, no historical trace is free from some kind of bias or other. A researcher ought to be aware of this tendency of historical explanation and hence he ought to start with the negative note that everything is false unless proved true. Therefore, his starting point is doubt. If doubt is his starting point, certitude is his destiny. The ultimate purpose of a historian is to establish truth on sure and certain ground. This is a long journey but worth undertaking if history is to fulfill its purpose. Certitude is assured fact or reality, the aim of the historian, to be achieved by following rigidly the principles of historical method. We cannot say that this is attainable in every case just as a criminal investigator cannot say that he has found out the truth. As history also is a science we cannot ignore our goal, and in many cases objectivity has been attained to a great extent. Ranke, a German,

wrote about France in such a way that no Frenchman could raise even the least objection. But certitude in history does not have the same precision, the same assured reality as in physical and natural sciences. Certitude in history is a relative term referring more to the narrative and expository part of history than to the explanatory and interpretative part. It is concerned more with a historical synthesis where historians make their own assessment of the situation. However, the very consciousness of the historical goal differentiates history from other branches of humanities, where there is no deliberate effort to move towards assured reality. Certitude to some extent is possible in history, because it has developed its own technique of knowing the truth, the vital element of which is interrogation.

Historical research depends mostly on putting forward a series of questions and getting the right answers to them. Interrogation is the key to all progress. It is the inquisitive mind, the questioning faculty and the critical spirit that is at the root of the historical method, just as it is of all other sciences. As history is denied the opportunity of direct observation, experimentation and verification, it has to adopt the indirect method of questioning to check and confirm the truth of an event. As we proceed with a detailed study of the several operations of research, we will observe that historical methodology has developed in each case a series of questions which alone will unravel the mysteries of the past. In a way, the historical method will become a mental gymnasium, wherein we have to wrestle with ideas.

In all social sciences, research starts with the preparation of a very comprehensive questionnaire, but in history the method is not that easy. We proceed to have a built-in system of their own, rigid, known and pre-determined, as if they frame our own questions as we go along. Other sciences are lucky that they have a patrimony bequeathed to them to enjoy, but in history there is none such to start except doubt, on which to build the structure, as if one has to earn and build the mansion as he proceeds along the job. Thus, in the preliminary operations we will be called upon to know what historical method is, what its value is, what exactly is meant by historical research, what are the requisite qualities expected of a research scholar, what sort of practical skill or technique he should possess, how he has to go about collecting material, making notes, classifying and arranging them, how to select a subject, how to prepare a bibliography, how to draw an outline or synopsis and what are the tools or concepts that assist him in

his research work. These problems would surely indicate the enormity of the task ahead from the selection of a subject to the completion of the work. Before he jumps into the arena of this challenging bout, he should be fully equipped with all the necessary skill to win the contest of writing good history, its own technique of knowing the truth, the vital element of which is interrogation. Historical research depends mostly on asking a series of questions and getting the right answers to them. Interrogation is surely the key to all progress. It is the inquisitive mind, the questioning faculty and the critical spirit that is at the root of the historical method, just as it is of all other sciences. As history is denied the opportunity of direct observation, experimentation and verification, it has to adopt the indirect method of questioning to check and confirm the truth of an event. As we proceed with a detailed study of the several operations of research, we will observe that historical methodology has developed in each case a series of questions which alone will unravel the mysteries of the past. In a way, the historical method will become a mental gymnasium, wherein we have to wrestle with ideas.

19.3.6 Final draft and UNITisation

Once you have your thesis statement and final outline, you are ready to begin writing. But do not expect your first draft to be the finished product. The successful research paper is usually the culmination of a series of drafts.

Start off by trying to set down all your ideas in the order in which you want them to appear. Even though the writing may be hasty and fairly rough, the first draft should attempt to follow your outline closely. You should then read over this raw material and try to refine it. Next, review the corrected draft and make further changes. Continue this process until you are satisfied that you have done the best you can in the time available.

In revising, you may add, eliminate, and rearrange material. If a section in the first draft seems unclear or sketchy, you may have to expand it by writing another sentence or two or even a new paragraph. Similarly, to improve the fluency and coherence of the paper, you may need to add transitions to show how one sentence relates to another or how one paragraph leads to the next. For the sake of unity and reader interest, you should delete any material that is irrelevant, unimportant, repetitive, or dull and dispensable. If the presentation of ideas seems illogical or confusing, you may find that you can clarify by rearranging phrases, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs. In later drafts you should concern yourself with the more mechanical kinds of revision. For

example, strive for more precise and eco wording. Try, in addition, to vary your sentence patterns as well as your choice of words. Finally, correct all technical errors, using a standard writing guide to check punctuation, grammar, and us age and consulting a standard dictionary to check the spelling and meaning of words. Your last draft, retyped, carefully proofread, and corrected, is the text of your research paper.

Self-Check Exercise-1

- Q1. What are the key steps in the research process for writing history, and how do they contribute to creating an accurate historical narrative?
- Q2. How do historians balance the use of primary and secondary sources when constructing a historical argument?
- Q3. Why is structuring and organizing the research material essential in the writing process, and what are some common methods historians use to do so effectively?

19.4 Academic Sources, documentations and citation guide

In historical writing, academic sources are essential for ensuring the credibility and validity of the work. Primary sources, such as letters, diaries, official documents, and artifacts, provide firsthand accounts of historical events. Secondary sources, like books, journal articles, and scholarly papers, offer analysis, context, and interpretations of historical events. Proper documentation of these sources is crucial for transparency and for allowing others to verify the information presented.

Citations are the means by which historians give credit to original authors and sources, ensuring academic integrity. Common citation styles in history include Chicago/Turabian style, which uses footnotes or endnotes for citing sources. Proper citation allows historians to trace the origins of ideas and evidence, supporting the reliability of their arguments and maintaining scholarly standards.

19.4.1 Footnotes

Since you will get your material for the thesis from various sources, primary and secondary, literature and archaeology, periodicals and journals, letters and documents and so on, you will be required to give proper credit to these sources in the body of the thesis itself. To do this you have to use footnotes numbered consecutively throughout the UNIT and placed either at the bottom of the appropriate page or in one list at the end of the paper. Today the latter method is used increasingly. Footnote numerals in

the text should come immediately after the part of the sentence to which the footnote refers and should come after all punctuations except the dash. Never put the numerals in the middle of a sentence. The number of footnotes needed will vary from UNIT to UNIT, but every important idea in the passage must be supported by an evidence or source whose reference appears in the footnote. Every quotation must have its footnote, and so must all the chief facts and opinions drawn from the works of others. Four to six footnotes for each page of the UNIT appears to be desirable but there is no rigid rule about it. Footnote numbers are put slightly above the line followed by a space. The names of authors and editors are given in the normal order, first names first; there is no need to give the last name first. Reference to books will include page number, volume number, month and year of publication. The names of the books or the titles of the journals are underlined in typed theses and put in *italics* in published works. Standard abbreviations as are applicable in appropriate bibliographies are used. Thus writing a thesis is an art which can be developed with conscious effort to utilize the available material to the best advantage.

19.4.2 Citations

Periodicals are publications that appear regularly at fixed intervals. They include newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals. An entry for an article in a periodical, like an entry for a book, has three main divisions: author, title of the article, and publication information. For scholarly journals the publication information generally includes the journal title, the volume number, the year of publication, and the inclusive page numbers of the article cited.

Booth, Wayne C. "Kenneth Burke's Way of Knowing." *Critical Inquiry* 1 (1974): 1-22.

Sometimes, however, additional information is required. Citations normally give the information in the following order:

1. Author's name
2. Title of the article
3. Name of the periodical
4. Series number or name
5. Volume number (for a scholarly journal)

6. Date of publication

7. Page numbers

19.4.3 References and bibliography

The second job of the scholar, after the choice of the subject, is the preparation of a bibliography. This gives him an idea of the range of materials on the subject. It is very important to prepare a very exhaustive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are unpublished original material, contemporary records, journals, official transactions, minutes, proceedings, private letters, inscriptions, coins and literary sources. Secondary sources are published material, books, records, journals and later works. The bibliography work is a continuous process. It requires periodic addition. As and when fresh material comes to light, it enters the bibliography, but a rough idea is essential in the initial stages to know the volume of literature available on the subject.

A bibliography is prepared by using the card catalogues, indexes to periodicals and reference books available in libraries, museums, archives and other repositories. Here also the scholar should use the card system. Copy each title on a separate card generally 3x5 inches, keep these cards in alphabetical order, and add useful titles as you find them. The final bibliography, to be used at the end of the thesis will most often include only the works that help in the actual writing—usually those cited in the footnotes. But the preparation of a good bibliography is a very important job, for historical sources are wide-spread, and their nature differs in accordance with the nature of the subject. For pre-history and proto history a different kind of bibliography would be required from that of modern history; art history would require a different type of material from that of political history and so on. The scholar will have to make a very careful study in the initial stages of all secondary sources on the subject which would help him to locate the sources. Scholars who have already worked in similar fields will have seen many of the sources they may need. Many of those sources might have been only very partially used, and the scholar will have to go over them again with the intention of finding out how well they have been used. The study of secondary sources serves one more useful purpose. He would know through this literature what has been done on this subject, so that he should know what remains to be done. These

secondary sources would help the researcher very much in the selection of his subject and in the limitation of its scope.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. Why is it important for historians to use academic sources, and how do primary and secondary sources contribute differently to historical writing?

Q2. What are the key guidelines for proper documentation and citation in historical writing, and why is accurate citation essential for academic integrity?

Q3. What do footnotes contain?

Q4. Name two referencing styles?

19.5 Summary

- Research is an attempt to make a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject, in order to discover facts or revise the known facts or put the facts into theories.
- Historical research is digging into the past in order to re-enact the past in its entirety, to reconstruct the past events as fully as they must have happened, to explain the meaning and significance of those events, to correct the wrong notions so long prevalent, if any, and to elaborate, analyze, synthesize and philosophize the ideas in the light of the knowledge we possess. Qualities that a good researcher should possess are, love of the subject, personal honesty, sobriety and intelligence.
- A scholar should know how to go about his job, and how he should classify and arrange the material. Taking down notes from the sources and go on doing so until one is fairly satisfied that he has completed the job is a sheer waste of time unless one knows exactly what one is doing.
- The scientific method of taking notes is the card or the slip system.
- The next job of the scholar, after the choice of the subject, is the preparation of a bibliography. For this he must make a record of the primary and secondary sources he has gained his information from.
- The bibliography work is a continuous process. It requires periodic addition.

- The third main job after the selection of the subject and the preparation of a bibliography is the development of an outline, a framework or a synopsis which would give him a rough idea of the whole project.
- Besides moral, mental and practical knowledge of historical research, a scholar would still be wanting certain other necessary skills such as *criticism, analysis, imagination, doubt, certitude* and *interrogation*.
- Having gained an idea of the true nature of historical facts, the scholar takes the next important step in synthetic operations which is to group the facts according to some definite scheme of classification which is devised on a practical basis.
- A researcher must find a principle to guide him in the selection, the grouping and arrangement of facts. The simplest and easiest mode of classification is that which is based on the external conditions of time, place and persons.
- In short, synthetic operations involve a very careful and intelligent use of the material. It requires some discerning power to know in what relationship one fact stands with the other.
- Synthetic operations include several processes that are required to unify the entire scrutinized material in one connected narrative. This calls for planning and arrangement of facts which should be properly classified under some logical plan. There is no rigidity in adopting any particular plan, but whatever the plan chosen, chronological, geographical, topical, it should be consistently followed.

19.6 Glossary

- **Bibliography:** It is a list of the books referred to in a scholarly work typically printed as an appendix.
- **Transcendentalism:** It is a religious and philosophical movement which was started in the early 1800's in America.
- **Proto history:** It was a period between prehistory and history during which a culture has not developed the art of writing.

19.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 The key steps in the research process for writing history include selecting a topic, gathering primary and secondary sources, analyzing the data, and synthesizing findings. Each step ensures that the historian's argument is well-supported by evidence, accurate, and contextually rich.

Answer-2 Historians balance primary sources, which provide direct evidence from the period being studied, with secondary sources, which offer analysis and interpretation. This combination allows historians to form a well-rounded argument while grounding their work in both original materials and scholarly interpretations.

Answer-3 Structuring and organizing research material is essential to ensure clarity and coherence in the narrative. Historians often use methods like chronological, thematic, or comparative frameworks to arrange their findings, making the argument easier to follow and the analysis more robust.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 Using academic sources ensures the credibility of historical writing by grounding arguments in reliable, verifiable evidence. Primary sources offer direct insights into historical events, while secondary sources provide analysis and context, helping historians interpret and understand the past more comprehensively.

Answer-2 Proper documentation and citation are crucial for maintaining academic integrity, allowing readers to trace the origins of information and verify sources. Accurate citation not only gives credit to original authors but also enhances the transparency and reliability of the historical narrative.

Answer-3 Footnotes contain all the material that has been referred to in the text.

Answer-4 The two referencing styles are as follows : (1) APA styles i.e. American Psychological Association and (2) Chicago Manual of style.

19.8 Suggested Readings

- Warren, John. 1998. *The Past and Its Presenters: An Introduction to Issues in Historiography*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Educational.
- Ferro. Marc. 2003. *The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past is Taught to Children*. Abingdon: Routledge.

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- Fea. John. 2013. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past*. Washington: Baker Publishing Group.

19.9 Terminal Questions

- Q1. How is research ethics important in writing history?
- Q2. Elaborate and discuss the importance of citations and footnotes in history writing with examples?

UNIT-20

UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH ETHICS

STRUCTURE

- 20.1 Introduction
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20.1 Introduction

Research Ethics examine the moral principles that guide a researcher and the obligations by which he is bound to conduct any sort of research in the society. It lays down the guidelines that are crucial to the conduction of a responsible research to ensure a high ethical standard by maintaining objectivity, integrity and honesty in the research and its participants. It is the ethics of planning, conducting, and reporting of research which makes the research believable and protects the dignity, rights, and welfare of the research participants. According to the Research Excellence framework, 2014, research is “a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.” The reality is that there can be ethical concerns at every step of the research process (Brickman & Rog, 2009). As a concept, ‘research ethics refers to a complex set of values, standards and institutional schemes that help constitute and regulate scientific

activity.’ Ultimately, research ethics is a codification of ethics of science in practice. In other words, it is based on general ethics of science, just as general ethics is based on commonsense morality.

20.2 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the Students will be able to:

- Understand the term ‘Research Ethics’ and the fundamental principles that direct them.
- Curate a better understanding of ethical standards and help them from steering away from unjust outcomes and decision making in research

20.3 Objectives of Research Ethics

- To protect human participants, their dignity, rights, and welfare and increase the reliability of the research
- To build up confidence in the research work done.
- To inculcate moral values by not doing harm to others while conducting research.
- To ensure that research is conducted in a way that works towards the welfare of individuals and society.
- To protect privacy and the progression of informed consent.
- To protect the rights of the research participants by forcing the academic honesty of the researcher

20.3.1 Advantages of Research Ethics

- Research ethics promote the aims of research.
- It increases trust among the researcher and the respondent.
- It is important to adhere to ethical principles to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of research participants.
- Researchers can be held accountable and answerable for their actions.
- Ethics promote social and moral values.
- Promotes the ambitions of research, such as understanding, veracity, and dodging of error.
- Ethical standards uphold the values that are vital to cooperative work, such as belief, answerability, mutual respect, and impartiality.
- Ethical norms in research also aid to construct public upkeep for research. People are more likely to trust a research project if they can trust the worth and reliability of research.

20.3.2 Limitations of Research Ethics

- Psychological risks: To take as an example, a questionnaire might perhaps signify a risk if it fears traumatic events or happenings that are especially traumatic.
- Social, legal, and economic risks: for example, if personal information collected during a study is unintentionally released, participants might face a threat of judgment and stigmatization.

- Certain tribal or inhabitant groups may possibly suffer from discrimination or stigmatization, burdens because of research, typically if associates of those groups are recognized as having a greater-than-usual risk of devouring a specific disease.
- The research may perhaps have an influence on the prevailing health system: for example, human and financial capitals dedicated to research may distract attention from other demanding health care necessities in the community.

Self-Check Exercise-1

Q.1 What do you understand by Research Ethics?

Q.2 List down three objectives of Research Ethics.

20.4 Ethical Issues in India

Mostly matters of research ethics differ from method to method. Most importantly, ethics also vary from place to place. For example; A Christian lady in white indicates a bride, while a Hindu lady in white indicates a widow. In most of the cases, cultures in India vary from state to state, and even from city to city. So, researchers should have a depth knowledge of cultures and other things of the place, they are working in.

- During the study, Indian researchers should give utmost importance to the cultural diversity and religiosity of the country.
- They must work within a framework suitable for all the customs, traditions, languages, castes, creed, colours, classes, regions etc.
- They must work for the promotions of all the cultures, religions etc., not the other way round.
- During the research, the researchers must keep in mind the wide economical, knowledge and technological gap between the people of India.

20.4.1 Guidelines for Research Ethics by NESH

The ethical responsibilities inherent in research are partly associated with standards related to the research process, including relationships between researchers, and partly with respect for the individuals and institutions being studied, including responsibility for the use and dissemination of the research.

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). These standards can broadly be divided into three main categories:

- Standards for freedom of research, good research practice associated with research's quest for truth and independence, and the relationship between researchers.
- Standards that regulate relationships to individuals and groups directly affected by the research
- Standards regarding social relevance and users' interests and regard for cultural reproduction and rationality in the public debate

Self-Check Exercise-2

Q1. List down two ways a researcher should deal with ethical issues in India.

20.5 Summary

Ethics are fundamental to conduction of any research. In this UNIT, we discussed and explored the dimensions of an ethical research. There are certain obligations that a researcher has towards the participants of his research and the society in general. We learnt the basics of research ethics, its principles and objectives, advantages, and limitations. Through this UNIT we summarised the ethics that one needs to imbibe and keep in mind as it contains the basic essence to research writing process.

20.6 Glossary

- **Research Ethics:** research ethics refers to a complex set of values, standards and institutional schemes that help constitute and regulate any work of research.
- **Plagiarism:** Taking of work or ideas from another source and presenting it as your own, with or without consent or acknowledgement of the original author.
- **Confidentiality:** reserving authorized restrictions on access and disclosure, including means for protecting personal privacy and proprietary information.

20.7 Answers to the Self-Check Exercises

Self-Check Exercise-1

Answer-1 Research Ethics examine the moral principles that guide a researcher and the obligations by which he is bound to conduct any sort of research in the society.

Answer-2 Research ethics promote the aims of research. It increases trust among the researcher and the respondent. It is important to adhere to ethical principles to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of research participants.

Self-Check Exercise-2

Answer-1 During the study, Indian researchers should give utmost importance to the cultural diversity and religiosity of the country. They must work within a framework suitable for all the customs, traditions, languages, castes, creed, colours, classes, regions etc.

20.8 Suggested Readings

- MacIntyre, Alasdair, *A Short History of Ethics*, London, 1967.
- *What is Ethics in Research and why is it important?*
<https://www.nichs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/index.cfm>
- (Roig, 2015)
- American Medical Writers Association (2008). AMWA code of Ethics,
http://www.amwa.org/amwa_ethics.
- Guidelines for research on the Internet, NESH 2003
<http://www.etikkom.no/retningslinjer/internett>

- <http://dissertation.laerd.com/principles-of-research-ethics.php>
- <https://www.publichealthnotes.com/research-ethics-definition-principles-and-advantages/>

20.9 Terminal Questions

Q1. Do Research Ethics have any objectives? If yes, explain them briefly.

Q2. Throw some light on the limitations of Research Ethics and the ethical issues faced by researchers in India.