

MEANING

History is often said to be the “queen” or “mother” of the social sciences. It outdates the other social sciences, having appeared in schools long before the others with the possible exception of geography. It is the basis of all subjects of study which fall under the category of Humanities and Social sciences. It is also the basis of the study of philosophy, politics, economics and even art and religion. No wonder, it is considered an indispensable subject in the complete education of man.

The term history is derived from the Greek word 'Historia' meaning 'information' or 'an enquiry conducted to find truth'. The other meaning is 'what has actually passed or happened'. It has been variously put though one and the same in essence.

“History is the present thought about the past, history is thought and nothing else” said by **Croce**.

NATURE OF HISTORY

- I. History is the study of man.
- II. It is concerned with man in time.
- III. It is concerned with man in space also.
- IV. It explains the present.
- V. It is a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends.
- VI. It is the story of the growth of human consciousness, both in its individual and collective aspects.
- VII. Continuity and coherence are the necessary requisites of history.

SCOPE OF HISTORY

The scope of history is from local history to national and from national to international. The knowledge of the child should not be limited to the events of his own country. It should be extended to the study of history of other countries because the events and the problem of a particular country are sure to affect the whole world. The scope of history is, thus, as vast and wide as humanity itself.

“History is a veritable mine of life experience and the youth of today studies history that may be profit by the experiences of the race” **Jones.**

AIMS OF TEACHING HISTORY

“History is not simply information regarding the affairs of the kings who have passed away but a science which explains the intellect and furnishes the wise with examples.” **Tarikh-i-Daudi**

“The aim of history is not to please nor to give practical maxims of conduct, nor to fire one with patriotic fervor, nor to afford mental training nor to arouse the emotions but to equip the readers with knowledge, pure, simple and truthful.”

- ✓ To promote self-understanding:
- ✓ To give proper conception of time, space and society:
- ✓ To enable the pupils to assess the values and achievement of their own age:
- ✓ To teach tolerance:
- ✓ Feed the education of intellect and leave the rest to history:
- ✓ To awaken interest in the subject and to keep it.
- ✓ Modern youth is to be equipped intellectually to the fullest:
- ✓ It is a storehouse of wisdom
- ✓ It inculcates intellectual discipline
- ✓ Development of memory, imagination and reasoning power

OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING HISTORY

- **Knowledge:** The pupil should acquire knowledge of terms, concepts, facts, events, symbols, ideas, conventions, problems, trends, personalities, chronology and generalisations, etc., related to the study of history. The pupil should be able to: recall, recognize, show and read.

- **Understanding:** The pupil should develop understanding of terms, facts, principal events, trends, etc., related to the study of history. The pupil should be able to: classify facts, illustrate events, compare and contrast events, explain events, discriminate, identify, arrange facts, detect errors, interpret and extract.
- **Critical Thinking:** The subject should enable the pupils to develop critical thinking. The pupil should be able to: identify, analyse, collect, select, draw and verify.
- **Practical Skills:** The subject enables the pupils to develop practical skills helpful in the study and understanding of historical facts. The pupil should be able to: draw maps, charts, diagrams and prepare models, etc.,
- **Interests:** The subject should enable the pupils to develop interest in the study of history. The pupil, on his own, should be able to: collect coins and other historical materials, participate in historical dramas and mock sessions of historical events, visits places of historical interest, archaeological sites, museums and archives, read historical documents, maps and charts, write articles on historical and other related topics.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING HISTORY

People live in the present. They plan for and worry about the future. History, however, is the study of the past. Given all the demands that press in from living in the present and anticipating what is yet to come, why bother with what has been? Given all the desirable and available branches of knowledge, why insist—as most American educational programs do—on a good bit of history? And why urge many students to study even more history than they are required to?

Any subject of study needs justification: its advocates must explain why it is worth attention. Most widely accepted subjects—and history is certainly one of them—attract some people who simply like the information and modes of thought involved. But audiences less spontaneously drawn to the subject and more doubtful about why to bother need to know what the purpose is.

Historians do not perform heart transplants, improve highway design, or arrest criminals. In a society that quite correctly expects education to serve useful purposes, the functions of history can seem more difficult to define than those of engineering or medicine. History is in fact

the person who could reel off the date of the Norman conquest of England (1066) or the name of the person who came up with the theory of evolution at about the same time that Darwin did (Wallace) was deemed superior—a better candidate for law school or even a business promotion. Knowledge of historical facts has been used as a screening device in many societies, from China to the United States, and the habit is still with us to some extent. Unfortunately, this use can encourage mindless memorization—a real but not very appealing aspect of the discipline. History should be studied because it is essential to individuals and to society, and because it harbors beauty. There are many ways to discuss the real functions of the subject—as there are many different historical talents and many different paths to historical meaning. All definitions of history's utility, however, rely on two fundamental facts.

History Helps Us Understand People and Societies

In the first place, history offers a storehouse of information about how people and societies behave. Understanding the operations of people and societies is difficult, though a number of disciplines make the attempt. An exclusive reliance on current data would needlessly handicap our efforts. How can we evaluate war if the nation is at peace—unless we use historical materials? How can we understand genius, the influence of technological innovation, or the role that beliefs play in shaping family life, if we don't use what we know about experiences in the past? Some social scientists attempt to formulate laws or theories about human behavior. But even these recourses depend on historical information, except for in limited, often artificial cases in which experiments can be devised to determine how people act. Major aspects of a society's operation, like mass elections, missionary activities, or military alliances, cannot be set up as precise experiments. Consequently, history must serve, however imperfectly, as our laboratory, and data from the past must serve as our most vital evidence in the unavoidable quest to figure out why our complex species behaves as it does in societal settings. This, fundamentally, is why we cannot stay away from history: it offers the only extensive evidential base for the contemplation and analysis of how societies function, and people need to have some sense of

history can be understood from elements of an institution or a society period despite change.

The Importance of History in Our Own Lives

These two fundamental reasons for studying history underlie more specific and quite diverse uses of history in our own lives. History well told is beautiful. Many of the historians who most appeal to the general reading public know the importance of dramatic and skillful writing—as well as of accuracy. Biography and military history appeal in part because of the tales they contain. History as art and entertainment serves a real purpose, on aesthetic grounds but also on the level of human understanding. Stories well done are stories that reveal how people and societies have actually functioned, and they prompt thoughts about the human experience in other times and places. The same aesthetic and humanistic goals inspire people to immerse themselves in efforts to reconstruct quite remote pasts, far removed from immediate, present-day utility. Exploring what historians sometimes call the "pastness of the past"—the ways people in distant ages constructed their lives—involves a sense of beauty and excitement, and ultimately another perspective on human life and society.

History Contributes to Moral Understanding

History also provides a terrain for moral contemplation. Studying the stories of individuals and situations in the past allows a student of history to test his or her own moral sense, to hone it against some of the real complexities individuals have faced in difficult settings. People who have weathered adversity not just in some work of fiction, but in real, historical circumstances can provide inspiration. "History teaching by example" is one phrase that describes this use of a study of the past—a study not only of certifiable heroes, the great men and women of history who successfully worked through moral dilemmas, but also of more ordinary people who provide lessons in courage, diligence, or constructive protest.