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History and Historiography: A Study of the Nature of History.

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Abstract:

This research paper discusses about History and Historiography in general. After going through this paper, one should be able to properly understand the meaning, nature, and scope of History. At the same time, this paper, would focus upon the views of some famous historians regarding 'History'. Historiography generally refers to the approach in which history is being studied. Therefore, for understanding history properly, we should have a proper knowledge of Historiography as well. Hence, the objective of this paper is to provide a proper guide to the subject of 'History'.

Keywords: History, Historiography, Nature of History, History of Historiography.

WHAT IS HISTORY?

The English word "History" have originated from the Greek word "*historia*", meaning "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation". The term "History" is however taken from the German word "*Geschichte*", which means a significant narration of the past events. Generally, history refers the study of the past and it covers every aspects of civilization. The scholars who write about history are known as Historians. The development of history writing started with the ancient Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus, who is popularly known as "the father of History" was the first historian to collect and systematically process information in the form of an account. Different historians have provided different definitions of history, some of the popular ones are as follows:

Edward Hallett Carr: "History is an unending dialogue between the present and the past and the chief function of historian is to master and understand the past as a key to the understanding of present."

Prof. Carl G. Gustavson: "History is a mountain top of human knowledge from whence the doings of our own generation may be scanned and fitted into proper dimensions. History enables a person to see himself as part of that living process of human growth which has emerged out of the past and will inexorably project itself out beyond our own life time. We are the product of the past but not the complete product."

Will Durant: "History is a narrative of what civilized men have thought or done in past time."

Prof. A.L. Rowse: "History is essentially the record of the life of men in societies in their geographical and their physical environments. Their social and cultural environment arises from the interaction of the one with the other, the society and its geographical condition."

Prof. G.R. Elton: “History is concerned with all those human sayings, thoughts, deeds and sufferings which occurred in the past and have left present deposit; and it deals with them from the point of view of happening change and particular.”

John Jacob Anderson: "History is a narration of the events which have happened among mankind, including an account of the rise and fall of nations, as well as of other great changes which have affected the political and social condition of the human race."

Thomas Charlyle: “World History is a biography of great men”.

Lord Acton: “History is the unfolding story of human freedom.”

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

R. G. Collingwood: “Every historian would agree, I think, that history is a kind of research or inquiry. What kind of inquiry it is I do not yet ask? The point is that generically it belongs to what we call the sciences: that is, the forms of thought whereby we ask questions and try to answer them. Science in general, it is important to realize, does not consist in collecting what we already know and arranging it in this or that kind of pattern. It consists in fastening upon something we do not know, and trying to discover it. Playing patience with things we already know may be a useful means towards this end, but it is not the end itself. It is at best only the means. It is scientifically valuable only in so far as the new arrangement gives us the answer to a question we have already decided to ask. That is why all science begins from the knowledge of our own ignorance: not our ignorance of everything, but our ignorance of some definite thing—the origin of parliament, the cause of cancer, the chemical composition of the sun, the way to make a pump work without muscular exertion on the part of a man or a horse or some other docile animal. Science is finding things out: and in that sense history is a science.”

From the above definitions one can easily assume the importance of History in the human civilization. Social, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, scientific, religious and a various other spheres are all a part of history.

NATURE OF HISTORY

Previously, history was considered as just the record of the events that occurred in the past. However, in the present times, the subject is studied with a much more critical approach and in a very scientific manner. A historian is required to evaluate and analyse the events in an unbiased manner. Personal opinions and ideas should never be incorporated into historical facts.

In fact, many times while writing history, a historian may not stay impartial and thus his works get influenced by his biasness. As a historian, analyse the past in the backdrop of his own social, religious, economic and cultural background, hence there is a chance of the historian to develop a biased opinion. Historian studies the past in the light of present, therefore, the developments of present times can affect the analysis of the past. Hence, it is essential for a historian to be free from any kind of biases.

1. **Dynamic:** History deals with man’s evolution through time. History is not static but dynamic in nature. It traces how humans have advanced through the ages.

2. **Study of the present in the backdrop of the past:** The present is a result of the past. Therefore, history helps us to realize how society has come to its existing form.

3. **Chronological:** History deals with a series of events which occurred at a particular point of time. Each event is recorded in the backdrop of the time in which it took place.

4. **Objective by Nature:** An ideal account of history should be as much objective as possible. Provision should be taken to prepare the data on authentic sources and make them free from bias interpretation. This helps in a clear understanding of the past

5. **Multi-dimensional:** Every aspect of human civilization should be studied under history. History should not be limited to political history or the history of the rulers, that have dominated history for a long time.

8. **Proper Analysis:** The selected events should not be simply narrated but a proper analysis is required. However, the analysis should be unbiased and free from any kind of influences. Truth and truth alone is required to turn a piece of writing into a historical record.

9. **Significant:** History records only those events which are significant in nature. Irrelevant and insignificant happenings of the daily life do not form a part of history.

10. **Consistent and Continuous:** History portrays the evolution of human development through ages, hence history is one of the most consistent and continuous process, that have witnessed the journey of civilization.

Some of the popular quotes regarding the nature of history writing are as follows:

"A historian has many duties. Allow me to remind you of two which are important. The first is not to slander; the second is not to bore." - French historian, Voltaire.

"History to be above evasion must stand on documents not on opinion." - English historian, Lord Acton.

"Historians have a responsibility to make some sense of the past and not just to repeat it." - British military historian, Michael Eliot Howard

"Each age writes the history of the past with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time." - American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner

"The writing of history reflects the interests, predilections, and even prejudices of a given generation." - American historian, John Hope Franklin

"Faithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. He must study events in their bearings near and remote; in the character, habits, and manners of those who took part in them. He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or a spectator of the action he describes." - American historian, Francis Parkman.

"The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind; for in history you have a record of the infinite variety of human experience plainly set out for all to see; and in that record you can find yourself and your country both examples and warnings; fine things to take as models, base things rotten through and through, to avoid." – Roman historian Livy.

"Those historians should give their own country a break, I grant you; but not so as to state things contrary to fact. For there are plenty of mistakes made by writers out of ignorance, and which any man finds it difficult to avoid. But if we knowingly write what is false, whether for the sake of our country or our friends or just to be pleasant, what difference is there between us and hack writers? Readers should be very attentive to and critical of historians, and they in turn should be constantly on their guard." - Greek Polybius.

"Everything must be recaptured and relocated in the general framework of history, so that despite the difficulties, the fundamental paradoxes and contradictions, we may respect the unity of history which is also the unity of life." – French historian Fernand Braudel

" Any fool can make history, but it takes a genius to write it." - Irish poet, Oscar Wilde.

"The historian should be fearless and incorruptible; a man of independence, loving frankness and truth; one who, as the poets says, calls a fig a fig and a spade a spade. He should yield to neither hatred nor affection, not should be unsparing and un pitying. He should be neither shy nor deprecating, but an impartial judge, giving each side all it deserves but no more. He should know in his writing no country and no city; he should bow to no authority and acknowledge no king. He should never consider what this or that man will think, but should state the facts as they really occurred." - Novelist and rhetorician Lucian.

SCOPE OF HISTORY

The scope a subject refers to the extent of the particular subject. In case of history, the scope is enormous and diverse. It covers every important event that have ever happened. Political, social, cultural, religious, economic, scientific or technological events, all come under the range and scope of history. B. Sheikh Ali writes, "with the passage of time the scope of history has been widened and new areas are included in it. History is gradually assuming all the three dimensions, as its main job is to narrate what happened, to discuss how it happened and to analyse, why it happened. It is growing in its extent as well."

The scope of history is also very dynamic in nature, just like the subject itself. The world in the past was fragmented into a number of social, political and cultural units. Each of these unit considered itself superior to another. For example, countries like Greek, Rome, China and India all have their independent histories in the ancient times.

After the industrial revolution, there was an improved means of transportation and communication across the different countries of the world, which bridge the gap between the various countries and a feeling of togetherness developed among people all over the world. This led to the rise on a unified and integrated culture. Thus, history gradually started assuming a universal nature. However, even today these divisions are existing which led to the debate on the historiography of the cold war. Still in general, history today deals with a much border perspective that cannot be limited to the mere geographical boundaries of the states.

With the rise of technology, the scope of history also got widened. After the discovery of technologies like radio carbon dating, the scope of history could be pushed back by millions of years. In the mid nineteenth century, the knowledge of the ancient history was further broadened by archaeology and geology. Until 19th century, history was limited to the study of political events However, at present the social, cultural, religious, economic, medical technological and literary aspect got incorporated into the scope of history along with the political ones.

SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORY

Normally, people are more interested in living the present and not in the dead past. However, there could be no proper understanding of the present without an appropriate knowledge of the past. In fact, most of the present problems have their roots in past. We could not reach to any proper solutions of these problems unless we understand how those problems originated and developed. Further, we cannot properly know our own capabilities until we read about the journey of human civilization in the past. In the words of historian R.G. Collinwood, "history is for human self-knowledge. It is generally thought to be of importance to man that he should know himself: where knowing himself means knowing not his merely personal peculiarities, the things that distinguish him from other men, but his nature as man. Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the man you are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is."

Hence, the significance of learning history are as follows:

1. History helps in developing our own sense of identity

To know who you are, firstly you need to cultivate a sense of identity. This refers to learning where you fit into the story of your nation or your position in the global community in a broader sense. History tells us how our nation, political institution, society and culture came to be in its existing state. It tells us from where our ancestors have come from and who we really are. Most important of all, it gives us the capability to recognize the legacies we may have inherited from our ancestors. Pearl Buck said, "If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday."

2. History helps in developing a better knowledge of the world.

We can't build a framework our life without knowing how things actually work in this world. History provides us a clear picture of how government, society, human minds and technology worked in the past, so that we can have a better understanding of how it works now. It also helps in determining how to prepare for the future, as it provides us the opportunity to learn from the past mistakes and achievements in the similar fields. Edmund Burke said, "In history, a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind."

3. History provides an understanding of other people

History is also a valuable resource when it comes to understanding people who are strangers to us. It develops our understanding of other cultures and communities, thereby helping in the formation of multi-cultural communities. Abraham Lincoln said, "Human nature will not change. In any future great national trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the incidents in this as philosophy to learn wisdom from and none of them as wrongs to be avenged."

4. History helps in understanding the nature of Change.

Change can be a very difficult concept to understand. Every one of us have a different experience in our life. These experiences are shaped by our societal norms, cultural background, economic status, personal experiences, and many other things. History helps in better understanding of when, what, how and why changes occurs.

5. History makes us a better citizens of the nation.

A Good citizen is the one, who is always well-informed regarding the nation. Without a working knowledge of history, no one can consider himself to be an informed citizen. By developing our understanding of the nation, history helps us in becoming a responsible and more effective citizen of the country.

6. History helps us to be a better decision maker.

History provide us the opportunity to learn from the past mistakes. It further helps in understanding the human mind, i.e. the reasons why people behave the way they do. Philosopher George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it."

7. History helps us to be appreciative

History helps us to appreciate the present as well as the past. When we learn about the movements and revolts against injustices in the past, we automatically develop a sense of appreciation for the ones who have fought against those evils. At the same time, it makes us realise at what cost we have gained the present that we are living it. Thereby helping us to appreciate the present without taking it for granted.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historiography is an analysis of descriptions of the past. The word Historiography refers to the art of writing history. It is the history of historical things or the history of history. It tells us the story of evolution and development of history writing in successive stages of history. It also includes the evolution of techniques and ideas, associated with history writing. Analysis in historiography usually focuses on the interpretations, narrations, use of data, or methodology of other historians in the past as well as in the present. According to Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris, "historiography is the study of the way history has been and is written—the history of historical writing.... When you study 'historiography' you do not study the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians". Though questions of methodology in history have always concerned historians, the modern study of historiography can be said to have its beginnings with E.H. Carr's work entitled *What is History?* In this work Carr challenges the traditional belief that the study of the methods of historical research and history writing were unimportant. The study of historiography requires a much more critical approach that goes beyond the ordinary examination of historical facts and data. Studies in Historiography verify the sources, generally by researching on the historian who have written it, his/her position in the social strata and the kind of history being written at that time. E. H. Carr in his work, have given a detailed description of what should be consider as historical facts. In the words of Carr, "What is a historical fact? This is a crucial question into Which we must look a little more closely. According to the common- sense view, there are certain basic facts which are the same for all historians and which form, so to speak, the backbone of history -the fact, for example, that the Battle of Hastings Was fought in 1066. But this view calls for two observations. In the first place, it is not with facts like these that the historian is primarily concerned. It is no doubt important to know that the great battle was fought in 1066 and not in 1065 or 1067, and that it was fought at Hastings and not at Eastbourne or Brighton. The historian must not get these things wrong. But when points of this kind are raised, I am reminded of Housman's remark that 'accuracy is a duty, not a virtue.' To praise a historian for his accuracy is like praising an architect for using well-seasoned timber or properly mixed concrete in his building. It is a necessary condition of his work, but not his essential function. It is precisely for matters of this kind that the historian is entitled to rely on what have been called the 'auxiliary sciences' of history— archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, chronology, and so forth. The historian is not required to have the special skills which enable the expert to determine the origin and period of a fragment of pottery or marble, to decipher an obscure inscription, or to make the elaborate astronomical calculations necessary to establish a precise date. These so-called basic facts, which are the same for all historians, commonly belong to the category of the raw materials of the historian rather than of history itself. The second observation is that the necessity to establish these basic facts rests not on any quality in the facts themselves, but on an a priori decision of the historian."

The past itself can never change, i.e. history could not be altered, however our understanding of the past is always changing and evolving. Different historians analyse and interpret the past according to their own techniques, principles and priorities. They make new theories and conclusions that could change the way of our understanding of the past. Historiography recognizes and analyses this process of change. To understand historiography, we must first accept the fact that our understanding of history is never absolute. Understanding of the past is never immune to challenges and criticisms. We should also understand the difference between historical facts (things shown by proof and recognized as true) and history (the analysis and interpretation of these things). The past definitely contains many definite facts. For example, World War 1 broke out in 1914, India got freedom from British rule in 1947, Atomic bombing of Japanese town Hiroshima took place on 6th august 1945. These facts could be isolated and devoid of meaning if taken on their own. The role of a historian is to make sense of these individual facts through analysis and research. For doing that, they inspect and interpret the facts, make assumptions, prepare theories and expresses their findings in the form of their writings.

The questions that a historian is generally tends to answers are as follows:

- **Causes:** Why a particular event have taken place or why an idea have originated.
- **Process:** What are the courses of the event.
- **Result:** What are the outcomes of a particular event or idea.
- **Consequences:** What are the far reaching consequences of the particular event or idea.
- **Contributions:** The action and reaction of different people related to the event.
- **Significance:** The importance of the event or idea.
- **Changes:** To capture the changes that have taken place as a result of the event or idea.

HISTORY OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

From the 19th century, historiography as an independent branch of history emerged in Europe. It evolved as a result of the philosophical revival that took place in the era of European enlightenment. Right from that time, numerous works on historiography has been produced all over the world. The successive stages of development in history writing from ancient to the present times can be traced through these works. They capture the progress of ideas of various historians and changing methods in historical writing. History writing, in the method of a collection of facts, analysing them and providing them a sensible interpretation did not emerge all of a sudden, instead it was a gradual process that went through the way of folklore and a variety of quasi-historical writings. Every human cultures tell us stories about the past that includes deeds of our ancestors, heroes or gods. Earliest chronicles written by the ancient civilizations could not be treated as proper history. Though, their importance could not be ignored in the progress of historical writings. Quasi-historical practices like the theocratic and myth traditions in history were produced by the ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians. Theocratic writings are generally regarding the activities of mankind, though the actions of man are described as controlled by some divine or supernatural powers. Under the theocratic writings, the kings are generally portrayed as the incarnations of god or as appointed by the god for governing mankind on earth. The myths were generally regarding Gods and not about any other normal humans. Events stated in the myths are said to have been taken place in the remote past. Elements of both myth and theocracy could be seen in the writings of the ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians. Ancient Hebrew Scriptures also comprises a great amount of both myth and theocracy in their writings.

In terms of dimension, durability, and influence at least three major and many minor traditions of historical writings and thoughts can be identified in the past. The major ones include the western or the classical Greco-Roman history writing, the Islamic historical writings that originated from the seventh century of the Christian era and the Chinese historical writings. The minor ones include the numerous indigenous traditions of analysing the past. The nature and quality of the historical literatures tends to differ in different ages and among different historians. These differences generally reflect the changes in social and cultural life. It also tells us whether there was any existence or non-existence of a sense of history.

History writings in earlier times were mostly about politics i.e. popular movements, revolts, and wars or regarding the kings, statesmen and generals who figured in them. However, from 20th century, historians shifted their focus from kings, statesmen and generals to ordinary soldiers, workers, peasants and other people of the lower strata. Until relatively recent times, a vast section of men and almost all women were excluded from the horizon of history

because they did not have any authority or permission to write. Practically everything that was known about them passed through the filter of the elite literates.

Annales School of historiography was developed by the French historians in the 20th century. It is named after its French journal called *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*. The school has been extremely influential in setting the outline for historiography in France as well as in numerous other countries. Focus on social rather than political issues was one of the major feature of the Annales school of historiography.

Big History is a multi-disciplinary approach that began in 1980s. It attempts to recognize great or big themes or patterns that stretch across traditional periods of history. Big history examines history from the beginning of time to the present day.

Comparative history is the comparison between different societies that existed during the same time period. Some famous advocates of this comparative history includes American historians Barrington Moore and Herbert E. Bolton; German historian Oswald Spengler; British historians Arnold Toynbee and Geoffrey Barraclough.

Cultural history is a comparatively new development in history, meets the different shades of culture. According to Peter Burke, the definition of cultural history to be like defining culture on its own. It is problematic to reach any predominant interpretation of cultural history as culture itself have so many meanings, explanations and definitions put forward by many scholars. Therefore, it also it is difficult to define cultural history. In the opinion of Burke, cultural history is something that is not in shape, it is constantly evolving and developing. This trend of history emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a response to the apparent limitations of the social history perspective of the previous historiography. Over the years it has covered diverse fields and has produced different types of historiographies.

Deconstruction is originated from the approach of Jacques Derrida in 1960s. It is an approach to understand the relationship between a text and its meaning. Deconstruction suggests that the texts seek to impose 'ideas' on their readers, thus trying to control the thoughts of the people.

Diplomatic history is the history of international relationship between states. It is a type of political history, that focuses on the nature of international relations between states over time. Though ancient Greek historian Thucydides was extremely concerned regarding the relationship among states yet the credit for the modern form of diplomatic history goes to the leading 19th century German historian Leopold von Ranke. Ranke's understanding of diplomatic history depend on the large number of formal documents and data produced by modern western governments as sources, which according to him should be interpreted in an unbiased and neutral spirit.

Economic history is the study of evolution and development of economic phenomena, that took place over time. Analysis in economic history is undertaken using a combination of historical approaches with statistical methods and the application of economic concept to historical situations.

Great Man history, this theory evolved in the 19th century. According to it, history can be largely described by the role of great men or heroes. The major proponent of this theory is Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle. He argued that history was the biography of a few dominant individuals or heroes like Napoleon Bonaparte, writing that "The history of the world is but the biography of great men."

History from below, as opposed to the Great Man History, History from below is a concept of historical narrative which focuses on the perception of common people, rather than any great man or political leader. This term was coined by French historian Georges Lefebvre and was later popularised during the 1960s by British Marxist Historians.

Historiophoty is a term coined by American historian Hayden White for describing the representation of history in motion pictures and graphic images.

Marxist historiography is a school of historiography influenced by the principals of Marxism. According to Marxist historiography, social classes and economic constraints are central to determine historical consequences. Marxist historiography has made considerable contributions to the history of the working class.

Metahistory, refers to the history beyond history. Generally, meta-history is often interpreted philosophically as a 'philosophy of history' or the 'reflection on history'. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* written by Hayden White and first published in 1974 discusses the principals of metahistory in details. In this book, Hayden White discards the belief that historians or journalists are able to write about the past or present in its actual form. Metahistory questions upon the objectivity of historical writings, arguing that historians bring concepts to bear on their sources that shape what they write.

Microhistory is a branch of history, which studies history on a very small scale. It was first developed in the 1970s. Microhistory generally covers the study of a small town or village. Other common types of microstudies involve looking at individuals of trivial importance or analysing a single art like a particular painting.

Military history refers to the history of armed conflict and its impact on the society, culture, economy and international relationships. An armed conflict may range from a brawl between two tribal groups to conflicts between militaries of two states. A military historian record, analyse and interpret the events of military history.

Numismatics is the study of currency, that including coins, tokens, paper money or any other related objects.

Palaeography refers to the study of ancient handwriting and the art of deciphering and reading historical manuscripts.

Political history refers to the description and analysis of political events, movements, ideas and leaders. It is generally constructed around the nation state. In the words of philosopher Friedrich Hegel, "Political History is an idea of the state with a moral and spiritual force beyond the material interests of its subjects: it followed that the state was the main agent of historical change".

Postmodernism can be categorized as an over-all disbelief of any 'grand-narratives.' It discards apparently universal stories and models such as religion, orthodox philosophy and gender that have defined society and culture in the past. Instead it looks to a variety of local and subcultural ideologies. A major proponent of postmodernism was the French scholar, Michel Foucault.

Post-structuralism is a label framed by American scholars to denote the diverse works of a series of philosophers and critical theorists who came to international prominence in the 1960s and '70s. A major philosophy of post structuralism is the unpredictability in the human nature. Post-structuralism is the response to structuralism. **Structuralism** is a mid-20th century intellectual movement, developed in Europe. According to it human culture can be understood by the means of a structure. The Post-structuralist authors were the critiques of this theory of structuralism. Writers who were often recognized as post-structuralist include Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, Jean Baudrillard, and Julia Kristeva. The movement of post-structuralism is closely related to that of postmodernism.

Prosopography refers to the study of the common characteristics of a historical group by means of a collective study of their lives and a multiple career-line analysis. Taken as individual biographies, they could be largely unnoticeable. Prosopographic research focuses on the pattern of relations by the analysis of collective biographies. This makes Prosopography a valuable technique for studying many societies in the pre-modern era. Prosopography is becoming an increasingly important approach within historical research. British prosopographer Katherine Keats-Rohan defines Prosopography as "Prosopography is about what the analysis of the sum of data about many

individuals can tell us about the different types of connexion between them, and hence about how they operated within and upon the institutions - social, political, legal, economic, intellectual of their time.”

Providential history refers to the theological or religious approach to history. There are two ways to view history: the first through the secular lens and the second is through the lens of God. Providential history consider God's will as the cause of every historical events. According to this approach, almighty's plan for the salvation of the world unfolds through the courses of human history.

Psychohistory refers to the study of the psychological inspirations in historical events. It assembles the understandings of psychotherapy with the research methodology of history to recognize the origin of the social and political behaviour of individuals, groups or nation. Its focus is on the family and childhood especially on topics like child abuse.

Quantitative History is a type of historical research that makes use of quantitative and statistical tools. Quantitative historians use with databases, i.e. large quantities of economic and demographic data.

Revisionist History, also known as Historical revisionism is the reanalysis and reinterpretation of conventional theories on the basis of evidences and facts regarding a historical event. The viewpoint of the revisionist historians is that a significant change is required in the nature of the interpretation of historical events. Historian James McPherson, described the importance of revisionism as: “History is a continuing dialogue between the present and the past. Interpretations of the past are subject to change in response to new evidence, new questions asked of the evidence, new perspectives gained by the passage of time. There is no single, eternal, and immutable ‘truth’ about past events and their meaning. The unending quest of historians for understanding the past—that is, ‘revisionism’—is what makes history vital and meaningful”.

Social history is also referred as the new social history. It is an area of history that studies the lived experience of the past. Social history, attempts to interpret historical facts from the point of view of developing social trends

Universal history refers to the presentation of the history of mankind as a whole or as a coherent unit. Historians of universal history consider history as a coherent whole, governed by certain basic characteristics or unchallengeable principles. Universal history forms the basic in the earlier western tradition of historiography. In the ancient Greco-Roman historical tradition, the first universal history was written by Greek historian Ephorus in the 4th century BC. Though his work has been lost, still its influence can be seen in the works of Polybius and Diodorus. Afterwards, universal history provided an influential lens to the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

World history studies the common patterns that emerge across all the cultures of the world. Unlike national or regional history, world History, analyse historical events from a global perspective. The rise of world history is a product of the current trend of globalization. Unlike the histories written in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, that mainly focused on national perspectives, world history focuses on the common patterns that appear across all global cultures. The advent of World History as a distinct field of study was initiated from the 1980s, with the creation of the World History Association. It has increasingly becoming a popular approach in historical research. Historians of world history uses a limited approach, with two major themes: integration (how and by what process world history have united people all over the world) and difference (how the various patterns of world history expresses the diversity of the human nature).

Whig history considers the past as a progress towards a better future, with greater liberty and knowledge. Generally, Whig historians focusses on the rise of constitutional form of government, individual liberties and scientific progress. The term is generally applied to histories that present the past as the inevitable march of development towards enlightenment. Whig history believes in the power of human reason to reshape society for the better, irrespective of past history and tradition. It proposes that the progress of mankind is inevitable.

Women's history studies the role of women in history. It comprises the history of the growth of woman's rights and equality; the analysis of individual and groups of women of historical significance; and the effect that various historical events have had on women. Another feature of women study comprises the differences in the lives of women caused by nationality, race, economic status, social status, and various other aspects of society. Women's history formally began from the 1970s, when the feminist wave noticed that women's perspective and previous feminist movements were largely left out from mainstream historical research.

SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

During the early modern period, the term historiography was generally used to denote the writing of history only. Historiography should be differentiated from history on the basis of the fact that historiography directly does not comprise the study of past events instead it focuses on the changing explanations and interpretation of those events in the historical writings of different historians. While history comprises the 'study of the past', historiography tries to find out how the past has been studied by different historians and what urged a particular historian to adopt a specific line of thought in the writing of a specific topic in history.

Historiography is an important topic for every single historian, irrespective of the nature of their writing or the audience they are addressing to as historiography provides a level of transparency that permits others to understand from where the facts are being received and how they are being processed.

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