**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

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***Abstract***

*Research is an intellectual activity. It is responsible for bringing to light new knowledge. It is also responsible for correcting the present mistakes, removing existing misconceptions and adding new learning to the existing fund of knowledge. Research is also considered as the application of scientific method in solving the problems. It is a systematic, formal and intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. Historical research deals with the meaningful record of human achievement. It is used   
to understand the past and understand the present in the light of past events and   
developments. Historical analysis may be directed towards an individual, an idea, a   
movement or an institution. The present study follows the general method of historical research and it provides a method of investigation to discover, describe and interpret what existed in the past.*

*(Key Words: Historical, Research, Qualitative, Quantitative, Data, Sources, Primary, Secondary, Chronology, Subaltern history.)*

**Introduction**

Research is an intellectual activity. It is responsible for bringing to light new knowledge. It is also responsible for correcting the present mistakes, removing existing misconceptions and adding new learning to the existing fund of knowledge. Research is considered as a combination of those activities which are removed from day-today life and are pursued by those persons who are gifted in intellect and sincere in commitment of pursuit of knowledge. But it is not correct to say that the research is restricted to such type of persons. However, it is correct to say that major contribution of research comes from highly gifted and committed workers. Thus, the research is not at all mysterious and is carried on by hundreds of thousands of average individuals.

Research is also considered as the application of scientific method in solving the problems. It is a systematic, formal and intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. There are many ways of obtaining knowledge. They are intuition, revelation authority, and logical manipulation of basic assumptions, informed guesses, observation, and reasoning by analogy. One of the branches of research known as empirical research is highly goal-oriented technique.

**Definitions of Research**

The following are the important definitions of research:

(a) *"Research is an endeavour (attempt) to discover, develop and   
verify knowledge, It is an intellectual process that has develop   
over hundred of years ever changing in purpose and form and   
always researching of truth"-* **(J. Francis Rummel).**

(b) *"Research in an honest, exhaustive intelligent searching for  
facts and their meanings or implications with reference to a   
given problem****"-*(P.M.Cook).**

(c) *"Research is seeking through methodical processes to add to   
one's own body of knowledge and hopefully to that of others,   
by the discovery of non-trivial facts and insight.” -* **(Howard and Sharp).**

(d) *"Research may be defined as a method of studying problems  
whose solutions are to be derived partly or wholly from facts****"-*(W.S.Monroes).**

(e) *"Research is simply a systematic and refined technique of   
thinking, employing specialized tools, instruments and   
procedures in order to obtain a more adequate solution of a   
problem that would be possible under ordinary means. It   
starts with a problem, collects data or facts, analyses them   
critically and searches decisions based on the actual   
evidence"-* **(G.C.Crawford).**

**Historical Research – An Overview**

***“History”*** the word derived from the Greek word ***‘historia’*** deals with all aspects – Social, Political, historical of man’s life in society. History is the story of the human experience. It is a science which leaves a man more intelligent and wiser with experiences of the past at his fingertips. It encompasses within its ambit the broadest studies, touching upon every aspect of human life. Today, history has become a valuable aid in understanding the process of evolution and how society has emerged in its present state. It gears up in appreciating one’s national heritage and in imbibing a sense of staunch patriotism for one’s nation. It opens up in us a clean sense of world unity and oneness.

While history teaching originally focused on the facts of political history such as wars and dynasties, contemporary history education has assumed a more integrative knowledge that includes aspects of geography, religion, anthropology, philosophy, economics, technology art and society. No teachers of history should have steadfast faith in his capacity to teach the subject well and should realize the utility and value of teaching history.

**History-Meaning and Definitions**

In its original sense, history is an enquiry into human events or learning based on ascertained facts. In a restricted sense, history is nothing but strictly the recorded past based on research.

**1. Dionysius of Halicarnassus C40 – 08BC** – “Philosophy drawn from examples”.

**2. Herodotus** – “An account of an unchanging past”.

**3. Sir Francis Racon 1561 – 1626** – “History makes men wise”.

**4. Thomas Carlyle 1795 – 1881** – “History is essence of Biographies”.

**5. John R. Seelay 1834 – 1895** – “History is past politics”.

**6. J. B. Bury 1861 – 1927** – “History is science”.

**7. Lord Aenon 1884 – 1902** – “History unfolds human freedom”.

**8. Benedottocorce –** “History is contemporary”.

**9. R. G. Gollingwood 1889 – 1943** – “History is re-enactment of thought”.

**10. E. H. Cam** – “History, an unending dialogue between the present and the past”.

**11. G. J. Renier** – “History is experience of men”.

**12. A. L. Rowse** – “History is interaction between Society and Geography”.

**Kinds of History**

There are many kinds of history as follows:

Political History, Constitutional History, Parliamentary History, Legal History, Military History, Diplomatic History, Social History, Economic History, Intellectual History, Biographical History, National History, Universal History, Local History, New History, Total History, Structural History, Pop-History, Subaltern History.

**Historical Research- Meaning**

Research is a serious academic activity with a set of objectives to explain or analyze or understand a problem or finding solution for problem adopting a systematic approach in collecting, organizing and analyzing the information relating to a problem.

History is a halfway house between science and art. Even before the discovery of writing history, existed in the form of oral traditions, which were recited to the knowledge and amusement of the people. After the advent of the written script they were set in the form of poetry.After independence it was fell that in addition to preservation of old customs and tradition one must prepare our citizen to face the future needs and challenges of the developing society.

History is a dynamic process; it is indicating an active orientation of learning or a construction of knowledge by the learner.To achieve the goal of teaching history, the teacher must adopt advanced teaching methods in history education. Today history is a valuable aid in understanding the process of evolution, and how society has emerged in its present state.

History as a science attempts or explain the development of civilization. The investigator of the sources of history must do his part in a truly scientific spirit. Historiography and historical explanation are two terms which have a common definition i.e. the narrative presentation of history based on a body of techniques, theories and principles of historical research and selection of materials.

The beginning of western historical tradition can be traced back to the fifth century B.C. in the writings of **Herodotus** and **Thucydides.** The tradition, set by these Greek scholars continued till the Second Century C.E. It is known as the classical period of historical writings in Europe. The salient feature of these writings was that the writers narrated events which were glorious and worth preserving in the form of social memory.

A great scholar and a brilliant writer the incarnation of an elevated and complete historiography, Leopold Von Ranke 1795 – 1886 during sixty years of his professional career evolved a historical methodology claiming that with this methodology one could write objective history.

Its history is carefully and faithfully analyzed. It is bound to be composed of various dimensions, namely *i). Time factor ii). Place factor iii). Development factor and iv). Continuing factor.*

Various approaches or methods for selecting and organizing the subject matter in history as follows:

a. The concentric approach method.

b. The topical method.

c. The patch method.

d. The regression method.

e. The chronological method.

e. The cultural epoch theory method.

f. The lines of development method.

g. The progressive method.

**Types of Historical Research**

Historical research attempts to establish facts so as to   
arrive at conclusions concerning past events. The main purpose of historical research   
is to arrive at an accurate account of the past so as to gain a clearer perspective of the   
present. According to John W. Best (1977), the historian must depend upon the   
reported observation of others, often witness of doubtful competence and sometimes   
of doubtful objectivity. Historical research has great value in the field of educational   
research because it is necessary to know and understand educational achievements   
and trends of the past in order to gain a perspective on present and future directions. It   
is useful for predicting the future.

Historical research can be qualitative or quantitative or a combination. The type of   
approach should be determined by the issue addressed and the data available.   
Historical research deals with the meaningful record of human achievement. It is used   
to understand the past and understand the present in the light of past events and   
developments.

Historical analysis may be directed towards an individual, an idea, a   
movement or an institution. However, none of these objects of historical observation   
can be considered in isolation. People cannot be subjected to historical investigation   
without some consideration of their interaction with the ideas, movements and or   
institutions of their times. The focus merely determines the points of emphasis   
towards which historians direct their attention.

**Sources of Data in Historical Research**

Historical data are usually classified into two main categories as follows:

1. Primary sources, which, are eyewitness accounts. They are reported by an   
actual observer or participant in an event. Finding and assessing primary historical data is an exercise in detective work. It involves logic, intuition,   
persistence, and common sense (Tuchman, 1994).

2. Secondary sources, are accounts of an event not actually witnessed by the   
 reporter. The reporter may have had a word with an actual observer or read   
 an account by an observer, but his or her testimony is not that of an actual   
 participant or observer. Secondary sources may sometimes be used, but   
 because of the distortion in passing on information, the historian and the   
 researcher uses them, only when primary data are not available, which   
 unfortunately is frequently the case. As Tuchman (1994) points out, finding   
 the secondary sources are only the first step. The researcher must then verify   
 the quality of such source material.

**Importance of Historical Research**

The following are the main purposes or importance of research:

i. To profit by the experiences of the past in the solution of present-day problems.

ii. To develop the science of behaviour of historical situations.

iii. To provide knowledge that will permit the educator to achieve its goals by more effective method.

iv. To provide knowledge concerning achieving the Objective.

v. To review existing Knowledge

vi. To describe some situation or problem.

vii. To construct some situation.

**Characteristics of Historical Research**

The following are the characteristics of research:

1. It develops new knowledge or data from Primary source.

2. It develops general principles of a theory or a law.

3. It is systematic, expert and accurate investigation about a particular problem.

4. It strives to eliminate feeling, emotion, prejudice, favour and preference.

5. It may generalize even unpopular findings.

6. It organizes data and quantity in qualitative term as far as possible and expresses them

in numerical data.

7. It requires an inter-disciplinary approach.

8. It is not a field of specialist only. Action research may be done by a classroom teacher.

9. It is not a purely mechanical approach.

10. Its methods are inadequate for the solution of many of the problems we face.

11. It suffers from the inadequate of control.

12. It continues to use criteria that would not survive critical and explicit discussion.

13. It is relatively prosaic repetitive and lacking in impact.

**Nature of Historical Research**

Historical research attempts to establish facts so as to arrive at   
conclusions concerning past events. This is usually accompanied by an   
interpretation of these events and of their relevance to present circumstances and what might happen in the future. The main purpose   
of historical research therefore is to arrive at an accurate account of the past so as to gain a clearer perspective of the present. This knowledge enables us at least partially to predict and control our future existence.

Historical research, as any other type of research, includes the delimitation of a problem, formulating research questions or tentative generalizations, gathering and analyzing data, and arriving at conclusions or generalizations based upon deductive and inductive reasoning. However, the historian faces greater difficulties than researchers in any other field.

Historical data is a closed class of data located along a fixed temporal locus and historian has no choice of sampling his data, and he is supposed to include every type of data that comes his way. Historical research is not based upon experimentation, but upon reports of observation which can not be repeated. The historian handles a data of unique type which can not be repeated. They are mainly tracing of past events in the form of various types of documents, relics, records, and artifacts having a direct or indirect impact on the event under study.

The job of the historian becomes more complicated when he   
derives truth from historical evidence. The major difficulty lies in the   
fact that the data on which historical research is based are invariably   
relatively inadequate and at times the study is conducted with all of the   
undependability that the data may entail.

The historian must depend upon the reported observations of others, often witnesses of doubtful competence and sometimes of doubtful objectively.

**Value of Historical Research**

Historical research has great value because it is necessary to know and understand achievements and trends of the past in order to gain perspective on present and future directions.

**Difficulties Encountered in Historical Research**

The problems involved in the process of historical research make it somewhat difficult task. A major difficulty is delimiting the problem so that a satisfactory analysis is possible, too often, beginners state a problem too much broadly, the experienced historian realizes that historical research must involve a penetrating analysis of a limited problem rather than a superficial examination of a broad area. The weapon of research is the target pistol not the shotgun.

**Conclusion**

Since historians may not have lived during the time they are studying and may be removed from the events they investigate. They   
must often depend upon inference and logical analysis, using the recorded experience of others rather than direct observation, to ensure that their information is as trustworthy as possible, they must rely on primarily, or firsthand, accounts. Finding appropriate primary sources of data requires imagination, hard work, and resourcefulness. Historians must also keep in mind the context in which the events being studied occurred and were recorded. It is necessary to keep the biases and belief of those who recorded the events in mind, as well as the social and political climate in which they wrote.

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