

Multidisciplinary Basic History- 01

Sarthak Laha

Guest Teacher, RKMV, Belur Math



Why do we study history?

- ▶ We study history because history doesn't stay behind us. Studying history helps us understand how events in the past made things the way they are today. With lessons from the past, we not only learn about ourselves and how we came to be, but also develop the ability to avoid mistakes and create better paths for our societies.
- ▶ History helps us understand change : History is full of transitions that have altered the world's story. When you build your knowledge of history, you understand more about what created our present-day society.
- ▶ We learn from past mistakes : History gives us a better understanding of the world and how it operates. When you study a war, you learn more about how conflict escalates. You learn what dilemmas world leaders face and how they respond—and when those decisions lead to better or worse outcomes.
- ▶ We gain context for the human experience : Covid Pandemic and its Effect

Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs

- According to Maslow human needs were arranged in a hierarchy, with physiological (survival) needs at the bottom, and the more creative and intellectually oriented 'self-actualization' needs at the top.
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid.
- The five levels of the hierarchy are physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.
- Lower-level basic needs like food, water, and safety must be met first before higher needs can be fulfilled.
- Few people are believed to reach the level of self-actualization, but we can all have moments of peak experiences.



What is History?

- The term History derived from the Greek Word 'istoria' which means enquiry, research, exploration, information and learning.
- The Arabic word 'tarikh' stands for chronology.
- The Sanskrit Words 'itihasa' refers to Legend.
- History is a continuous process between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and past and the chief function of historian is to master and understand the past as a key to the understanding of the Present----E.H Carr

Historiography?

- Historiography literally means the art of writing history.
- It is the history of history or the history of historical writing.
- Historiography tells the story of successive stages of the evolution or development of historical writing.
- It comprises the study of the development of man's sense for the past.

History Definition

- History is the essence of human experience...Dionysius
- All history is contemporary history.... Benedetto Croce
- History is a discipline which makes men wise.... Sir Francis Bacon
- History is the essence of innumerable biographies of great men.. Sir Thomas Carlyle
- History is simply a science, no less and no more.. J.B Bury.
- All history is the history of thought ...R.G Collingwood.

Scope and Importance of History

- The scope or range of history has been ever changing and ever widening.
- Herodotus>Thucydides>church historiography>renaissance and historiography>modern Historiography
- Political history, Economic History, Social History, Cultural History, Military history, legal history, diplomatic history, intellectual history, biographical history, national history, universal history, local or regional history, subaltern history, new history.

Objectivity and Bias in History

- Truth in the writing is attained when the historian can assemble and interpret his evidence in a way that coincides with historical actuality.
- Science is, by definition objective. Scientific knowledge is universal and anyone using the same evidence under the same conditions will come to the same conclusions.
- It seems inevitable that there must be a degree of subjectivity in all historical writing because selection of what is considered to be significant and relevant is an essential part of the historian's business.
- Scientificity, objectivity, impartiality???

History and its Auxiliary sciences

- Chronology, Archaeology, Numismatics (Study of Coins), Paleography (old handwriting), Graphology (connection b/w handwriting and his character), sigilliography (study of seals), philology (study of language), diplomatic (study of official documents), linguistics (evolution of language), photography, etc
- History and related subjects
- History and politics- Machiavelli
- History and Geography
- History and Economics- marx
- History and Sociology- Comte
- History and literature
- History and religion
- History and philosophy
- History and science
- History and computer

Physiognomy: Face Reading is the practice of assessing a person's character or personality from their outer appearance—especially the face.



History a science, Arts or social science

- Science- an enquiry, from known to unknown, to find things out, it rests upon evidence and reasoning, scientific method of enquiry, ...Bury
- As an enquiry after truth history is a science. It is a kind of inquiry or research. It does not consist in collecting what is already known and arranging it in a pattern. Its way of explanation is from ignorance to knowledge, from indefinite to definite. history is a science it rests upon evidence and reasoning. It is built on facts as a house is built on stones; but mere accumulation of facts is no more a science than a heap of stones in a house. The collected data is scientifically analyzed, Classified and interpreted.
- Arts- writing history as a secondary and subsidiary function, absolute impartiality is impossible,
- Social science- study that is related with the society we live in.




Is History Science or Art?

- We have discussed elsewhere that the term 'history' is derived from the Greek word "istoria" which means enquiry, research or exploration. Thucydides the ancient Greek historian is still recognized and honoured as the Father of Scientific History, since he realized the hope of his predecessor Herodotus to achieve a scientific knowledge of past human actions. The dominant influence on Thucydides was the influence of Hippocratic medicine," which is evident in the former's description of the plague and his enquiry into the laws according to which the historic events happen. However, humanism, not scientific temper, was the dominant characteristic of Greco-Roman historiography. Even the flickering light of scientific outlook of Greco Roman historiographers was obliterated in the medieval Christian historiography. Along with the revival of a humanistic view of history during Renaissance accurate scholarship once again assumed importance.
- **Impact of Science on Historiography**
- The impact of science on historiography at the end of the eighteenth century was incalculable. When science had contributed so irresistibly to man's knowledge of the world it also furthered man's knowledge of his past. The method by which science studied the world of nature was systematically applied to the study of human affairs throughout the nineteenth century. The Newtonian tradition, Herbert Spencer's Social Statics (1851) and the Darwinian Evolution, which brought history into science, reinforced the practice of applying the principles of science to historical writing. "Evolution of science confirmed and complimented progress in history" (E.H Carr). Fascinated by the method of science J.B. Bury declared at the beginning of the twentieth century that history was "a science, no more and no less" (1903). Since then Bury's dictum gained wide currency "History was a science and had nothing to do with literature" asserted John Seeley.



History is a science

- **In what respects history could be considered a science?**
- First, as an enquiry after truth history is a science. It is a kind of inquiry or research. It does not consist in collecting what is already known and arranging it in a pattern.
- Secondly, like science history begins from the knowledge of our own ignorance and proceeds from the known to the unknown, from ignorance to knowledge. from indefinite to definite.
- Thirdly, history seeks to find things out. It provides answers to questions asked by historians
- Fourthly, history is a science since it rests upon evidence and reasoning. The collected data is scientifically analyzed, classified and interpreted.
- Fifthly, history employs scientific methods of enquiry. It uses various methods of investigation such as observation, classification, formulation of hypothesis and analysis of evidence
- Sixthly, like the scientist an historian also approaches his subject matter in a spirit of science. Both are keen in acquiring accurate knowledge. In fine, history seeks to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. To the extent history endeavors to tell the truth by adopting a rational approach, it is a science.



History is an Art

- The question whether history was a science or an art had been hotly debated in European Countries, especially in Germany, during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The consensus was in favour of the contention that history was a science.
- But this contention was countered by **Benedetto Croce**, the distinguished Italian historian. In his first essay on the theory of history, written at the age of 27 entitled **History subsumed under the Concept of Art**, he asserted that history was an art.
- Croce and Collingwood provide proof to the contrary. As the narrative account of the past, history is an art. As a narrator the historian looks at the past from a certain point of view. He expresses his personality in his work like a seasoned artist. Absolute impartiality is impossible in history because the author of history is a narrator and hence an artist. Further, an historian the artist differs from a scientist when he communicates his results. The scientist simply reports whereas the historian conveys the human experience. In history historian's ethical standards and intellectual integrity play a significant part. Like an artist, the historian also must have the capacity for imaginative sympathy to reconstruct the past, on the basis of records. The manner and style in which the historian gives his narrative is important.
- Historians like Gibbon, Carlyle, Macaulay, Trevelyan and others distinguished themselves by the artistic qualities of their work. Like the work of art its wholeness and harmony and truth are inseparable from a concrete and vivid appreciation of its parts. History also displays fine feelings and emotions.



Why Art?

- Firstly, it must be crystal clear. Language being an inadequate instrument infinite care has to be taken to write history unambiguously.
- Secondly, it must be correct. Correctness means clarity.
- Thirdly, it must be tidy. Almost attention shall be paid to the sequence of ideas and to the way in which they are connected.
- Fourthly, it should avoid super abundance of detail. Events should be allowed to speak for themselves.
- Fifthly, it must be trustworthy. The historian should know what to select and what to omit.
- Sixthly, it must be aesthetic. Art is the communication of an aesthetic emotion. It is conveying the sense of satisfaction enjoyed by the historian himself. His avowed object is to keep the memory of mankind awake.
- History is a half way house between science and art. History is a science because it investigates into truth; it proceeds from known to unknown, it provides answers to questions, it rests upon reasoning; it employs scientific methodology. and it approaches the subject in a spirit of science. History is an art in the sense that it is a narrative account; it uses imagination to reconstruct the past, it distinguishes itself by its style and manner of presentation; it aims at wholeness and harmony. it displays fine feelings and emotions and it is concerned with human values.
- History is therefore, a science as well as an art. It is a balanced blending of both science and art. When history attempts to discover truth it is a science and when it narrates the truth it becomes an art. History is scientific and artistic. At best it is a half-way house between science and art. In the inimitable words of G.M. Trevelyan, "The discovery of historical facts should be scientific in method. But the exposition of them for the reader partook of the nature of art."




History and its Allied Subjects


- History is composite in character and inclusive in its scope. It is central and pivotal social science. It is indeed a feeding ground for all social sciences and humanities. As H.C.Darby has pointed out history is basic to social sciences as mathematics is to natural science. Since history is a study of the different facets of human life and experience all social sciences depend on and draw heavily from history. G.M.Trevelyan aptly observed that history is a house in which all subjects dwell. And yet the relationship between history and other related subjects is rather close and intimate; as close as between reciprocal lovers!



History and Economics

- ▶ Economic activities of man have a positive correlation with historical developments. History also deals with the economic experience of man from age to age. An understanding of history is a prerequisite for an appreciation of economic engagements of man, the development of economic institutions and the formulation of economic theories which have a bearing on the working of society. Hence, historical source materials concerning matters economic, found in ancient and medieval documents and inscriptions, can be of great help to scholars of past economics. Similarly, present day historians can not afford to neglect the economic crisis of the thirties and the post-war economic developments all over the world.
- ▶ Karl Marx found unity of history in economic factors. The other political, social, artistic and religious factors have no continuity of their own but reflections of the basic economic fact. Marx considered all developments in history as the result of economic configurations. Saligman propounded the view that ultimately economic factors decide social transformation. It must, however, be recognized that economic interpretation of history is one of the explanations of historical phenomena. History is not all economics. All economically well developed affluent societies are not alike, nor do they behave in the same way. Economic explanation can not give a satisfactory answer to this phenomenon. Socio-Cultural-Political-Philosophical factors are as important as economic forces in determining historical events.

- 
- There are very close ties between economics and history. Economic policies help to determine which groups stay in power and which ones fall out of favor. In 1932, Herbert Hoover's failed economic policies brought about the election of Franklin Roosevelt and the beginning of social programs, such as Social Security in the United States. The Great Depression led to the rise of Hitler and his quest to make Germany great again.
 - On a smaller scale, Henry Ford's practice of paying his workers high wages in 1908 led to the Model T becoming the most ubiquitous car in the United States in the early part of the century. This led to the United States improving its infrastructure as well as other industries, such as hotels and diners for travelers. As more people gained disposable income in the 1920s, spectator sports became popular, and baseball and college football are still popular events in the United States.
 - Economics was also a factor in the decision to explore the world. Europeans were desperate for Asian spices; they did not want to risk traveling through Muslim-held lands after 1453 and sought to cut Venetian middlemen out of the market. For this reason, Columbus sailed West across the Atlantic Ocean in the hopes of reaching Asia. While he only got as far as Hispaniola, his discovery of the New World still ranks as one of the biggest events in history and economics.

- 
- There has been a long-standing connection between economics and history. Most major historical events have an economic basis to them.
 - In looking at the major wars fought since the 1890s, economics has played a key role in the start of the war. The United States wanted to become a world power in the 1890s. We were looking for a war that would lead us to gain colonies. By having colonies, we could get stronger economically. Our businesses would benefit. Thus, we went to war with Spain in 1898.
 - In World War I, Germany wanted more land. They wanted colonies for reasons very similar to why we wanted colonies. They knew winning a war would be good for their businesses and economy.
 - There is some evidence that suggests the United States joined World War I so our businesses could benefit. The Nye Committee came to this conclusion after explaining why we joined the war.
 - Business leaders have opposed laws that allow unions to form. Business leaders believe unions will ask for more money and benefits. They believe this will hurt the company economically. Thus, business leaders have supported laws that curtail collective bargaining, make it harder for unions to exist or form, and that require people or business to reveal to whom a person or business is making political contributions.
 - Slavery was based to a degree on economic factors. Southerners believed they would lose money if slavery ended, and they had to pay the workers on the farms. Southerners argued that ending slavery would be economically a disaster for the South. Economics has always been tied to history. There is even a whole field of history that studies the past through the lens of economics.

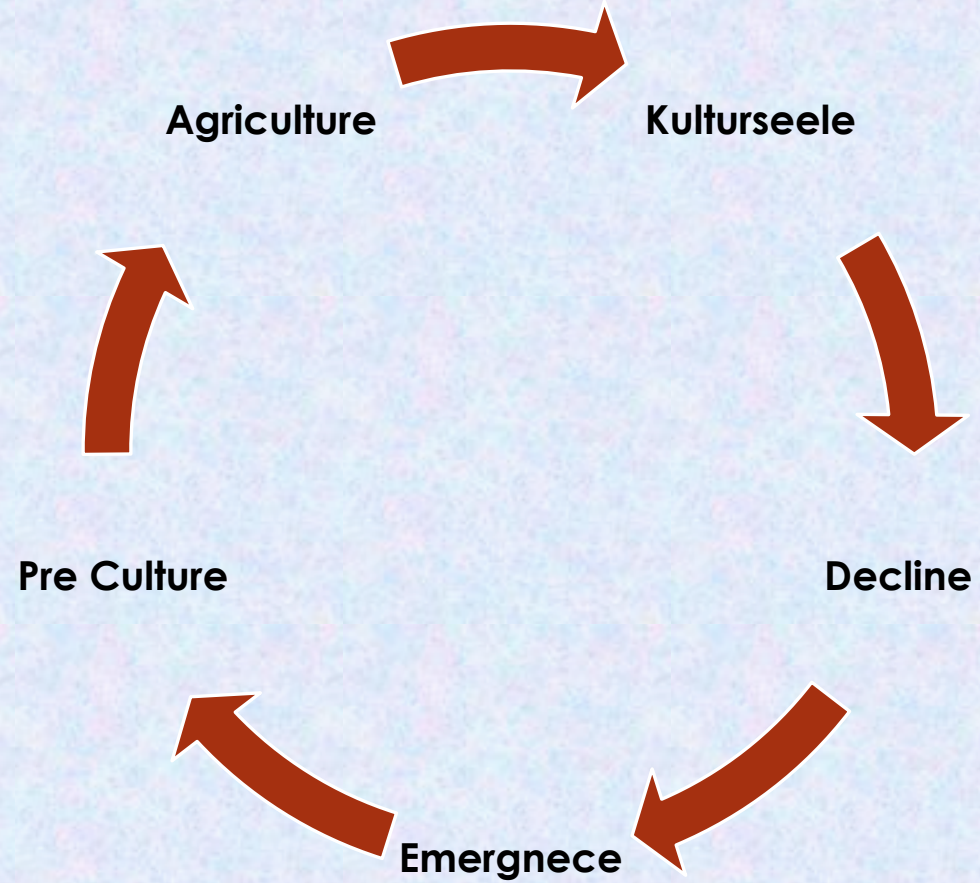
Cyclical Theory of History

- Cyclical Theory of History was developed by Oswald Spengler (Decline of the West, 1918), Arnold Toynbee (A study of History, 1956)
- They argued that societies and civilizations change according to cycles of rise, decline and fall just as individual persons are born, mature and grow old and die.
- According to German thinkers Spengler every society has a predetermined life cycle birth, growth, maturity and decline.

Oswald Spengler's Theory

- German philosopher, Born 29 May, 1880, Blankenburg.
- Died 8 May, 1936, Munich
- Books 1. "The Decline of the West: perspectives of World History" (1918-1922)
- 2. Man and Techniques (1931)
- Main theme:- civilizations undergo a seasonal cycle of a thousand years and are subject to grow and decay analogous to biological species.

Cyclical Theory





Marxist Philosophy of History

- Karl Marx
- Founder of Scientific socialism.
- Works- German Ideology (1846), Poverty of Philosophy (1847), Communist Manifesto (1848), Das Capital.
- Historical Materialism . It analyses the historical process, describes the law of social development.
- 5 different societies –primitive communist societies>slave society>Feudal society>Capitalist Society>socialist society.
- Economic exploitation, class struggle
- Marxist historiography.

Greek Historiography

- Ancient Greece was the cradle of Historiography.
- The earliest Greek historians were the choroniclers.
- The Greek called them Logographoi (prose writers).
- Narrative history is the oldest species of history.
- Herodotus (c.484-430 B.C)- composed – 'Histories'
- Theme- Graceo-Persian conflict.
- Source?, and criticism.,,,,Cicero called him 'The Father of History'
- Thucydides (c.460-396 BC),,,,, wrote- 'History of Peloponnesian war'
- Founder of historical method.

Roman Historiography

- Greek influence
- Cato,,,,,Origines
- Cicero, Julius Caesar, Crispus
- Livy- History of Rome, From the city's Foundation.
- Tacitus,, - Dialogue on Orators, Agricola
- Plutarch- Parallel Lives, Moralia
- Humanistic, Secular, patriotic writing.

Church Historiography

- From Humanistic to theocratic.
- History as the will of God.
- Eusebius Pamphili of Caesarea ,,, Ecclestial History,,,, Father of church History.
- St. Augustine (354-430AD)- dimensional Genius,,,City of God.
- Philosophy of History.

Renaissance and its impact on Historiography

- La Renascita or Re-birth.
- Rebirth of Classical Culture.
- Humanistic.
- Giovanni Vilani,,,Pioneer of Renaissance historiography,,,,Chroniche Fiorentine,,, history of Florentine.
- Leonard Bruni,,,, first modern historian,,,, History of Florence
- Niccolo Machiavelli,,,The prince (1513), Discourses on Livy, History of Florence, the Art of War.
- Retrieval of historical writing.
- **Reformation Historiography**,,,Revolt against the Church,,, Desiderius Erasmus,,,the Praise of Folly,,, satire.

Colonial Construction

- Role of Christian Missionaries
- Aware about Indian language and history.
- James Mill and his Historical text
- Hindu-Muslim Division.
- History writing in 19th century.
- History writing in 20th century.

Indology and The recovery of Indian History

- Paucity of Historical Literature on Ancient India.
- The orientalist or indological recovery of ancient indian history.
- William Jones,, Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784)
- James Prinsep
- Alexander Cunningham.

W Jones (1746-1794)	T Colebrook (1765-1837)
<p>Oriental Research polyglot Asiatic society of Bengal Asiatic Researches Journal Translation- Abhigyanam sankuntalam, Geeta Govindam Manu Smiriti- 'The Institute of Hindu Laws Concept of Golden Age</p>	<p>Oriental Research Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain 1823 Sanskritist Writing- A Digest of Hindu Law, A Sanskrit Grammar, Essay on the Vedas, The Sacred Writing of the Hindus Assumption- Sati Practice was a gross deviation from the authentic tradition.</p>
<p>Charles Wilkins – translation of Bhagavat Geeta 1785, Hitopodesha 1787</p>	<p>J princep- Brahmi Eprigraphs Indian Antiquities 1858</p>

Max Muller (1823-1900)

- Theory of 'common source' language
- History of Sanskrit Literature 1859
- Series Sacred Books of the East 1879-1904
- Sankrit Name- MokshaMula Bhatt



Indigenous imagination

- Imagines the glorious past.
- Revival of nationalist consciousness
- Hindu and Islamic history writing.
- Challenge towards colonial mentality.
- National history
- Reaction against racial discrimination.
- past as a key to understanding of present.
- Regional history.
- Economic history.
- Social and Cultural History.
- Nationalist Historians- R C Dutt, R C Majumdar, B J Tilak, R G Vaidarkar, H C Raychaudhuri, Jadunath Sarkar
- Some Works- R C Dutt – Economic History of India under Early British Rule, R K Mukherjee- A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity, K P Jaysawal- Indian Polity, V D Savarkar- The Indian war of Independence, S B Chaudhuri- Civil Rebellions in the Indian Mutiny, Tarachand- Influence of Islam on Indian Culture.

Important Books

❑ Historiography

English books

- ❑ 1. What is History- E.H Carr
- ❑ 2. The Idea of History- R.G Collingwood
- ❑ 3. A Textbook of Historiography- E. Sreedharan



Infinite patience, infinite
purity, and infinite
perseverance are the
secret of success in a
good cause.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA