

# Historical research

## Topic: 150-154

Historical research means meaningful recording of past events. It is the branch of learning that studies the records of past events. It is a scientific method of inquiry to historical problems. It depicts relationship between persons, events, times and places, studying the undergoing change and transformation. Historical research provides new understanding of past, relevance to present and future. It also gives important information on the effects of past practices and prepare for future.

### Historical research – in education

- In the field of education, historical research helps educators understand problems and issues.
- It accumulates knowledge.
- It improves practices and policies

### Good research questions to be asked during historical research

- What is the historical context that led to this event or situation?
- Why did it happen at this time and place?
- How did things use to be?

### Primary sources

- Read scholarly literature
- Discuss with your supervisor

### Locating relevant sources in historical research

Sources of historical data or evidences:

- Two major categories: documents and remains
- Documents
  - Official records
  - Institutional records
  - Personal documents
  - Newspapers, periodicals, journals

- Literary material
- Catalogue, syllabus, prospectus
- Remains
  - Building, furniture and equipment
  - Library and their furniture
  - Photographs and other records.
  - Forms of degree, diploma, certificate, records, registers
  - Text-books, exercise-books, maps, drawings, etc.
  - Written material

### **Evaluating relevant sources in historical research**

Sources of historical data or evidences:

- Who created the source (text) document
- How neutral is the source
- For whom was it created?
- Significance of the source?
- Evidence or support?
- Relation to other sources
- Reliable and credible?
- Evaluating the truth content

### **Advantages and disadvantages of historical research**

- Great deal towards education
- Avoiding the mistakes of the past
- Applying lessons from the past to current problems
- Using the past to make predictions about the present
- Understanding present practices and policies in light of the past
- Examining trends across time
- Scientific research growing

- Very difficult to study historical events
- Cause - effect relationship
- Obstacles hindering the objectivity of the study
- Special historical perspective required
- Serious decline due to scientific research
- Valid sources from the past