

Chapter 1: How, When and Where

Activity:1

Question: Look carefully at Fig.1 and write a paragraph explaining how this image projects an imperial perception.

Answer: This image shows Indian Brahamanas giving all their spiritual texts to Britania (The symbol of British) so that they can be the protectors of their culture.



Activity:2

Question: Interview your mother or another member of your family to find out about their life. Now divide their life into different periods and list out the significant events in each period. Explain the basis of your periodisation.

Answer:

My mother's name is Mrs. Bindu.

1. When she was at infancy: She was not able to talk to anyone she was not knowing what was happening to her. She didn't remember anything about that stage.
2. During Her childhood: She loved to be a centre of attention. She wanted to rule the whole world .She was innocent at that time. She was also happy at that time.
3. Adolescence: A lot of changes took place in her body. She was growing taller. She was a little bit upset due to the loss of her childhood.
4. Early Adulthood: She now knew the changes of life and was ready to go with the flow. She was in her college again happy and contempt.
5. At Middle age: She was married during her middle age that was a vast change in her life.
6. At Older age: She now has two children.And that was all about her life.

Activity:3

Question: Look at Sources 1 and 2. Do you find any differences in the nature of reporting? Explain what you observe

Source 1 - Reports to the Home Department

In 1946 the colonial government in India was trying to put down a mutiny that broke out on the ships of the Royal Indian Navy. Here is a sample of the kind of reports the Home Department got from the different dockyards:

Bombay: Arrangements have been made for the Army to take over ships and establishment. Royal Navy ships are remaining outside the harbor.

Karachi: 301 mutineers are under arrest and a few more strongly suspected are to

be arrested. All establishments are under military guard. Vizagapatnam: The position is completely under control and no violence has occurred. Military guards have been placed on ships and establishments. No further trouble is expected except that a few men may refuse to work.

Director of Intelligence, H.Q. India Command, Situation Report No. 7. File No. 5/21/46 Home (Political), Government of India.

Source 2 - "Not fit for human consumption"

Newspapers provide accounts of the movements in different parts of the country.

Here is a report of a police strike in 1946.

More than 2000 policemen in Delhi refused to take their food on Thursday morning as a protest against their low salaries and the bad quality of food supplied to them from the Police Lines kitchen.

As the news spread to the other police stations, the men there also refused to take food. One of the strikers said: "The food supplied to us from the Police Lines kitchen is not fit for human consumption. Even cattle would not eat the Chappattis and dal which we have to eat."

Hindustan Times, 22 March, 1946.

Answer:

In the source 1 the reporting is done by government officials, which tells us the actions taken against the mutineers. It doesn't tell us the reason why this type of situation arose.

In the source 2, the reason behind the protests by policemen is given clearly and also about how and when the protests took place. This is an example of neutral reporting and it shows us the real nature of colonial rule.

Let's imagine

Question: Imagine that you are a historian wanting to find out about how agriculture changed in a remote tribal area after independence. List the different ways in which you would find information on this.

Answer: To find out about how agriculture changed in a remote tribal area after independence I will have to use the traditional methods of gathering information. These include:

1. Observation: This means observing the current condition and comparing with the data available for the time before independence.
2. Interviews: This means I will have to interview the people who lived before independence so that I can get first hand information.
3. Questionnaires: I will have to formulate questionnaires to help me gather the information I need.
4. Questioning: This involves questions farmers and all involved parties to give the side of their story.
5. Study of existing forms, organizational documents and reports: This is also another way of gathering the information because the journals, reports etc will provide data that had been gathered at that time.

Therefore these are some of the ways I would gather information.

Let's recall

Question 1: State Whether True or False:

(a) James Mill divided Indian history into three periods—Hindu, Muslim, Christian.

(b) Official documents help us to understand what the people of the country think.

(c) The British thought surveys were important for effective administration.

Answer:

(a) True

(b) False

(c) True.

Let's discuss

Question 2: What is the problem with the Periodisation of Indian history that James Mill offers?

Answer: The problem with the periodisation of Indian History that James Mill offers is that he divided the Indian history into three periods – Hindu, Muslim and British. However, the periodisation of Indian History on the basis of religion is not feasible for many reasons. For example, many different religions coexisted peacefully when the country was ruled by Hindu kings.

Mill thought that all Asian societies were at a lower level of civilization than Europe. According to him, before the British came to India, religious intolerance, caste taboos and superstitious practices dominated social life under the rule of Hindu and Muslim despots. Mill felt that only British rule could civilize India and to do this it was necessary to introduce European manners, arts, institutions and laws in India.

Question 3: Why did the British preserve official documents?

Answer: The British believed that by preserving official documents, it would be easier for them or any other persons to know about the decisions taken in the past. One can study the notes and reports that were prepared in the past. Their copies may be prepared and used in present time if needed so.

Question 4: How will the information historians get from old newspapers be different from that found in police reports?

Answer: Usually, the newspaper reports are not biased. These reports explain the fact as it was. Most of the time, these do not try to manipulate the event. These represent the true story of the event with every detail. On the other hand, the official reports are usually biased. These are written as per the will of the senior officials. These reports may carry the biased view of the reporting police officer. Thus if the historians are based only on the police reports, they may become misguided.

Let's do

Question 5: Can you think of examples of surveys in your world today? Think about how toy companies get information about what young people enjoy playing with or how the government finds out about the number of young people in school. What can a historian derive from such surveys? Answer to be attempted by the students.

Answer:

- Today, various types of surveys are carried on both by the government and private enterprises. The government carries surveys like a census in which various details of a family are collected. Similarly, Companies carry surveys for the use of their products and to find prospective customers. For example, the survey is conducted for various purposes regarding soap, shampoo, vehicles, etc. used by the people.
- The toy companies prepare a questionnaire and print them on a sheet of paper. Their representatives visit the school and distribute these papers among young people after school is over. Young people are asked to tick (✓) or cross (×) options of their choice. Then they get these papers back. In their office, they obtain data from these papers and derive their conclusion about the play liked by young people.
- The government carries out a census every 10 years. Each household provides details of its children. It is from this detail that the government comes to know about the number of young people in the school. Also, it can collect data from the school directly.

- From these data, historians can come to know about the education level and sportsmanship of the generation under survey. Also, they can derive information on the household size, etc.

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