

DETAILS OF LECTURE NOTES

Name of the Teacher : **Dr. Yatendra Singh**

Name of the Subject : **Research Methods**

Class / Semester : **M.P.Ed. - I Semester**

Unit : **II**

Historical Research



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- The systematic collection and evaluation of data to describe, explain, and understand actions or events that occurred sometime in the past.
- An attempt is made to reconstruct what happened during a certain period of time as completely and accurately as possible.

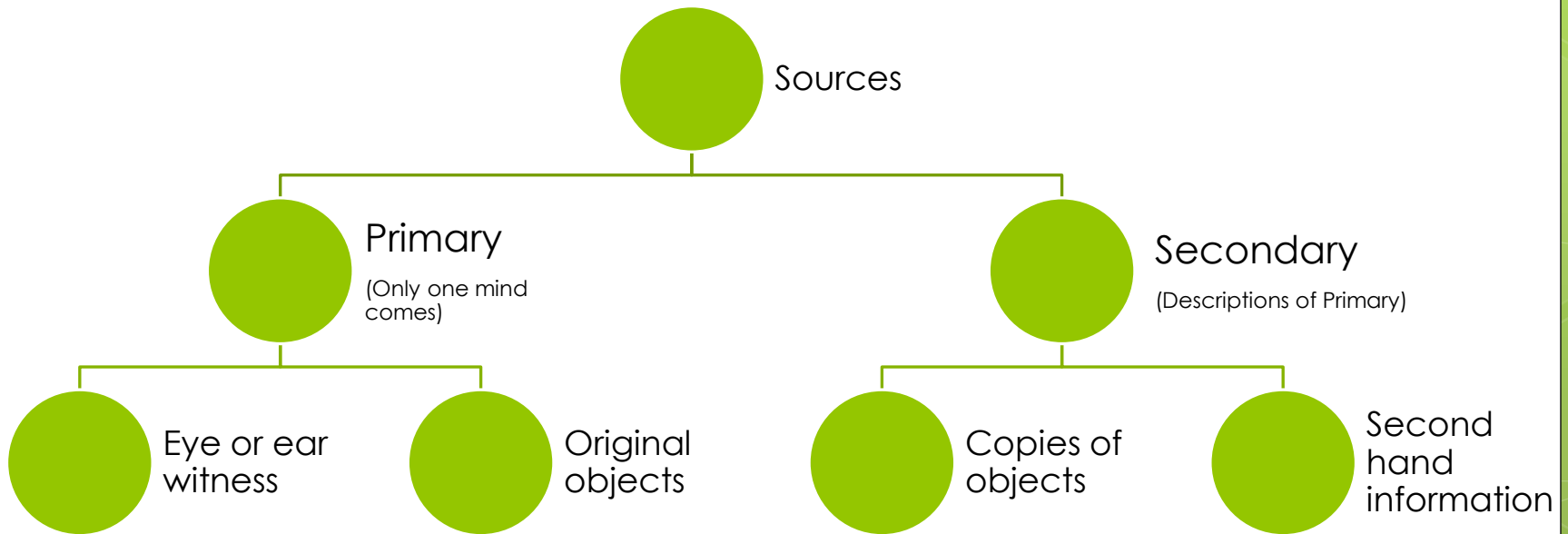
Purpose

- To make people aware of what has happened in the past in order to:
- Learn from past failures and successes
- Apply them to present-day problems
- Make predictions
- Test hypotheses concerning relationships or trends
- Understand present educational practices and policies more

Steps Involved in Historical Research

- Defining the Problem
- Locating relevant sources
 - Primary Sources
 - Secondary Sources
- Summarizing information obtained from historical sources
- Evaluation of historical sources
 - Internal criticism
 - External criticism

Sources of Historical Materials



Sources of Historical Materials Contd...

Primary Sources

- Official Records
- Personal Records
- Oral Statements
- Pictorial Records
- Published Material
- Physical Remains
- Printed Materials
- Mechanical Records

Secondary Sources

- Textbooks
- Encyclopedias
- Newspapers
- Periodicals
- Reviews of research and other references

EXTERNAL CRITICISM

- external criticism may be described as in historical research evaluate the validity of the documents i.e. Where, when and by whom it was produced. - *Authenticity*
- With the help of external criticism, the historians determine whether or not a given source is genuine and admissible as evidence. - *Genuinity*
- It aims to determine the answer to the number of following questions: (*to examine Authenticity & Genuinity*)
 - a) What is its origin and legality?
 - b) Who was the author?
 - c) Was the document written by the *ghost* writer?
 - d) What were the qualifications of the authors.
 - e) Is the particular piece of equipment, part of apparatus/costume or other professional artefact authentic.

INTERNAL CRITICISM

- It is concern with the meaning and accuracy of the statements.
- The evaluation is transferred from the authenticity of the documents to the trust worthiness of its contents. - *Accurate*
- It determines the reliability of the sources by correctly interpreting the contents of the documents.
- A number of questions will serve to clarify this form of criticism.
 - a) Is the meaning of words the same?
 - b) Is the author writing seriously?
 - c) Is the author is expressing his real belief?
 - d) How soon after the event was the document written?
 - e) Was the author biased in any way?
 - f) Are written sources, evaluated with an understanding of the time and condition under which these were produced?

Evaluation of Historical Materials

○ **External Criticism** *(Authentic & Genuine)*

- Who is the Author?
- Ghost Writer
- Qualification of the Author
- Is a particular item of equipment authentic?

○ **Internal Criticism** *(Accuracy & Meaning)*

- Meaning of the words is Same
- Seriousness
- Is the author expressing his/her real beliefs?
- How soon after the event was the document written?
- Bias

Advantages and Disadvantages of Historical Research

○ Advantages

- Permits investigation of topics and questions that can be studied in no other fashion

○ Disadvantages

- Cannot control for threats to internal validity
- Limitations are imposed due to the content analysis
- Researchers cannot ensure representation of the sample

Pitfalls in Historical Research

The researcher should guard against various pitfalls (hidden danger) that are present in historical research:

- Complete misunderstanding of the meaning of historical sources.
- Attempt to fill historic gaps with little or no basic evidence thus sacrificing accuracy.
- Use of poor logic in handling historical material and in drawing conclusion from them.
- Bias
- Carelessness in reporting.

Principles of Criticism

- A primary source is more reliable than a secondary source.
- The closer a source is to the event which it purports (*intention*) to describe, the more one can trust it to give an accurate description of what really happened.
- A source may be forged or corrupted; strong indications of the originality of the source increases its reliability.
- If a number of independent sources contain the same message the credibility of the message is strongly increased.
- Since the tendency of the source is to provide some kind of a bias tendencies need to be minimized or supplemented with opposite motivation.
- If it can be demonstrated that witness / source has no direct interest in creating bias its credibility increases.

Principles of Criticism contd.....

- Do not read into earlier documents the conceptions of later times.
- Do not judge an author's ignorant of certain events necessarily because of failure to mention them.
- Underestimating a source is no less an error than overestimating it, and there is no more virtue in placing an event too late than in dating it too early by the same number of years or centuries.
- A single true source may establish the existence of an idea, but other direct, competent, independent witnesses are required to prove the reality of events or objective facts.
- Identical errors prove the dependence of sources on each other or a common source.

Principles of Criticism Contd....

- If witnesses contradict each other on a certain point, one or the other may be true, but *both may be in error*.
- Direct, Competent, independent witnesses who report the same central fact and also many peripheral matters in a causal way may be accepted for the points of their agreement.
- Official testimony (*report or evidence*), oral or written, must be compared with unofficial testimony whenever possible, for neither one nor the other is alone sufficient.
- A document may provide competent and dependable evidence on certain points, yet carry no weight in respect to others.

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