FROM LIVELIHOOD TO MISSION: STRATEGIES FOR REVITALIZING THE ROLE OF THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY IN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Historians who created their records to serve as the memory of their nation, which enables people to forecast upcoming events, have documented the past. The history faculty at most universities concentrate on their financial needs because of insufficient funding and institutional resources combined with their limited research access and traditional teaching methods and the absence of humanistic support policies. The research employs a descriptive-analytical method together with scientific literature analysis to identify the challenges that hinder history professors from successful societal interaction while presenting solutions to restore the discipline's social and practical functions. The research shows that three main issues decrease the social effects of history education. These problems lead to decreased student interest, weakening of cultural and national identity, neglect of historical heritage, and reduced influence of history in policymaking and future planning. The study introduces practical solutions to these problems by establishing connections between history and tourism through media campaigns and developing university projects that receive funding from both private and international sources while creating new educational methods and academic and cultural partnerships. Implementation of these measures needs professors, students, and government and private sector workers to collaborate. The practice will enhance history's role in developing cultural, social, and economic aspects while creating a tool that helps build a better and more sustainable future.

Keywords: History education, Role of history professors, Cultural identity, Humanities, Social development, Revitalization of History, Educational policies

Introduction

The discipline of history is a core field in the humanities, providing societies with knowledge essential for understanding

cultural heritage, preserving collective memory, and forming national identities. History functions as both an academic discipline and a framework that informs cultural development and supports future-oriented decision-making. Societies that integrate historical knowledge into planning and policy processes are better equipped to make informed decisions for the future. History professors play a critical role in this system. Their responsibilities extend beyond classroom teaching to include guiding research, disseminating knowledge, and supporting social and cultural initiatives. Through these activities, professors facilitate the connection between historical knowledge and societal needs, enabling history to contribute to education, cultural understanding, and policy development.

In many developing countries, history professors face several challenges that limit their professional engagement. These include limited funding, insufficient institutional support, restricted research opportunities, reliance on traditional memorization-based teaching methods, and low public awareness of the discipline's significance. As a result, historians may focus primarily on securing a livelihood, which reduces the practical and societal application of their work and limits the discipline's contribution to policy-making and social development.

This study examines why history professors in different contexts often restrict their professional activities to academic survival rather than pursuing the broader societal mission of their discipline. It identifies key structural, institutional, and pedagogical barriers to public engagement and proposes strategies to strengthen the role of history. These strategies include integrating historical research with tourism, media engagement, university-based projects, private sector and international support, and the development of academic and cultural partnerships through innovative teaching approaches. The study argues that restoring history's full role as both an academic field and a contributor to societal development requires coordinated collaboration among professors, students, government institutions, and private-sector stakeholders.

Problem Statement

The department of History as one of the most important branches of human sciences in universities and scientific centers is officially in the educational system. Still, the current situation indicates that this field has become mostly a theoretical and memory-oriented one and has been completely far apart from its practical and social functions (Smith, 2019). In many universities, teaching history still follows the traditional ways without much connection to the real needs of society and day-to-day changes (Abdollahi, 1398). As a result, history is unable to play a significant role in making the basic structure of culture and society develop.

One of the major issues in this regard is that history teachers play very little practical role in the society. Many faculty members could limit their activities into classical teaching, as their resources both financially and research wise are not sufficient, also there is no substantial institutional backing (Ghaznavi, 2020). This means that very little participation is found for them in the cultural and socially oriented projects of history-related policymaking. Gradually, this has been making the ties between the university and society weak, hence very little will be found referring the history faculty as social and cultural agents (Hobsbawm, 1997).

On the other hand, disinterest among students in the field of history is also one of the major ramifications of this situation. Most students consider it a course that will hardly find use in real life; hence, there is little or no motivation for them towards historical research. However, most of this disinterest can be attributed to lack of innovation in teaching methodology and the absence of practical projects that tie historical events into the realities of society (Navidi, 1400). Moreover, another fundamental problem concerns the lack of connection between history and labor market and economy of society. As most fields of study,are either designed or funded according to economic needs and labor market demands, history education is deprived of these (UNESCO, 2021). Most graduate historians often face unemployment problems, which itself contributes to demotivation towards study and teaching in that discipline (Anderson, 2005). The main question now is how to pull the historical field from its status-from more or less subsistence and limited university-based practices- into the arms of its main mission of service to society and strengthening cultural identity.

Background and Significance of the Discipline of History in Society

History is one of the most ancient branches of humanities, which has significantly affected the collective memory and national identity from ancient Greece to modernity. Historians like Herodotus and Thucydides of ancient Greece also recorded human events in a narrative form and not only provided analysis in order to give lessons for the future generation to learn from (Momigliano, 1990). This trend continued in the other civilizations of Islam, China, and Europe as history was to act-in those instances-as a political legitimacy, a cultural identity, and as a means of social education (Hodgson, 1974). at present, history, specifically, national history, is vital in continuing the development of the national identity and societal development. Studies have shown that educational systems that diverge towards national history have successfully given strength to unity and awareness among younger generations (Smith, 1991). Afghanistan and Central Asia do not differ in this aspect since history is one of the major factors

through which cultural heritage is interpreted and the younger generation is linked to their civilizational roots (Barfield, 2010).

In cultural terms, history is no longer a continued narrative of what happened in the past, but rather active in foresight and social planning. Historical analysis is useful for improving decision-making for the future, as it informs policymakers on the mistakes committed in making decisions in the past (Carr, 1961). History is thus a basis for intercultural dialogue and could also serve as an instrument of cultural diplomacy in international relations (Iriye, 2002).

Hence, the relevance of history to modern society goes beyond the ground of education; rather, it is a treasure cultural asset tool for identity formation and a necessary ingredient in policymaking, cultural development, and social progress. Failure to address this problem of discipline would adversely affect national identity, cultural heritage, and societal capacity towards thinking beyond those horizons of future orientation.

Causes of the Limited Engagement of History Professors in Society

1. **Lack of economic and institutional support**

   Due to factors such as the lack of research funding or the unavailability of institutional support, history professors lose out in most cases on motivation for either social or research activities (Hobsbawm, 1997; Karimi, 2018). Insufficient finances make many historical projects either go unattempted or remain incomplete, thereby pushing professors into restrictively meager academic activities (UNESCO, 2021).

2. **Limited research and project opportunities**

   Due to a lack of specialized research centers and obstacles to the access of archives and historical documents, such factors hamper the professors' work (Smith, 2019; Sharifi, 2017). Furthermore, exchange opportunities for international scholarship are rare, which means that fewer opportunities are left for history professors to take part in conferences or publish in international journals (Anderson, 2005).

3. **Lack of public awareness of the importance of history**

   A significant portion of society views history as an impractical science, and this misconception has diminished the status of history professors and the neglect of their role in cultural policy-making (Navidi, 2021; Gaddis, 2002). Media have also paid less attention to showing people how history is relevant to their lives, inadvertently fostering public apathy towards that area (Lowenthal, 1985).

4. **Excessive emphasis on rigid memory-style instruction**

   The rote methods of teaching history, based on memorizing dates and events, have diminished student motivation and creativity in academia (Ghaznavi, 2020; Wineburg, 2001). This strict reliance upon rote memorization cuts off the possibility for professors to connect

history with contemporary social and cultural issues (Abdollahi, 2019).

5. **Lack of government policies supporting the humanities**

In several countries, the governmental concern lacks resources for the humanities and pours resources into the natural and technical sciences (UNESCO, 2021; Collini, 2012). Such policies weaken the social standing of history professors and prevent them from taking on the mission-oriented role envisioned for them (Nussbaum, 2010).

Comparative Perspective with Other Countries

The discipline of history has faced, and faces some, similar challenges in so many countries. Problems of a negative view for being bulimic in the role of history professors for society and an over-emphasis on theoretical teaching are altogether felt to be a global issue that really needs reform. The experience of different countries may be instructive in reviving a role for history in Afghanistan and the region. In Europe, beginning in the UK, a decline of interest in humanities was seen during the 1980s. Meanwhile, because of projects such as the “History for All,” the government and academic institutions were trying to merge history with the need of the society. Actual making of television documentaries, traveling exhibitions, and joined projects between universities and museums were some of the modes of activities (Evans, 1997).

In the United States, Public History centers brought a partial solution to the problem of history's distancing from everyday citizen life. These encourage history faculty to work closely with museums, mass media, and local community organizations to present history in simplified and practical terms to the public (Frisch, 1990).

The post-World War II experience in Japan showed how a history could become an effective means of reconstructing national identity. The school system emphasized local and indigenous history, and students' interest in history was greatly fostered through educational tour programs at historic sites (Garon, 2003). In countries of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for instance, educational reforms after independence in the 1990s turned history into a tool of nation building. History professors were indeed active not only in universities but also in the media and government programs to reinforce national historical narratives (Dave, 2007).

These examples illustrate that one can hardly hope to renew the role of history in society through academic teaching only. Rather, far closer links between history and society, media, tourism, and cultural policies could take history professors from "mere livelihood" to fulfilling "scientific and cultural mission.

Strategies for Revitalizing the Role of History in Society

1. **Linking history to tourism**

History can play a major role in enhancing tourism. Further work can be done to publicize sites of historical importance, conduct training for professional guides, develop educational tours, and produce multimedia on cultural heritage for awareness as well as job opportunities for history graduates (Timothy and Boyd 2003; Karimi 2018; Ashworth 2011). Hence, this link will turn history into a live cultural activity while incorporating it into the economy and labor market (Hosseini 2016).

2. **Media activities**

Media is largely instrumental in popularising history. Through historical documentary production, television and radio program development, newspaper articles, and social media, their efforts will promote public awareness and, therefore, at a wider view (Hoskins, 2001; Navidi, 2021; Edgerton, 2001). Notably, the involvement of history professors in constructing media content would extend history beyond academia and into the public (Fickers & Johnson, 2010).

3. **On the university and student projects**

Universities should be more actively involved in executing historical undertakings. Projects like field research, digital archival of documents, establishing museums in universities, or organizing historical exhibitions could allow faculty and students to experience society directly with (Smith, 2019; Abdollahi, 2019; Kean & Martin, 2013). Such works strengthen the relationship between history and the cultural needs as well as the social demands of society (Ricoeur, 2006).

4. **Attracting funds from the private sector and international organizations**

An important strategy would be tapping support-both financial and scholarly-from the private sector and organizations such as UNESCO, cultural foundations, and research institutions. Investment from such bodies into historical projects may very well ensure sustainable development in the protection of cultural heritage (Harrison, 2013; Habibi, 2015).

5. **Innovation in history instruction**

To catch-up the youth, new ways of teaching history should be installed. These are storytelling, educational games, historical reenactments, study tours, and modern techniques such as virtual reality; all these make history teaching more attractive (Wineburg, 2001; Ghaznavi, 2020; Prensky, 2010). They not only motivate but also induce a deeper and more active understanding of history (Seixas & Morton, 2013).

6. **Forming historical academic and cultural associations**

This pave the way for the coming together of professors, students, and researchers through the establishment of historical academic and cultural associations within universities and society. These format, organize meetings, workshops and conferences, but serve as bridges linking historians to a wider public (Collini, 2012; Sharifi, 2017; Clark &

Ashton, 2010). In the end, this in fact could strengthen the academic as well as social identity of history while there well with unique possibilities for research and scholarly exchange.

Conclusion

History as a collective memory and a core element of national identity is much more than a view into the past. It is a bridge between the past and future, creating deep linkages into culture, economy, politics, and society. The strategies discussed here show that revitalizing the role of history in society can never be realized from an academic angle confined to the walls of universities but requires a multidimensional engagement with the practical realities of life. History, when integrated with tourism, becomes an economic and cultural resource; when mass media apply their communication skills, they step into the public sphere and liberate history from the confines of library memory through university projects. The private sector and international organizations ensure sustainability and preservation of historical heritage; innovations in pedagogy help inspire and engage the younger generations in meaningful and interactive ways. Additionally, scientific and cultural organizations of history can catalyze a consolidation of the scholarly identity of the discipline among society.

Hence, society's role of history has to move beyond a narrow understanding of the past to a consideration of its abilities as a positive force for cultural, social, and economic development. Indeed, history deserves the work if it works toward protecting the legacy of the past while at the same time bringing to fruition an even brighter and more sustainable future for society.

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