

Source Method

By the source method is meant all those materials which specify the past and are helpful in the acquisition of knowledge, because direct experience is very important in the process of learning. Looking at an object or activity directly provides much more knowledge than reading about it. It is better to visit a mountain, factory, monument etc. than to read about it in a book or listen about it. Thus, the experiences gained directly by somebody are more valuable. The present is explained with the help of direct experiences. These experiences cannot explain the past, because that period can no more be perceived. For example, if we wished to study the Gupta period, we would have to be dependent on indirect sources of knowledge, because the Gupta rulers are neither present nor have we seen them. However, this indirect

knowledge can be made direct using certain devices, among which the source is very important. All copper-plates, statues, ruins, pillars, records etc. can be used to concretise their personality. Therefore, we can say that we can give concrete form to the past using this method.

Various Kinds of Original Sources

Original sources are of three types :

1. Physical Sources : These comprise of monuments, idols, statues, weaponry, ruins, pillars, rivers, oceans, mountain, coins etc.

2. Oral Sources : These include folksongs, folktales, stories, customs, traditions etc.

3. Written or Printed Sources : These include ancient diaries, records, scriptures, texts, manuscripts, books of law, magazines, etc.

Application of Source Method

The source method occupies a very important place in acquisition of knowledge. Its application helps to cultivate the power of logic in students. Its application introduces an element of liveliness, and students cultivate the habit of exploration and verification. In such a case, a teacher becomes duty-bound to introduce them with useful material and present it in due detail.

A teacher can perform this task in the following ways :

1. Demonstration : A teacher should demonstrate the original sources before students and tell students about their utility and application. He should demonstrate them at adequate time.

2. Assigned Reading : A teacher can assign students the task of reading the relevant specified paragraphs while using such sources. These paragraphs should be relevant and interesting.

3. Problem-solving : Sources are also important in problem-solving. Students become able to solve problems and correct errors found in textbooks with the help of these sources.

Difficulties in Application of Original Resources

1. In Supply : The original resources which are very vital, and can be used by students, may be hard to get, or they may be scattered over a large area, gathering which is a difficult task.

2. In Language : The original resources may be in a language not known by students or even teachers. It may not be possible for them to decipher them.

3. Contradictory Views of Writers : Due diversity of opinions among different writers, there may be an element of doubt, because each writer writes his text with a different perspective and on the basis of his experiences. Moreover, copywriters too commit errors in copying manuscripts and there may be variations in different copies of the same manuscript.

Merits of Source Method

Following are the merits of this method :

1. The application of this method cultivates in students the ability to identify authentic facts. With this, students don't believe in what is told to them, they try to gather authentic material for proper inferences.
2. The application of this method arouses interest of even weak and backward students in the subject. Their curiosity is aroused greatly. It also motivates them for their creative and original expression, and their skill can be cultivated by it.
3. This method cultivates students' ability to identify the facts. It trains hem in testing, comparison and analysis.
4. The application of this method cultivates students' power of reasoning, and their thinking is redirected to the proper course.
5. This method brings liveliness in study, and students cultivate the habit of exploration and testing.
6. The application of this method makes students to explore by themselves under the guidance of their teacher and thus draw conclusions on their own.

Demerits of Source Method

Following are the chief demerits of this method :

1. This method can possibly be used by the inexperienced students of higher classes. It cannot be undertaken in small classes.
2. The application of this method presents language-related difficulties before students, and they may not be able to use it properly, as it is not possible to know all languages.
3. The greatest problem faced in applying this method is the lack of source books, which may compile different types of sources which may be suitable for students too.