

Role of History in Nation Building

According to Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, nation-building is constructing, creating or structuring a national identity using the power of a state. Nation building encompasses creating a personality or a national identity for your nation such as devising a national flag, a national anthem, a national language or creating some equipage or odds and ends for your country or nation.

What is the role of history in creating a nation? Why is the study of history important? According to Peter Stearns' article, there are five reasons why. Firstly, history helps us understand people in societies. We all know that there are three main tenses in English: past, present and future. These three are directly related with each other. Without the past, there would not be a present and with no present, there would not be a future. The past is a mirror of the present and the present is the mirror of the future. Whatever events happened in the past, affects the present and the future. The best example for this is the world's current problem: Global Warming. How would we know the causes of this if we do not look back on what our forefathers did to create this global disaster? We always have to look at factors that took shape earlier in our history. Sometimes recent history will suffice to explain a major development but most of the time we need to look further back in our history to find explanations. There were people who lived ages and centuries before us, and their actions are affecting the present we live in. Consequently, our actions now will affect the future generations' present. In the case of global warming, if we stop or reduce using harmful chemicals and harmful gases on our planet then climate change will reduce and it will give us a better future.

The second reason is connected to the first one and it is, the importance of history in our own lives. With history we see the ways people in distant ages constructed their lives. We read biographies and autobiographies and we see the differences of how people lived before us. To cite an example we can see how people in the 1950s lived, in contrast to how people live now. Through books of history we may have knowledge of the climate in Manila in 1957, what movies were playing, which artists were famous and among others. By reading books that were written and published in the past, we find details and additional information for us to compare to our present. Thirdly, history contributes to moral understanding in relation to the second reason, studying the stories of individuals and situations allows us to test our own moral senses. Through the years, society's standards changes. The new generation perceives things differently. For example, in 1919, Luisa Capetillo challenged the mainstream society by becoming the first woman in Puerto Rico to wear trousers in public. Capetillo was sent to jail for what was then considered to be a "crime", but the judge later dropped the charges against her. At the time of Capetillo, women had lesser rights and wearing of pants were thought to be only made for men, was this okay in the past? No, it was not but our society today, in the 21st century, are more lax and we learned to accept people for who they are and what they wear. Some restrictions in our society today are that students are not allowed to dye their hair in a wild colour or women showing their breasts online and in public. People think that it is rather immoral. Another thing that changed was that in the 1950s, cigarette smoking was thought to be good for our body but later scientists found that the nicotine in the cigarette causes cancer and other diseases. In the future, these things will change and society will evolve and have different views from us today and society has an impact on what kind of nation we and will have.

History helps us to have an identity, whether it may be a state identity or simply a family identity, historical data helps us know how groups of people have been formed, groups like families, tribes and nations. In history, we can see what their illnesses were, we can know what their hardships were. When we know our genealogy we can find out who our ancestors are and what lineages we have. Were our ancestors colour blind? Were they anemic? Did a certain Indios in 1774 Manila help give our land freedom? History tells these stories that when mixed together, create a national history. Stories that emphasise unique features of a nation and its national experience, that are meant for its citizens to understand national values and for people to have a sense of nationalism. This also means that history is essential for good citizenship. How would we be considered good citizens if we do not know the history of our nation? If we do not know our nation's history then how can we be proud of it? It is important to know our nation's history because our country's forefathers may have fought for our land. History provides proof about how countries have interacted with each other may it be through armed conflict or trade, this provides