

## ORAL HISTORY REPOSITORY

Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. It begins with an audio or video recording of a first-person account made by an interviewer with an interviewee (also referred to as narrator), both of whom have the conscious intention of creating a permanent record to contribute to an understanding of the past. It may take the form of eye-witness evidence about the past, but can include folklore, myths, songs and stories passed down over the years by word of mouth. Whereas the practitioners of oral history contemplate its ancient origins but in its modern form Oral History owes its origin in the works of Allan Nevins at the Columbia University, USA. In the United States the original impetus for the development of Oral History was a concern for **creating documents to complement the existing written record**. The information gleaned from interviews worked to fill in the gaps in the extant written historical sources. In Europe on the other hand **Oral History instead of being an archival practice aimed at creating a history of everyday lives of those who had remained out of the frame of academic history**. Its purpose was/is often to “give voice” (“amplify voice”) to marginalized or forgotten individuals or groups; it was believed that at a minimum oral history would aid in the transformation of history from a discipline to an activity. The Oral History Repository of the Department of History, University Of Kashmir actively engages in carrying out Workshops and seminars on Oral History with an avowed objective to train students and scholars for doing standard oral history. The core issues in Oral History related to its origin and transformation, purpose and methodology are discussed and deliberated upon. Whether and how Oral History democratized historical record and the act of doing history and how oral historians respond to the traditional/ academic historian’s onslaught on oral history is often at the centre of the discussion. We also discuss the legal and ethical issues in Oral history together with the issues related to transcription and archiving of the oral history products (audio/video recordings). Since oral historians consider ‘memories as living histories’ and academic historians are wary of memory as a historical source efforts are made to generate a discussion around the reliability-unreliability of memory as resource for producing knowledge about the past. We encourage our students to do Oral History with at least two persons of their choice as a part of their M. A. programme. The audio-recordings are archived for use of use of historians and other social scientists. We are adopting the Columbia University OHMA Program model to teach and do Oral history.

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**Coordinator Oral History Repository**

*\*Certified by Columbia University, New York , USA to teach and Do Oral History*

