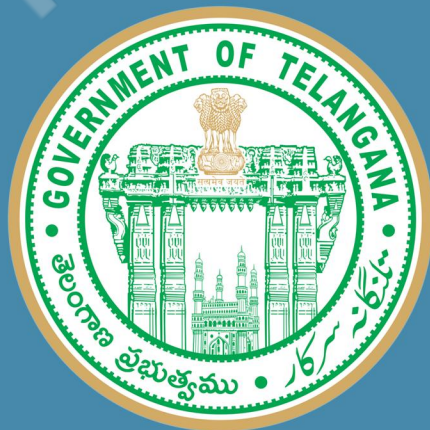


# State Curriculum Framework-2011

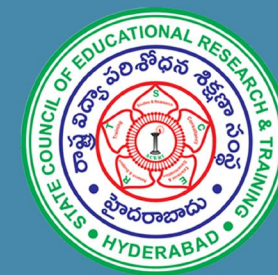
*Position Paper*

on

## **Social Science**



**School Education Department  
Telangana, Hyderabad.**



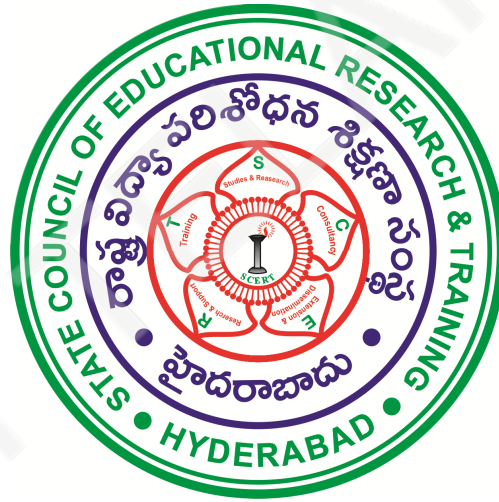
**State Council of Educational Research & Training  
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**State Council of Educational Research & Training,  
Telangana, Hyderabad.**

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State Council of Educational Research & Training,  
Telangana, Hyderabad.

## **Vision of the State**

*The vision of the State is that ALL children should receive high quality education and become responsible citizens with an acute sense of the other. They should be aware of their environment and think about it critically. They should listen carefully and speak fearlessly. They should be able to understand what they hear and read; but they should also be able to questions it. Teachers should promote these skills, provide meaningful teaching learning processes in natural and friendly environment that enable children to express themselves freely and ask questions. Teachers are collaborative learners and reflective practitioners. Parents and community should have a sense of ownership and participate in the life of the school. In a world which is becoming increasingly instrumental, materialistic and competitive, school should become a space for reflection, cooperation and promotion of human and ethical values.*

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## 1. Changing Societies and Social Science Teaching

Our children are growing up under rapidly changing conditions consequent upon the process of globalisation and deeper penetration of market in the lives of people. These processes simultaneously open possibilities for personal advancement and social mobility while also posing serious challenges to the livelihoods of people.

Andhra Pradesh has been deeply affected by these developments in recent years. We are witness to the burgeoning of new urban centres which are focal points for international investment, the massive growth of the service sector (including the Information Technology sector) and the simultaneous phenomena of acute farm distress leading to farmer suicides and unbridled exploitation of our natural resources leading to long term environmental degradation and loss of traditional livelihoods for people.

Scholars like Amartya Sen maintain that education is a key to successfully coping with these challenges and potentials.<sup>1</sup> Globalisation, while rapidly rendering many traditional livelihoods unviable, opens up tremendous possibilities for educated and skilled persons for personal advancement. At the same time for the vast masses access to resources and livelihoods requires effective use of democratic processes and legal provisions. This too can be effective only when meaningful school education is available to all.

In the post independence era policy makers saw school education as a major instrument of nation building and achieving objectives like equality, justice and sustainable development enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution.<sup>2</sup> These purposes have also assumed a new meaning and urgency under the current conditions where collective national identities are being eroded and we seem to be moving away from the goals of equity and social justice. The earlier task of reducing social inequalities based on caste, gender, class, region and physical capabilities and establishing rule of law remains grossly unfulfilled.

Set in this context Social Science Education has to enable the future citizens to understand and address many of these challenges. Social Sciences will particularly be

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<sup>1</sup> Amartya Sen,....

<sup>2</sup> Kothari Commission,

important in enabling the students to understand their own lived experiences in the context of global developments, to understand the formation of their multiple identities as citizens of a pluralist nation, develop frameworks for handling diversity and inequality in society, besides acquiring skills of social analysis. Such a training accompanied by an orientation to approach the problems of diverse social groups with empathy and concern will enable our children to work out creative and humane solutions to the problems facing them.

Social Sciences have been undergoing major paradigm shifts from the earlier positivist moorings to development of critical methods accomodating multiple perspectives. It is a matter of satisfaction that many academic institutions based in Andhra Pradesh and intellectuals from Andhra Pradesh have made significant contributions to this transformation of Social Sciences. It is time to harness this positive resource to transform our school education.

Pedagogy in general and social science pedagogy in particular too have been radically changing. Instead of visualising the class room as a place for mere transfer of definitive package of information we are moving towards enabling children to build their own concepts and understanding through guided exposure to materials and questions. As children from more and more diverse social backgrounds come to the school, they bring very rich and diverse experience of social reality and perspectives drawn from their own social backgrounds. This nascent understanding of children needs to be nurtured through careful exposure to other experiences and by posing challenging learning situation for them. The subjectivities of the child needs to be nurtured and developed while at the same time helping them to come to terms with wider experiences, understanding and questions.

Such a pedagogy requires that the curriculum be designed keeping in mind the context of the learners. Given the fact that the contexts vary between different cultural and geographic regions like Rayalaseema, Telangana, Coastal Andhra and the Easter Ghats, and even within the regions the challenge before the Social Science curriculum designers is to address these variations while at the same time conforming to more universal curricular objectives. Contextualisation should not be taken to mean that only the immediate world of the children should be the subject of study. Rather, attempts should be made to help children understand their own world and the larger world



through constant comparison and reflection over the similarities and differences. At the same time, issues of major concern in the immediate world of the child should be addressed in the curriculum. This requires both sensitivity to major regional social issues in the text books and also space for the teacher to take up issues of local and topical importance while teaching in the class.

As a part of Social Science Teaching we need to develop special skills relating to the deciphering information and perspectives encoded in different media – narratives, visuals, tables, maps, graphs and pie charts. Equally important is to enable children to critically question the information so provided and assess its value and limitations.

Social Science Teaching also needs to break out of text book centering to include a wide variety of experiences like survey, discussions with people of diverse backgrounds, collective action etc.

## 2. Feedback on existing curriculum, syllabus and textbooks

Social Science is presently taught as a component of Environmental Studies from class three to five and as a separate subject in upper primary and secondary stages. Even though it is treated as one subject, it is in fact broken into four distinct components of History, Civics, Economics and Geography. **At the secondary and higher secondary levels Sociology too is taught as a separate subject. Please Check!!!**

Over the years significant progress has been made in developing text books for these subjects and in deploying teachers in the schools. To a very large extent the old colonial and communal biases have been weeded out of these text books though much still remains to be done to address caste, regional and gender biases.

Yashpal Committee had recommended as early as 1993 that the information and concept load in the text books be reduced and efforts be made to develop child's ability to analyse socio-political realities. It had also called for a radical review of Civics teaching which it considered was a legacy of colonial attempts to create conformist and docile subjects. The National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences as a part of the National Curriculum Framework 2005 too has made extensive recommendations for reforming the Social Science Curriculum. Significantly it has called for a greater focus on issues of equity, social justice and dignity with a special emphasis on gender issues.

A review undertaken by SCERT of Andhra Pradesh indicates that the teaching of Social Science in the state at present requires a radical rethinking. There is a general feeling that is an unimportant subject which is both uninteresting and has little career opportunities. Curriculum and syllabus are not in consonance with the interests and capabilities of the students. The relevance of the subject matter to the child is not brought out by engaging with the local context or the child's social experiences.

School teachers have time and again pointed out that while for formal purposes (allocation of teaching time and exam marks) Social Sciences was treated as one subject, the syllabus designers treated it as three or four subjects and sought to go by the demands of the discipline. This placed immense pressure on text book writers who ended up writing synoptic and cryptic chapters with no space for image formation, concept formation, or analytical thinking. All this only compounded the problem of students alienating them from the subject. There is a pressing need to reduce the

content load in the curriculum by rationalising the syllabus and addressing upfront the issue of integrating the different subject areas in one common framework.

Text books are treated as the only source of information to be transacted and as such local experiences as seen by children or other adults of the community have no place in the class room. Even within the text books the treatment of subjects is archaic and does not take into account the recent developments in the concerned disciplines.

The textbooks consider all knowledge needs to be narrated through written word alone without recourse to other modes like visuals or charts or activities. This makes them unattractive to children. The textbooks are bulky, unattractive with poor quality paper and print. As such, the book does not satisfy the visual senses of the students.

The role of active participation of the student in curriculum transaction is either absent or very limited making students passive receivers of information without reflecting their own ideas or experiences. There is little chance for the student for identifying themselves with what is being learnt. The books do not provide any scope for activity based learning, self-learning and continuous comprehensive evaluation.

At the middle and high school level the teacher has a complex role of designing the teaching activity keeping in mind the learning potentials of the children and the nature of the subject they are teaching. Teacher and teacher preparation are not aligned to the role they are expected to play in the class room. Most teachers do not have the requisite graduation background in subject areas like history, geography, economics, political science, etc. In the absence of scope for professional enrichment opportunities like seminars, conferences and workshops teachers find it difficult to cope with the changing nature of the subjects and their pedagogy.

As a consequence of poor teacher preparation, **classroom transaction** is mostly dull and teacher or text book centered with larger orientation to examinations. The philosophy of constructivism is not followed and hence has little scope for development of capabilities and skills among students. Utilization of local and community resources is very minimal and the attempt for making the learning activity meaningful to the student is also weak.

Resources available in schools: Several sets of maps and globes have been supplied to all the schools in Andhra Pradesh under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Each class in primary and middle schools have a class room library of about 60-100 books. About 40% of middle schools have a few computers too. It is necessary to strengthen these class room libraries to include atlases and books on social science themes. The computers available in the middle schools may be more effectively used by giving them Compact Discs of films, encyclopaedias etc.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation continues to be quite traditional with undue emphasis on rote learning and terminal exams. There is a dire need to shift to continuous and comprehensive evaluation and evaluation in accordance with the objectives of social science teaching.

### **3. Nature of Social Sciences**

A number of disciplines (like history, geography, economics, political science, etc) each with their own distinct methodologies and perspectives constitute Social Sciences. While respecting the distinctiveness of each, it is also necessary to develop inter-disciplinary perspectives to arrive at a holistic understanding of social issues. It is for this reason that the National Focus Group has recommended the incorporation of themes that are designed to encourage the use of inter-disciplinary approaches.

Before we take up the specific contributions of the constituent disciplines a brief consideration of the social sciences as a whole may be useful. Social Sciences study different aspects of human life to understand social phenomena and also to help us determining normative priorities and policies. They therefore cannot be divorced from the debates on 'what ought to be'. Thus Social Sciences strive to simultaneously nurture subjectivities and a broader impersonal vision of the world. It seeks to foster thus sensitivity and empathy on the one hand and a high degree of rigour in studying social issues. They study society by using rigorous methods which are both quantitative and qualitative. In quantitative approach social phenomena are studied through quantifiable evidence where in statistical procedures are adopted to create valid and reliable findings generalisations are made after studying many cases. In qualitative approach social phenomena are studied through direct observations, direct and indirect interaction with participants, analysis of texts and documents etc.

The methods employed range between surveys or cross-sectional studies of larger sample to in-depth analysis of individual units, comparison across time and space, monitoring of contemporary issues to interrogation of historical documents.

Traditionally Social Sciences promoted determinism and typification and stereotyping. Geographic determinism or economic determinism, stereotyping of communities and even countries has been hall marks of social science teaching. These need to be discarded in favour of a more open approach which allows multiple causal explanations.

Another important feature of social sciences is that they always advocate multiple perspectives approach as human phenomena cannot and should not be understood from only one point of view. Any social phenomena affect people differently depending

upon their social standing. Thus multiple perspectives approach gives voice to diverse points of view. In doing so it can be said to operate on a democratic principle. Multiple perspectives approach is more holistic and comprehensive as identification and utilization of various sources / points of view will help in development of analytic and critical thinking.

Since Social Sciences involve such a high degree of subjectivity built into their inquiry, it is imperative to critically examine the subjectivities that shape them. Thus an important part of social science inquiry is an inquiry into itself, ie an inquiry into the history of the disciplines themselves.

While Social Sciences have the common characteristics outlined above, the different disciplines coming under it have developed vibrant and divergent methodologies and perspectives. The very idea of grouping them together under the nomenclature of 'Social Sciences' is a rather recent one. As such we need to consider the specific aspects of each of these disciplines before we proceed to discuss the teaching of Social Sciences.

**History:** History as a discipline focusses on understanding social change over time and not only seeks to explain that change but also to understand how the change affected different social groups differentially and how that change was perceived and portrayed down the ages. Since history seeks to uncover the past by interpreting the sources of information, it places great value upon critically evaluating and using the sources of information. Needless to say as a construction of the past, history has an important role to play in the formation of identities in the contemporary world. It therefore becomes a bone of contention between different conflicting socio-political groups. This certainly helps to enrich the debates in history and our understanding of the past provided we realise that each one of us has multiple identities which need to be both critiqued and respected. Such identity formation has to be tempered by the use of critical methods of looking for evidences and evaluating them according to accepted standards of the discipline. Thus history teaching should incorporate both an account of change over time and also how and why history is written in multiple ways.

While teaching history a healthy balance between local, regional, subcontinental and global histories needs to be maintained. There is great potential in local history, which

has not been tapped in our history teaching for fear of local chauvanism. However it is time we abandoned this fear and come forward to study the history of the immediate social world of the students using critical methods. This will also enable us to broaden the issues discussed in history to include communities, settlements, technologies, cultures and folklore besides the conventional political and socio-economic themes.

**Geography:** Geography seeks to understand spatial patterns in social phenomenon in general and to explain spatial variation. An important component of this investigation is the relation between the natural enviroment and society. In the past these relations were seen as immutable and determined by the natural environment. Over the last century these views were questioned on the ground that the relation between nature and societies have constantly undergone change and nature only offer possibilities and does not determine social action and that social intervention can change the natural environment in significant ways. A counter view also emerged that with globalisation, spatial differences will cease to have any singificance as we will inhabit a very uniform 'global village'. This has been questioned by several geographers who maintain that globalisation too creates new patterns of spatial differentials and inequalities and subordinations as metropolitan centres seek to access the resources of non-metropolitan regions. This has brought geographic studies of regions and regional development to the fore once again away from its previous focus on resource distribution and physical determinism. Geography has thus been transformed into a dynamic Social Science discipline with immense contemporary relevance.

Investigation of the dynamic relation between natural environment and human societies, relations within a society, and the relation between societies inhabiting different regions opens up immense possibilities of moving back and forth from the immediate environment of the child to the global world.

Spatial variation is typically depicted on a map and the skill of interpreting and making maps of varied kinds is essential part of the training that geography education provides. However, maps need to be seen more than a mere skill of depicting information. Cartogaphy is deeply embedded in the history of Geography and its social contexts. The major drive behind mapping the entire earth comes from the colonial need to access resources of the entire earth and gain control over all the peoples of the world.

**‘Social-Political Life’:** This is a relatively a new theme in school curriculum which seeks to provide inputs to the budding citizens to understand the socio-economic and political world in which they live in. It thus draws from a number of Social Science disciplines like sociology, economics, political science etc. It also takes up the major challenge of addressing normative issues like plurality, equity and justice. It thus combines in itself a dual objective of developing basic tools of social, political and developmental analysis and fostering the humanist values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The general tendency to preach normative values in simplistic discourses is highly inadequate and can only foster cynicism in children. Any discussion of the norm needs to be accompanied by a discussion of actual social realities and problems in realising the norms. Such a critical engagement with the norms along with positive examples is essential for fostering a realistic and hopeful attitude among the students.

Economics, Political Science and Sociology: These disciplines are introduced as separate subjects at the Higher Secondary stage for those who opt to study them. They are expected to provide preliminary introduction to these subjects which will enable them to pursue them in graduation in greater detail.



#### **4. The Teaching of Social Sciences – Towards an Integrated Approach**

While at the Primary stage Social Sciences are taught in an integrated manner as a part of Environmental Science, in Upper Primary stage it is usually taught as three or four subjects – History, Geography, Economics and ‘Civics’. As noted above the National Curriculum Framework advocated a reworking of ‘Civics’ and the NCERT have accordingly redefined the subject as ‘Social and Political Life’ incorporating aspects of Sociology, Political Science and Economics focussing on citizenship studies. In the High School stage all these are taught as distinct subjects. Students are expected to select streams of their choice in Higher Secondary stage and specialise in fewer subject areas. The National Focus Group suggested that while the existing disciplinary orientation may be retained, there is a need to make the boundaries between disciplines more porous. Wherever there is overlapping of the disciplines integrated approach must be adopted as there is a need for interlinking and cross referencing of different areas. To make the subject more relevant, meaningful and interesting for the child thematic approach should be taken up.

As pointed out above in the section on feedback from teachers, there is an urgent need to address the issue of integration of the subjects at the Elementary School level. Adoption of the discipline centred syllabus forces the adoption of a structure as dictated by each of the subject areas. An alternative approach is to take up themes like family or agriculture and treat them in a multi-disciplinary manner – going into their histories, geographic underpinnings or variations, institutional processes etc. However, multi-disciplinary approach needs a prior training and background in the different disciplines. Thus to understand how the institution of family has evolved over tribal, caste, colonial and modern contexts, one needs a minimum background in these themes. What is suggested here is therefore an eclectic approach for the Elementary School level, which uses an integrated thematic organising principle while retaining the disciplinary orientation within the chapters. We may retain the disciplinary framework at the High School and Higher Secondary levels.

The themes for the Elementary School Level can be as follows:

1. Diversity on the Earth – Landforms and Climates
2. Production, Exchange and Livelyhoods

3. Governance
4. Social Organisation, Inequities, Deprivation and Social Movements
5. Religion & Society
6. Culture & Communication
7. Skills to Study Social Sciences

Within the above broad thematic areas we can select issues drawn from different disciplines. For example, within the theme of ‘Diversity on the Earth’, we can not only try to understand the diverse landforms and climates but also how societies have interacted with this in different ways over historical time. Likewise, within the theme ‘Production, Exchange & Livelihoods’ we could study how production or exchange was organised in stone age or in medieval times besides also looking into regional patterns in contemporary production.

It is suggested that such an eclectic integrated framework may be followed for the Middle School classes (ie class six to eight), and we may adopt a more discipline based framework for the secondary classes (class nine and ten onwards).

A major issue curriculum and syllabus designers have to engage with is selection of themes and issues for school level study. The explosion of knowledge and the fear of being left behind if we do not keep up with it, the concerns of the contending social movements and interests etc exert substantial pressure to include a very large range of issues, far beyond the capability and interests of children. This trend needs to be checked and it should be kept in mind that we are now only training children to think and develop frameworks to assimilate diverse social experiences. Excessive burdening of content will only deflect us from our objectives. However care needs to be taken to represent issues of the marginalised and poor and also to develop a balance between the local, the regional, the national and the global.

## **5. Broad Objectives of Social Science Teaching**

- i. Develop skills of reasoning and exploring causation in social context
- ii. Relate the immediate social developments to broader global trends and the vice versa
- iii. Understand variety of human experiences across time and space
- iv. Understand multiple perspectives of looking at social world
- v. Understand the differential impact of social phenomenon on different sections of people
- vi. Develop the ability of critically evaluating received information, hypotheses and images
- vii. Develop abilities to handle text, data, illustration i.e. different modes of representing/ interpreting / visualizing information and knowledge
- viii. Critically engage with social and constitutional values.

### **History**

- i. Understanding the process of change in society
- ii. Develop a causal understanding of how and why societies change
- iii. Understand how change affects different social segments differently
- iv. Understand how the study of past is a necessary part of our identity formation
- v. Understand how identity formation influences the way history is reconstructed
- vi. Understand the significance and scope for human agency in history.
- vii. Imbibe the critical methods used to understand the past using sources
- viii. Understand that the social context of history writing influences the way the past is reconstructed and communicated.

### **Geography**

- i. Understand the dynamic relationship between human societies and the natural environment
- ii. Understand the physical ordering of space into natural regions and how societies have transformed them
- iii. Understand social spatial relationships like the relation between colony and metropolis.
- iv. Open up before the children the wide variety of human experience across the globe and at the same time develop a fellow feeling for all human beings.

- v. Develop an understanding of the social and historical context of geographical inquiry
- vi. Develop skills like map making and reading, using instruments like scale, rain guage, thermometer etc. and understanding their role in the evolution of geography.

### **Objectives of Teaching Social & Political Life**

- i To give an introduction to methods of socio-economic analysis
- ii To introduce children to basic constitutional values and objectives
- iii To develop an understanding of democratic polity and rule of law
- iv To develop methods for comparing the normative or ideal with the actual reality in the field
- v To give an exposure of diversity of human experience of people from different walks of life
- vi To take a considered view of controversial issues rather than avoiding them

## **6. Social Sciences and other subjects**

Many of the skills of Social Sciences derive from Language abilities – specially the ability to read, comprehend and engage with texts, the ability to express ones own thinking succinctly using the right conceptual vocabulary, the ability to formulate questions, to elaborate an argument or summarise a view point. Similarly the ability to describe a visual and express opinion about it or dramatise a complex human situation or to express a text in the plastic medium (clay models etc) are an essential part of Social Science education.

Quantification is likewise important in social sciences, especially in Geography and Economics. Likewise skills of measuring area, height, temperature, rainfall etc are crucial to geography.

The skills of logical reasoning, verification, etc so much a part of scientific thinking are also vital to Social Sciences.

## 7. Pedagogy of Social Sciences

Traditionally Social Sciences have been taught as a given body of information, that need to be memorised and recalled. The inordinate importance of the text books derived from this factor. The principle teaching method adopted was to read aloud the text book and explanation of some new terms by the teacher followed by dictation of answers to the end chapter questions. The constructivist approach advocated by NCF 2005, treats knowledge as not fixed but actively constructed through an interactive process. It is therefore imperative to give adequate space for children to apply their minds and reflect on their own experiences while learning about any phenomenon.

Knowledge formation is a social process in which the older generation passes its learning to the new generation which in turn critically assimilates and builds upon this heritage. We therefore do not advocate 'radical constructivism' which seeks to allow children alone to set the agenda and the process of learning. There has to be an active dialogue between subject experts (through their books), teachers and children for a fruitful construction of knowledge to take place in the class room.

The great merit of the constructivist approach is that it tells that knowledge cannot be transferred in a mechanical manner and each individual has to work it out for himself or herself based on their experiences and mental schema. In this process each individual also enriches knowledge. So the school is not merely a place for knowledge transfer but also of knowledge generation and enrichment.

This approach has great implications for the pedagogy of social sciences. It requires three important processes to take place in the class room: firstly each child has to engage with the process of learning through purposeful activities - both physical and mental. Secondly each child should be able to think and articulate their thoughts and questions freely and share them with sensitivity with their fellow students and teachers. Thirdly, each child should be able to bring their own experiences and figure out how they relate to the issue being discussed.

Activities like preparation of tableau, skit, role playing, mock election, mock parliament, collective action on issues related to the welfare of the school and its environment, survey and group project work will all offer contexts for enhancing understanding and articulation of the understanding.

Mental activities should engage children with the texts – comprehending and critically reviewing them against their own experiences and understanding. Comparison, contrasting, extrapolation, imaginative explanation too, constitute important mental activities which are central to social science learning.

The teacher has to play a very sensitive role in moderating the discussion in the class room. Often teachers feel diffident in handling sensitive issues of caste, gender, community, etc. which they consider divisive in the class room. However, inclusive education and critical pedagogy require us to address these issues to promote understanding and reconciliation. The confidence and sensitivity of teachers need to be built up for this purpose.

Role of Text-books: Ideally the idea of single text books which are the font of wisdom which need to be memorised to attain knowledge need to be given up. However, we have to also come to terms with the situation where our children do not have access to good literature on social science themes and the text books remain the only available written material of a reliable quality. It is of vital importance that the text books themselves help to promote non-text book forms of learning. This can be done through a number of devices. The use of informal language familiar to the child, allowing children to question the text or add to the text on the basis of their experiences, constantly referring to the fact that there can be alternative view points on the issues etc are some such devices. It should be made clear to the teachers and the students that the text book is actually incomplete and each class room has to complete it through its teaching-learning activity.

The feedback above draws attention to the fact that our text books are very badly designed and unattractive. This is not only due to bad designing or poor printing quality. It is also due to the monotony of the textual materials. We urgently need to rethink about the materials we give children in our text books. The NCERT has demonstrated that it is possible to give a very wide variety of materials both written and visual, each of them posing a different kind of challenge before the children. Instead of all of them repeating the same set of messages, it is also possible to treat them as complementary to each other.

**Language of the Child:** Most children feel more at ease discussing the more intimate social experiences in their own mother tongue. Thus it is best to teach Social Sciences in the mother tongue of children or at least use a multi-lingual approach in the class room.

We are also using the term ‘language of the child’ in a broader meaning to cover the natural expression of the child. Traditional methods of teaching do not allow the children to form their own ideas in their own words and sentences – instead they were forced to memorise and write in the language of the text books or the language of the teacher. Such practices need to be given up to encourage children to speak and write in their own languages without fear of rebuke or ridicule. Giving children the opportunity to explore and express their own experience and understanding in their own words is of vital importance in the learning of Social Sciences.



## **8. Evaluation in Social Sciences**

The Right to Education Act mandates that the prevailing examination system be replaced by the system of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). This however should not be interpreted as weekly or daily tests. CCE should be seen as deriving from an activity based approach to teaching. The teacher should closely observe each child as he or she participates in the class room and out-door activity and note his or her progress. The teacher has to then design activities that draw out the student in areas where he or she may be lagging behind. It is therefore necessary to design the syllabus and text books in such a way as to incorporate CCE as a part of the normal routine.

As the term ‘comprehensive’ indicates, evaluation should not be focussed on just one aspect such as ability to retain and recall information. It is necessary to bring a range of skills such as reasoning, extrapolating, exploring causal factors, comparing, summarising textual information, surveying, discussing, representing information, etc.

While CCE should necessarily be an ‘open book’ and collective affair even in the secondary stage the possibility of having an open book evaluation should be explored. Open book evaluation relieves the students of the pressure of memorising a huge load of factual details and focus attention on understanding the main concepts and processes. However, open book evaluation requires a very creative task setting which focusses on the basic objectives of social science teaching.

The core of Social Science education lies in strengthening the subjectivity of the learner so that she or he may enrich her or his own unique contribution to the society. Thus evaluation in Social Sciences has to engage with the issue of judging subjective response of the students. It is pointless to insist on all children to memorise the same answer and writing them down in the exams in the same manner. However our examination system is not geared to handle subjectivities and focuses exclusively on what is called ‘objectivity’. This is usually interpreted as identical answers by all students. Assessing subjective answers therefore requires special processes and efforts

like evaluating sample papers to see the possible range of student response to a question and then preparing a schedule for evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rashmi Paliwal, 'Assessment in Social Sciences in schools', in Learning Curve,

## 9. Teacher Preparation

The foregoing discussion on the objectives of Social Science Teaching and its pedagogy clearly indicates a changed role for the teacher and a new expectation from her.

To begin with the agency of the teacher has to be restored. The teacher cannot be treated as a mere administrator of a syllabus and curriculum developed by others but as a person who is taking the decision regarding the curriculum and the materials. The teacher builds bridges between the larger curricular objectives and the world of the students. She has to be empowered to take the final decisions in the field.

Empowering the teacher to take decisions and make choices is the most crucial factor in Social Science Education. This requires both structural changes and also preparation of the teachers. The structural changes should be directed to involve the teacher in all major decisions relating to curriculum and to give autonomy to the teacher to decide what to teach and how to teach using what materials at a given point of time. The teacher should be held accountable for the outcome but not deprived of the authority to take decisions.

Teacher preparation therefore should involve orientation of the teacher into the basic approach and methodologies of the subjects, the variety of materials and strategies that can be used to teach them, and possible pedagogic approaches that could be adopted in the class room. This is done best by helping the teacher to experience first hand an alternative class room in which, the text book is transacted through active discussion, use of libraries and resource persons from the community, drawing children to present their own experiences and thought.

Often it has been noted by observers that many teachers have an ambiivalent attitude towards the constitutional values like democracy, equality and secularism. These values form the core of our social science curriculum; any orientation of the teacher which does not imbue the teacher with these values may be considered highly inadequate. This is possible only if the teachers experience at first hand these values in the process of their orientation. Likewise, a teacher should also understand and have faith in the learning potential of the students, whatever their background. An understanding of the

children and their social background will enable the teacher to handle the resources these diverse social contexts provide to the class room.

The RTE Act mandates that at the middle school level there shall be subject teachers, and this would mean that a social science teacher should have a specialised background in any of the social science disciplines. Mere graduation in one subject may not equip a person to teach social sciences in an integrated manner and such teachers may require additional orientation in all the subject areas. An initial pre service training needs to be followed up with periodic professional reviews and exchanges and refresher courses. Indeed we need to think in terms of setting up professional teachers' associations to consolidate the understanding autonomy and initiative of teachers to teach Social Sciences.

Given the RTE Act directive regarding CCE, the teachers need to be empowered and oriented to conduct this task on a creative and regular basis.

#### References:

1. NCERT National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences
2. NCERT, National Curriculum Framework and Syllabus 2005
3. NCFTE,
4. Poonam Batra,.....
5. NCERT Text Books
6. Eklavya Text Books
7. Rashmi Paliwal, Assessment of Social Sciences in Schools, Learning Curve

## **Constitution of India preamble**

**WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, *having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN, SOCIALIST, SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC, REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens***

**JUSTICE, *social economic and political***

**LIBERTY *of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship***

**EQUALITY *of status and opportunity and to promote among them all***

**FRATERNITY *assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.***

**IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty–sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**