

SOCIAL SCIENCE

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE – I

Textbook for Class VI



0658

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NCERT

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FOREWORD

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days is actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory committee for Social Science textbooks at the Upper Primary Level, Professor Hari Vasudevan and the Chief Advisor for this book, Sarada Balagopalan, for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are

indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to the systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

New Delhi
20 December 2005

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training



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We would like to thank R.K. Laxman (The Times of India), Sheila Dhir, Poile Sengupta and Anjali Monteiro for permitting us to use their work and writings. We duly acknowledge, Penguin, Tulika and the Government of Maharashtra for allowing us to use their publications.

Some of the illustrations in this book have been done by children. The children of Government Middle School, Uda, District Harda have drawn the pictures used in the collage on rural livelihoods. Aditi, Aishwarya, Anisha, Bali, Meenakshi and Sahar also provided us with their drawings. Saswati Chaudhury has painted two of the illustrations that we have used in the first chapter.

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The efforts of the Publication Department, NCERT in bringing out this book are also highly appreciated. This textbook is a reflection of all of our efforts. Suggestions and critical feedback on this book are welcome.

The contribution of M.V.S.V. Prasad, *Assistant Professor*, Department of Curriculum Studies, NCERT, in reviewing and updating the current edition is appreciated.

ON USING THIS BOOK



Why ‘Social and Political Life’?

Members of the team that drew up the National Curriculum Framework 2005 were of the opinion that the subject ‘Civics’ grew out of a certain colonial past and therefore required to be changed. In addition, members of the curriculum committee felt that civics had been focused only on describing government institutions and programmes and needed to develop a critical outlook. “Social and Political Life” is the new subject that emerged out of this exercise. This new subject has also simultaneously expanded its scope by including within its purview topics that deal with various aspects of social, political and economic life.

What is different about ‘Social and Political Life’?

A great deal of effort has gone into consciously devising a different approach while writing this textbook. The textbook incorporates a mix of the following three elements:

- 1) Recognising that children learn best through concrete experiences. We have tried to discuss institutions and processes through incorporating these either in the form of fictional narratives, or case-studies or exercises that draws on the child’s experiences.
- 2) Introducing concepts with a view to enabling comprehension rather than the retention of facts. Some of the ways in which we have done this is through minimising a listing of information, through asking questions that encourage the child to think, and through avoiding definitions wherever possible.
- 3) Keeping in mind that the child is already deeply enmeshed within familial and social networks, we have tried to balance the ideal with the real in our discussion of topics.

Children bring in a lot of what happens in the outside world to the classroom. The discussion of topics draws upon as well as interrogates these understandings. The reality is portrayed along with an analysis of how we could move towards the ideal. This ideal is emphasised through the values that are enshrined in the Constitution and through people’s struggles to achieve these.



This book is divided into four sections that focus on different concepts i.e. diversity, government, local government and administration and livelihoods. Each section contains chapters that elaborate and expand on these concepts.

I. Beginning Each Chapter

Each Chapter begins with two elements that have been introduced to create an interest in the child to find out what the Chapter is about. The first of these is the Introductory Box that provides a brief glimpse into the contents of what that Chapter will deal with. At times it has questions that are designed both to generate curiosity as well as to elicit the child's experiences on the particular topic. We have also begun each Chapter with a large visual. The reason behind this is once again to enable the child to conjecture, with the help of the picture provided, what the particular Chapter seeks to get across. Teachers are encouraged to come up with their own questions and visuals in addition to using those provided in this book.

Chapter 2

Diversity and Discrimination

In the previous chapter you have discussed the meanings of diversity. Sometimes people who are 'different' from others are teased, laughed at or not included in a certain activity or group. We feel hurt, angry, helpless or sad when friends or others treat us in such ways. Have you ever wondered why this happens?

In this chapter we will try and explore how such experiences are related to the society we live in. We will look at how they are connected to the inequalities that exist around us.



II. In-text Questions and Exercises

What were Hector and his classmates protesting about?
List five ways in which the non-whites were discriminated against:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

You will notice that all of the Chapters include boxes that contain in-text questions, discussion boxes or exercises. These serve several purposes. One is to help the teacher gauge the extent to which the student has understood what has been discussed earlier in the Chapter.



3. Talk to a vegetable vendor or hawker and find out how do they organise their work, their way of preparing, purchasing, selling etc.

4. Bachchu Manjhi has to think twice before taking a day off from work. Why?

Second is to expand on the student's understanding of concepts by attempting to locate these within a child's own experiences.

The third is to allow the student to recall and make connections with what has been taught earlier.

Exercise: Look at the statements in the column on the left. Can you identify which level they belong to? Place tick marks allow the student to recall and make connections with what has been taught earlier.

The decision of the Indian government to maintain peaceful relations with Russia

Local State Central

☐
☐
☐

The decision of the West Bengal Government on whether to have Board exam in Class 8 for all government schools.

☐
☐
☐

Introduction of two new train connections between Jammu and Bhubaneswar.

☐
☐
☐

Discuss

Why do you think Samir Do did not attend school? Do you think it would have been easy for him to attend school if he wanted to? In your opinion is it a fair situation that some children get to go to school and others don't?

The discussion boxes are meant for discussion in small groups which then later gets shared with the whole class. These discussion boxes are central to the student experientially expanding upon their understanding of particular concepts and should therefore in no way be ignored for the sake of time constraints.

III. End-Text Questions

In drafting the end-text questions, care has been taken to encourage the student to understand rather than to blindly memorise the contents of the book. Students should be encouraged to write the answers in their own words. Various types of questions have been used. A brief explanation of three different types of questions are provided:

QUESTIONS

1. What is the work of the police?
2. List two things that the work of a Patwari includes.

» One type requires the child to **specifically recall some of the main ideas** of the Chapter.

» Another type asks the student **to answer based on their own experiences.**

5. Fill in the following table to show the services provided by people in the markets which you visit frequently.

Name of the shop or office	Nature of the service provided



x

6. Compare the situation of Sekar and Ramalingam by filling out the following table:

	SEKAR	RAMALINGAM
Land cultivated		
Labour required		
Selling of harvest		

» There are compare and contrast questions that ask the student to think through the information presented to them

» Questions also ask the student **to imagine a situation** that they have read about and react to the issues it throws up.

6. Read the following news item.

...The incident came to light when some villagers brought a badly injured Lad to hospital for treatment. In the FIR recorded by the police Lad said that he was attacked when he insisted that the water in the tanker must be emptied into the storage tanks constructed as part of the water supply scheme by Nimone Gram Panchayat so that there would be equal distribution of water. However, he alleged that the upper caste men were against this and told him that the tanker water was not meant for the lower castes.

Adapted from *Indian Express*, May 1, 2004

- Why was Bhagvan beaten?
- Do you think that the above is a case of discrimination? Why?

7. Discuss:

In the two photographs you see different ways of collecting and disposing garbage.

- Which way do you think provides safety to the person disposing garbage?



» Another type has used visuals/ photos to ask the student to describe what they see and how it relates to what they have read in the Chapter.

These various types of questions will allow the teacher to evaluate whether the child has not only understood a concept but that this learning includes an ability to relate to the concept meaningfully. The teacher is encouraged to set questions of various types, like the ones described above, when evaluating the student. It is important that we formulate new questions, similar to the end-text questions. We must try to abandon the practice of students 'learning' answers to a fixed set of questions. Expressing opinion, or debating on certain issues is part of engaging with or learning a concept.



IV. Use of Narratives

I meant it as a joke. A joke for the small ragged boy who sold newspapers at the traffic light at the busy intersection. Every time I cycled past he would run after me, holding out the English paper and screaming out the evening's headlines in a mixture of Hindi and English. This time, I stopped by the pavement and asked for the Hindi paper. His mouth fell open...



This book uses several narratives, both fiction and non-fiction, to enable the child to understand ideas and institutions. These narratives should be used to encourage introspection as well as discussion, with the effort being to have the student identify as much as possible with the story. In some Chapters we have asked students to write narratives of their own based on their experiences of similar situations. The student should be encouraged to

be as creative as possible while writing and narrating these stories. The teacher is also encouraged to look for linkages that can be made with concepts that are being taught in the other subjects.

Imagine that you are a writer or an artist who lives in the place described above. Either write a story or draw a picture of your life here.

Do you think you would enjoy living in a place like this? List five different things that you would miss the most if you lived here.

Bachchu Manjhi – A Cycle-Rickshaw Puller

I come from a village in Bihar where I worked as a mason. My wife and three children live in the village. We don't own land. In the village I did not get masonry work regularly. The income that I earned was not sufficient for our family.

After I reached this city, I bought an old cycle rickshaw and paid for it in instalments. This was many years ago...



V. Use of Images

This book contains several illustrations and photographs. These are as integral to the Chapter as the narrative is and the teacher is encouraged to use these in explaining the narrative contents of this book. In addition pictures help the child visualise a situation even if the child is not familiar with it. The teacher is encouraged to use relevant visual material in the classroom in addition to what is provided here. The library, newspaper, magazines, the internet are all a potential source of visuals and should be used whenever possible.



VI. Use of other Sources

Letters to the editor



Not bad! One of the taps in the nearby village must be getting water!

Ban posters

POSTERS ON walls spoil the city's looks. Further, many times posters are pasted on important sign boards and even road maps. All political parties should arrive at a consensus on banning posters on walls.

MAHESH KAPASI
Delhi

A textbook is important but only one among many sources that can be used in a classroom. Students should be encouraged to read outside their textbooks. One way would be to find out answers to some of the questions raised in the class in other sources like the newspaper, magazines, books etc.



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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[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 of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the ²[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.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)