

School Education and Social Science

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ABSTRACT

Social Science in school education is crucial for fostering informed, engaged, and responsible citizens by teaching students about human societies, cultures, and interactions. It provides a foundation for understanding complex social, economic, and political issues, promoting critical thinking, and developing a global perspective. Social Science as a discipline has the unique capability of being able to look at both developmental and normative issues of the society. It includes a wide range of content drawn from the disciplines of History, Geography, Political Science, Economics and Sociology, therefore this is an indispensable part of the School curriculum which is essential to provide social cultural and analytical skills required to adjust in increasingly interdependent world. It is the only subject which deals with the issues of equality, justice, peace and dignity in society and polity. Social Science is necessary for fulfilling the constitutional goals. In order to realize the above expectations, Social Science teachers need to be prepared to have the necessary skills, values, and attitudes so that they can inculcate the same in the learners.

Keywords: Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, Sociology, School Education

INTRODUCTION

Education, as a planned endeavor at personal level on a small scale institutional level on a large scale, aims at making children capable of becoming active, responsible, productive, and caring members of society. Till recently this expectation has not been realized due to several factors such as a perception that Social Science is a nonutility subject that merely transmits information and is bereft of the skills required to function in the real world. There is an urgent need to change the perception and this can be achieved only through a well planned and executed Elementary Teacher Education Programme. Such a programme has to deal with some major concerns. It is necessary that they be equipped to educate the children through perspective of gender equity, the perspective that develop values for peace, respect the rights of all, value work.

In the present ecological crisis, promoted by extremely commercialized and competitive life styles. Teacher and children need to be educated to change their consumption patterns and the way they look at natural resources. Teacher education institutions will need to reframe their programme courses to include the perspective, concept and strategies of inclusive education. There is also a need to develop sensitivity to bring and include girls in class room transactions. Teacher Education also needs to give greater thrust to provide inputs for enrichment programmes for education of gifted children. There is also a need to orient and sensitize the teacher to use ICT in a critically useful and developmentally appropriate way.

ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION:

Developing Critical Thinking:

Social Science encourages students to analyze information from various sources, question assumptions, and form their own well-reasoned opinions on social issues.

Promoting Citizenship:

It helps students understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, learn about different forms of government and political systems, and participate in democratic processes.

Fostering Empathy and Understanding:

By studying different cultures, societies, and historical periods, students gain a deeper appreciation for diversity and develop empathy for others.

Improving Communication Skills:

Social Science subjects require students to express their ideas clearly and persuasively through writing, speaking, and presentations, which are essential for effective communication in all areas of life.

Building a Global Perspective:

It exposes students to the interconnectedness of the world and helps them understand global issues such as climate change, poverty, and conflict, promoting a sense of global citizenship.

Interdisciplinary Approach:

Social Science is not just about memorizing facts; it's about understanding how different disciplines like history, geography, economics, and political science relate to each other.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Inadequate Resources and Funding:

Some schools lack the resources and funding necessary to provide high-quality Social Science instruction, including qualified teachers, updated materials, and field trips.

Lack of Qualified Teachers:

Many schools struggle to find and retain qualified teachers with a strong background in Social Science, which can impact the quality of instruction.

Curriculum and Assessment:

Some curricula may be outdated or overly focused on rote memorization, which can make learning less engaging and meaningful.

Integrating Technology:

Social Science education can be enhanced by using technology to access resources, conduct research, and engage in interactive learning activities.

Collaborating with Communities:

Schools can collaborate with local communities and organizations to bring real-world experiences into the classroom, making learning more relevant and meaningful.

Promoting Inclusivity:

Social Science education should be inclusive and representative of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all students.

By addressing these challenges and embracing opportunities, schools can ensure that Social Science education is a vital and engaging component of their curriculum, empowering students to become informed, critical, and responsible citizens of the world.

The future teachers have to be acquainted with various strategies to involve the community in School Education Programme. The above concerns can be addressed by an endeavor to achieve the following objectives. Through Social Science Education the future teacher has to acquire the competency to-

- Understand The Learner Within Their Social, Cultural And Political Contexts, Their Beliefs And Treat All Children Equally.
- Construct His/ Her Own Knowledge As Well As Encourage Children To Construct Knowledge.
- Make Learning A Joyful And Participatory Activity.
- Organize Learner Centered , Activity Based, Participatory Learning Experiences.
- Analyse And Critically Examine Curriculum And Text Books And Adapt Curriculum To Suit Local Needs.
- Promote Peace Values – Democratic Way Of Life, Equality, Justice, Liberty, Secularism.
- Be A Reflective Teacher Who Can Improve His/Her Self Professionally Through Reflective Practices.
- Consciously Integrate Various Components Of The Curriculum-Arts, Value S, Craft And Creative Activities.
- Adopt Techniques Of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation And Process Based Assessment.
- Acquire The Skills Of Using Ict In A Meaningful Way In Classroom Processes.
- Ensure Community Cooperation And Participation In Classroom As Well As School Activities.
- Use Community Resources Purposefully For Classroom Processes.
- Skills To Prepare And Use Verities Of Learning Materials.
- Take Up Simple Research Activities To Address Quality Issues. In Order To Achieve The Above Objectives Following Alternatives have been suggested to be incorporated in the D.Ed programme.

It is suggested to introduce Content , throughout the course as follows:

- a) 1st to 4th/1st to 5th Std during First year
- b) 6 th to 7th/8th Std during second year as the case may be such a programme has to be pedagogy based and transacted through an integrative approach. ‘Social Science Education ’ as suggested above can be introduced in first and second year course.

As follows. specialization in any two school subjects during first year and the same to be continued during second year.

- c) Content not to be viewed as an isolated component but as an integral part of pedagogy.
- d) Pedagogy adapted is to be suited to the developmental stage and level of maturity of the learners. Eg: Activity based learning.

Concept formation

Inquiry based learning, problem solving etc A well thought out scheme of continuous and comprehensive evaluation needs to be evolved, based on constructivism for this purpose the teacher education institution may design, develop, and use varieties of instruments of evaluation.

Proposed Curriculum and Pedagogy

Keeping in view the above listed objectives and the alternatives suggested on the basis of NCF-2005 and NCFTE-2009, the following curriculum and pedagogic areas are to be incorporated in D.Ed program.

School curriculum.

i. During First year 1st to 4th / 5th std themes : A deeper understanding of concepts and sub concepts included in the themes. Analysis of the content, enrichment of the same through field based and library based activities, school/classroom observation to generate content and episodes leading to resource readiness.

ii. During Second year study of 6th and 7th/ 8th std Social Science syllabi for a deeper understanding of the content. A critical analysis of the syllabi and text books.

iii. To sift the plug points suited to the integration of Peace Education, Value Education. iv. Relate the themes and content to local specific needs. B. Practical Inputs to understand the learner and the curriculum. i. Observation of School activities and interactions with the learners. ii. Field surveys. iii. Projects. iv. Group Discussions based on curriculum. v. Reflective activities to internalize and share their experiences and backgrounds.

iv. Exposure to integration of various components of Social science, and with other Disciplines. C. Pedagogy. i. Understanding the philosophical and epistemological bases of EVS and Social Science. ii. Approaches based on Constructivism. iii. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation – Selection, and interpretation. iv. Community participation in social science education.

v. Understanding and practicing inclusive education and the values enshrined in the Constitution.

vi. Developing and using learning materials , judicious use of locally available resources.

The major shifts proposed in Teacher Education Programme should cater to the expectations of NCF-2005 as follows

- Teacher centric fixed design to learner centric flexible process.
- Stress on teacher guidance and monitoring to one who can facilitate support and encourage learning.
- Passive reception learning to active participatory learning.
- Learning within in four wall of the class room to learning in the wider social context.
- Knowledge as ‘given’ and fixed to knowledge as evolved and creative.
- Short and few appraisal to multifarious and continuous appraisal not in the form of marks, but on a scale (qualitative) and the student’s achievement is evaluated and a continuum and she is placed according to her performance in various activities.

Teaching is a Profession and Teacher Education is a process of professional preparation of teachers. Preparing someone for a profession is an arduous task and it involves action from multiple fronts and perspectives. Apart from training the student-teachers in the necessary knowledge and skills and a good Teacher Education Programme should also endeavour to develop proper attitudes, values, and outlook towards teaching Profession.

Education, as a planned endeavor at personal level on a small scale institutional level on a large scale, aims at making children capable of becoming active, responsible, productive, and caring members of society. They are made familiar with the various practices of the community by imparting the relevant skills and ideas. Ideally, education is supposed to encourage the students to analyze and evaluate their experiences to doubt, to questions, to investigate- in other words, to be inquisitive and to think independently. With this perspective Social Science encompass as diverse concern of society and includes a wide range of content drawn from the disciplines of history, geography, political science, economics, and sociology. The selection and organization of material into meaningful Social Science curriculum, and that will enable students to develop a critical understanding of society, is therefore a challenging task. The possibilities of including new dimensions and concerns are immense especially in view of the students own life experiences.

The Social Science curriculum is vast and by its nature must involve transaction with understanding of the outside world. There are several issues in teaching-learning of social science that impact the learning outcomes. Social Science is largely perceived as a body of facts with very little relevance to the life of the student. In pluralistic society like India, local context and content is vital in the classroom transaction in Social Science. Social Science also carries the unique position of being able to look at normative issues of the society, but in reality it is a different scenario.

Past and Present Scenario:

In spite of the recommendations of various committees and commissions in the past and the present, the scenario remains the same and the vexed issues/problems remain unresolved such as,

1. The prevailing perception of Social Science is that it is a non-utility subject as a result low self esteem governs the class room transaction process with both teachers and students feeling uninterested in comprehending its content.
2. There is a widespread belief that history merely transmits historical information and is too centered on the text, which is required to be memorized for examination. The content of the text books are unconnected to daily realities and is viewed as providing unnecessary details about the past.
3. There is a perception that not many desirable job options are open to students specializing in the Social Science.
4. It is felt that the Social Sciences are bereft of the 'skills' required to function in the real world, which creates the impression that the subject is redundant.
5. The content of Social Science is as retention of information without comprehension.
6. It is often presumed that only natural and physical phenomena lend themselves to scientific inquiry and human sciences (History, Geography, Economics, Political Science etc.) cannot be by their very nature scientific.
7. Text books are seen as the major source of knowledge. This forecloses any possibility of innovation by an active participation of the learners.
8. The Social Science curriculum has hitherto emphasized developmental issues. These are important but not sufficient to understand the normative dimensions like issues of equality, justice, and dignity in society and quality and thus creating a gap between the role of an individual in contributing to developmental issues.

Keeping the past and present status of Social Science Education there is a need to tune the teacher education program according to needs of the society.

The Proposed Epistemological Frame: Based on the above considerations of popular perception the issues to be addressed in preparing future teachers are as follows.

1. To emphasize in the teacher education curriculum that Social Science is essential to provide social cultural and analytical skills required to adjust to an increasingly interdependent world and to deal with political and economic realities.
2. It is important to reinstate the importance of Social Sciences by pointing to their indispensability in laying the foundation for an analytical and creative mind.
3. It is necessary to empower the teachers and students and the local community to generate knowledge in their own real contexts to the content of Social Science by bringing relevant local content as a part of teaching-learning process ideally transacted through activities drawn from local teaching learning activities.
4. It is necessary to recognize in teacher education that Social Sciences lend themselves to scientific inquiry just as much as the natural and physical sciences do, as well as indicate ways in which the methods employed by Social Sciences are distinct to those of the natural and physical sciences.
5. It is important to create a teacher education program to widen the popular base for human values namely, freedom, trust, mutual respect and respect for diversity.
6. There is a need to select themes in the teacher education curriculum where different disciplinary approaches can facilitate an in-depth and multiple understanding of human values.
7. It is essential to accommodate in the teacher education curriculum multiple ways of imagining the Indian nation along with the national perspective and the local perspective through which the children can relate themselves to the nation to ensure a deeper and richer understanding of the nation.

8. There is a need to achieve a shift in focus from utilitarianism to egalitarianism that would address the normative concerns like issues of equality, justice, and dignity in society and polity.
9. There is an urgent need to restore self esteem to the Social Sciences by having them to address social and political issues in such a way as to awaken in the studentteacher a real concern for social justice.

Keeping the above considerations in view the vision of Social Science education of teacher education at elementary level is framed herewith.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the importance of social science cannot be overstated. It molds students into informed, empathetic, and engaged citizens of the world. At Ramagya School, we recognize that every child is unique and deserves the opportunity to grasp the significance of social science in their life. Through our various events, workshops, and counseling sessions, we aim to ignite the spark of curiosity and nurture the curious minds of our students. So, embrace the world of social science with enthusiasm, for it is the gateway to a deeper understanding of the world and your place within it.

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