UNIT 2 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCES

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Social science is one of the important curricular areas in school education that encompass diverse concerns of society. It includes a wide range of contents drawn from the disciplines of history, geography, political science, economics and sociology. Social science perspectives are indispensable to build the knowledge base for a just and peaceful society. You might be eager to look into several aspects of this particular curricular area and may further like to know the way in which it has been placed in school curriculum. You may like to probe the way different stakeholders like parents, students, teachers, academicians and policy makers look at this domain of knowledge. As a practicing teacher, you may also like to explore the way in which teaching-learning process is organised in social science classrooms. In the changing scenario, why is there a need to bring changes to pedagogical practices of social sciences? You may also like to seek answers to the questions related to several pedagogical issues encountered by teachers. You are aware of the fact that in most of the schools in our country, especially those located in remote, inaccessible and rural areas, teachers rely on single source for transacting knowledge – the textbook. Through this unit you will be acquainted with use of textbooks designed with new approach based on constructivism. As a practitioner, you may have come across several personal difficulties while teaching the subject. For example, you may have realised that some of your students are not keeping pace with your method of teaching social sciences. In such a situation, you may require to introspect and come out with meaningful solutions through action research. In this unit, we will acquaint you with the process of conducting action research in social sciences. Further, you will be learning about use of local/community knowledge and learners’ own experiences in the teaching-learning process. While teaching in the class you must have noticed that there is a diverse group of students in your classroom. We will describe strategies to deal with diverse and inclusive classroom. In order to achieve the above competencies, you need to upgrade your skills continuously through professional development. In this unit, you will be learning several aspects of curricular areas in social sciences, issues related to teaching social sciences, how to manage social science classrooms and ultimately how you can keep abreast with the profession by acquiring professional development.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the importance of social sciences in school curriculum;
- acquaint yourselves with pedagogical practices in social sciences;
- discuss the issues related to pedagogical practices in social sciences;
- examine the role of textbook in teaching-learning of social sciences;
- explain the importance of action research in social sciences;
- realize the need for utilizing local community knowledge and learners own experiences in teaching learning process;
- discuss the need for generating sensitivity towards gender, caste, religion among learners;
• adopt inclusion as a curricular strategy;
• discuss the need and importance of democratic classroom for social sciences; and
• examine the purpose and usefulness of professional development.

2.3 REFLECTION ON SCHOOL CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AND ISSUES RELATED TO IT

2.3.1 Reflection on School Curriculum

There are several stakeholders who look into different aspects of curricular areas in social sciences through multiple perspectives. They include society in general, parents, teachers, students, educationist, and decision makers in particular. There are several perceptions towards teaching social sciences at secondary level. It is least preferred in the hierarchy of disciplines and placed much below than natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology. You must have noticed that while selection of stream/subjects at the end of secondary stage, parents and children get attracted to science subjects and it thus happen that mostly so called low performers opt for subjects related to social sciences. This leads to low self-esteem of teachers and students, which ultimately affects classroom transaction process. In order to overcome the situation, there is need to emphasize that the social sciences are essential to provide social, cultural and analytical skills required to adjust to an increasingly interdependent world, and to deal with social, political and economic realities.

Some of the popular perceptions about social sciences are that social science is nothing but encyclopedia of events and places. Social science books comprise several textbooks for a single class. Students also feel that social sciences transmit textbook information which require only to be memorized. The events occurred in the past provide unnecessary details of the past events and location of places, minerals, industries and other resources. Questions asked in examination are based on rote memory and do not promote development of higher order cognitive abilities.

There is a general perception that since the subject does not inculcate any specialized skill required of job market, students of social sciences are generally deprived of jobs in the market. Therefore, people sometimes consider social science as a redundant subject. There is a common perception among people that social sciences emphasize on retention of information without comprehension. The subject requires memorization of large number of facts including dates and places. Since textbooks in social sciences very often do not include local content and realities, students, teachers and community lack interest and relevance in the social science textbooks due to absence of local content and realities. Moreover, social sciences still lack the legitimacy of carrying the flavour of scientific rigour as they hardly embed scientific inquiry in curricular discourse.

Social sciences carry a normative approach to create and widen the popular base for human values, like freedom, trust, mutual trust, and respect for diversity. Social science teaching stimulates child’s thought process and creativity.
What can be done?

It is important to reinstate the significance of the social sciences by highlighting their increasing relevance for job in the rapidly expanding service sector. The importance of the subject needs to be stated and advocated by pointing out its indispensability in laying the foundations of an analytical and creative mind. Social science contents need to focus on conceptual understanding rather than lining up facts to be memorized for examination and should equip children with the ability to think independently and reflect critically on social issues. Interdisciplinary approaches promoting key concerns such as gender, justice, human rights, and sensitivity to marginalized groups and minorities need to be encouraged in teaching-learning process.

2.3.2 Pedagogical Practices and Issues Related to it

Pedagogical practices need to change in the light of dynamic nature of the subject, changing classroom situations, and in order to make social science curriculum relevant, interesting and useful to the children and to meet the needs and expectations of the society.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 had advocated five basic principles listed in the Box-1. As a teacher of social sciences, you need to make a sincere attempt to bring these changes in your traditional classrooms and move towards construction of knowledge in classroom situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five Major Guiding Principles of Learning as mentioned in National Curriculum Framework-2005</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• connecting knowledge to life outside the school,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote method,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• enriching the curriculum to provide overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• making examination more flexible and integrated into classroom life,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCF-2005

Learning and knowledge in Social Sciences

Let us discuss what constitutes learning and knowledge in social sciences. NCF(2005) advocates child centered pedagogy. It means giving primacy to children’s experiences, their voices and their active participation in teaching-learning process. In our schools, social science is still taught in traditional method where either children are engaged in reading the textbooks in a louder voice in chorus, underlining the important terms and definitions or teacher lecturing about certain concepts. Students are largely dependent on help books and guides to note down the answers and the same is presented on a piece of paper during examination. There is no chance or very less chance of interaction between students and teacher in the classroom. When children speak, they are usually answering the teacher’s questions or repeating teacher’s words. They rarely do things, nor do they have opportunities to take initiative. You, as a teacher, need to bring changes in pedagogical
practices by giving primacy to the children, by enabling them to express their voices, by nurturing their curiosity, by providing them opportunity to pursue investigations, and by sharing and integrating their experiences with school knowledge—rather than emphasizing on their ability to reproduce textual knowledge.

You must note that children learn social sciences in varieties of ways through experience, making and doing things, experimentation, reading, discussion, asking questions, listening, thinking, reflecting and expressing their voices. They require opportunities of all these kinds in the course of classroom transaction. You must allow children to ask questions that require them to relate what they are learning in social science classrooms to things happening outside. You need to encourage children to answer to the questions in social sciences in their own words and from their own experiences, make an attempt to develop multiple perspectives upon the social science concepts and issues. This will foster creative and critical thinking among them.

You need to engage your children in active engagement during curriculum transaction through inquiry, exploration, questioning, debate, application and reflection, leading to theory building and the creation of new ideas/propositions.

Activity-1

In your social science classes, make an attempt to:

- encourage children to take initiative and take ownership for their own learning,
- ensure that students’ ideas are respected,
- encourage independent thinking among children,
- facilitate children to frame questions and identify issues, gather and analyze information, and create new knowledge. Ask open-ended questions,
- allow them time to reflect and build on the ideas of others,
- promote higher-level thinking,
- challenge children to reach beyond factual answers,
- encourage children to connect and summarize concepts by analyzing, predicting, justifying and defending their ideas,
- inculcate in them problem solving abilities,
- promote children to justify and defend their ideas,
- encourage children to discuss their concrete experiences,
- involve children in experiences that challenge hypotheses and arrive at solution.
- ensure that children are involved in real-world situations from which they can generate abstract concepts.
- encourage them to use raw data and primary sources,
- help them access to manipulative and interactive materials,
- encourage them to use local knowledge and their experiences as pedagogical practices.
2.4 EXAMINING THE ROLE OF TEXTBOOKS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHING

You must have probably noticed that in most of our classrooms teachers use standard textbook series. The reasons for this practice are many, depending upon the design and the focus of the curriculum, the mandates of the administration and governing body and/or the level of the expertise on the part of the classroom teachers. You may recall that a textbook is a collection of the concepts, and different propositions in the form of facts, theories, principles, assumptions, hypotheses, etc. on a selected topic or course / class. It is usually written by one or more teachers, academicians working in colleges/ universities, organizations like NCERT, SCERT having specialized knowledge in their respective fields. Most textbooks are accompanied by handbooks for teachers, which provide supplementary material, ideas and activities to use these textbooks throughout the academic year.

Textbooks were seen as major source of knowledge. This foreclosed any innovation by an active participation of the learners, both by teachers and students. The textbook should be used as opening up avenues for further enquiry. This would encourage learner to go beyond the textbook, to further reading and observation.

Source: NCF-2005

2.4.1 Textbook

In most classrooms, textbook is one and the only resource available with students and teachers. NCF- 2005 propagated for enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond the textbook. The fact that knowledge is constructed by the children implies that curricula, syllabi and textbooks should enable the teacher in organising classroom experiences in consonance with the children’s nature and environment, and thus providing them opportunities to use their own experiences. There is a need for multiple learning resources for teachers and children. In order to incorporate local knowledge, traditional skills, diversity among the learners and learning environments, there is a need for plurality of textbooks and other resources. In a diverse society, it is very much essential that all geographical regions and social groups must find space in textbooks. Children must relate themselves with the textbook.

2.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages

Textbooks provide you with several advantages in the classroom:

- They are very helpful for beginner teachers as they contain course to be dealt in the class and the design of each lesson is carefully elaborated.
- They provide organized units of work; they provide you with ideas for planning your instructional process.
- They provide balanced, chronological presentation of information.
• They provide administrators and teachers with a complete programme.

• Good textbooks are excellent learning resources for both teachers and students.

You must have also realized that sometimes textbooks might have failed to arouse students’ interest and students reject textbooks simply because of what they are – compendiums of large chunk of information for students and they may find it difficult to understand the relevance of a lot of information to their personal lives.

2.4.3 How to Use Textbooks?

A textbook is only as good as the teacher who uses it. It is important to remember that a textbook is just one tool, perhaps a very important learning resource. As a teacher, you must not over rely on textbooks and ignore other learning resources available. It has been also noticed that due to outdated information and insufficient coverage of course contents, teachers reject these textbooks. As a teacher you need to take many decisions, and one of those is how you want to use the textbooks.

Textbooks may have certain limitations. You must be wise enough to design certain strategies to overcome these limitations. We present in Table 1 limitations of a Textbook and how to over come them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitations of Textbook</th>
<th>Effect on Students</th>
<th>You may overcome limitation by..</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbook is designed as a single source of information.</td>
<td>Students visualize only limited perspective on a concept or issue.</td>
<td>As a teacher, you may provide a lot of information by using supplementary materials like websites, dictionaries, atlas, encyclopedias, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook becomes old and outdated over a period of time.</td>
<td>Students do not get current and relevant information.</td>
<td>Use textbook sparingly or supplement it with other learning resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook seems to be encyclopedic, and full of factual information.</td>
<td>Students assume that learning is simply collection and reproduction of facts and figures.</td>
<td>You may ask students higher level questions and provide them activities related to creative thinking and problem solving.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Textbook does not take students’ background into account.  
Teachers do not customize daily lesson plans according to the needs, aspirations, specific interests and attributes of the students.  
You need to assess what students know about the topic prior to instructional process and design the learning experiences based on students’ existing knowledge.

- Language of the textbook is often difficult for students to comprehend and readability of the text is affected.  
Students cannot read or understand important concepts.  
You may provide students a lot of supplementary information, which are easily comprehensible, by using materials like websites, dictionaries, atlas, encyclopedias, etc.

- Textbook has all the solutions to the questions raised.  
Students lose interest in the subject as the content may not be challenging for them and they perceive learning as an accumulation of right answers.  
Involve students in problem solving activities, higher level thinking questions, and activities beyond the textbook.

**Textbook as a learning resource:** There is no textbook which is totally perfect and complete in all respects. As textbook needs to address the requirements of diverse learners, it may have certain limitations also. But in our schools, this is the only single learning resource at your disposal, which you may use it as a blueprint, teacher’s guide or as an outline. From pedagogic point of view, you should not rely on a single textbook for your instructional planning. The textbook needs to be used very judiciously. You are free to modify, change or eliminate or add to the material in the textbook and supplement the textbook with lots of outside readings so that meaningful learning takes place in our classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Your Progress 2</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Notes:** a) Write your answers in the space given below.  
  b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit. |
| 1. Write any two guiding principles of learning as mentioned by NCF-2005.  
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2. ACTION RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHING

2.5.1 What is Action Research?

You might have learnt about action research earlier. In this unit, we focus our discussion on action research and its characteristics, and how it can be used as reflective practice in social sciences. Action research is a problem solving approach. It helps a teacher to perceive, understand and assess the situation, which is problematic and further facilitates a systematic analysis of possible reasons for the cause of problem. Once the entire process is done successfully, different alternative solutions are planned, and tried out to solve the problem or transform the dissatisfaction level to satisfactory level. The entire concept is derived from management. One of the forerunners in education who advocated and used action research is Stephen Corey. In present times there are several models of action research. In this unit we will be dealing with improvised model of Mc Kernan (1991) called ‘Time Process’ Model, which will be discussed in detail.

2.5.2 Why to Conduct Action Research in Social Sciences?

Before we discuss the model and its steps, it is pertinent to discuss why do social science teachers need to conduct action research? You know that teaching is a profession. So, in order to keep abreast with the latest developments in the subject and to upgrade and sharpen your teaching skills, you need to constantly reflect on your style and effectiveness of teaching so that you become reflective practitioner. You might have very often faced different problems in your classrooms which had affected smooth transaction of learning experiences. In such a situation you need to understand the problem, analyze the causes and attempt to solve the problem and improve the delivery of learning experiences. This is the essence of action research.

2.5.3 How to Conduct Action Research?

There are certain steps in conducting action research. We discuss them with the help of a case study.

Step 1: Developing a Focus: As a sensitive practitioner, you need to focus on the situation which is posing a problem or causing dissatisfaction in teaching-learning of social sciences. For example, on a field visit to a school in a rural area, the author found that more than three-fourth of the students from class VI to X were scoring less than 30% marks in questions related
Pedagogy of Social Sciences

to map identification and map labeling in their school based examination. In such a situation, the author focused his attention on the problem he had to explore further. He had in his mind the following questions: What was happening in the present situation? What are the causes of poor performance of the students? What can he do about that situation and how can he do in that situation?

In order to systematically answer these questions, he followed the following steps. These steps put together explain the process of action research and are displayed in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Steps in Conducting Action Research**

You must remember that action research is a small scale intervention by a teacher in the teaching-learning process as part of her/his legitimate activity. The whole action is specifically studied, planned and implemented in a specific context and hence cannot be generalized. The entire action research process enables a practitioner to reflect on her/his own efficiency and enable her/him to improve her/his professional practice. In the process of reflecting on the efficiency, it prompts the practitioner to enhance her/his efficiency. The entire perspective of becoming a reflective practitioner is possible only if one wants to become a reflective practitioner. It is the practitioner’s privilege.

**Step II: Analyze the problem/Dissatisfied State:** As a teacher of social sciences, you must have noted down that in most of the achievement tests in social sciences, there are items based on map questions. Students are expected to label the features and sometimes also identify the features. Majority of the students perform poorly in such questions.

**Step III: Probable Causes:**

i) Lack of knowledge of content, skills and motivation among social science teachers to teach geography (map skills).

ii) Lack of resources like maps, atlas and globes in school.

iii) Lack of interest among students to learn social sciences.
**Step IV: Proposition:** Subject teachers do not have thorough knowledge of maps and map reading skills. They do not have practical knowledge of using map as a teaching learning resource. Teacher training institutions do not provide sufficient skills in map reading and map drawing.

**Step V: Planning for intervention:** For developing the map reading skills among students and teachers Pre-Test was designed and administered to class IX students and teachers dealing with class IX. The Test consisted of very short answer type questions related to six major skills of map reading like scale, colour, distance, symbol, inference, etc.

After the Pre-test, scores obtained by students and teachers were tabulated and analysed. Six practical sessions (each session of one hour duration) was planned. During those sessions theoretical concepts related to Map, Scale, Types of Map, Uses of Map, Elements of Map (title, scale, direction, legend) were explained to students and teachers with several hands on experiences.

After the instructional process was over, these students and teachers were given post-test. Scores obtained by teachers and students were tabulated and analysed.

The students and the teachers who had maximum range of marks in Pre-test and post test were felicitated. As a token of appreciation these children were provided with atlas so that in future also they can sustain their map reading skills.

**Tools and Techniques Used:**
1. Scored answer sheets of students.
2. Pre-Test and Post Test Papers
3. Modules for Map Reading Skills

**Resource Support Needed:**
1. Support of Vidyalaya Administration
2. Financial Support for purchase of maps and atlas.

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**2.6 USE OF LOCAL/COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNERS’ OWN EXPERIENCES IN THE TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS (CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE)**

**2.6.1 What is Local Knowledge/Community Knowledge?**

You may wonder that if schools prescribe textbook in social sciences, what is the purpose of using local/community knowledge in the transaction of learning experiences. Is there any scope for incorporating local knowledge in our teaching-learning strategies? As you know that the aim of education is to relate the knowledge imparted in the school to the children’s own world. Our children will learn better if the content is related to them. This connection is possible through contextual learning or situating learning in
the context of the children’s world. There is a need to have close association between school and children’s local environment. If there is porous boundary between school and their environment then they recognize themselves as proactive participants in the learning process. Then they express their viewpoints in relation to concepts taught in the class. Therefore, it is desired that relevant local contents need to be integrated in the teaching-learning process. Ideally content must be transacted through activities drawing on local resources.

The constructivist approach gives primacy to the child centred-pedagogy and the way construction of knowledge takes place. The approach advocates that the child interacts with her environment and constructs knowledge and derives meaning out of it. The community of the child and her local environment formulates the primary context in which learning takes place.

This approach got incorporated and implemented while conceptualizing new textbooks. Now as a teacher you have to bring this approach into pedagogical practices.

In social science classes we need to hear the vivid experiences of the children acquired by them through interaction with local environment. We need to provide them scope for classroom talks in our transactional strategies. We need to teach social sciences by utilising local knowledge as social sciences present slice of social reality and children have familiarity with their immediate local environment. The local environment is a natural learning resource; teacher needs to be very selective and judicious in selecting local contents as local contents selected irrationally may not serve the purpose of teaching-learning.

2.6.2 Why Local Knowledge is to be Used in Social Science Class?

In order to have meaningful learning in the classroom, it is expected that the social science contents must be relevant, interesting and meaningful to the students. It will be interesting if it is familiar to students so that they can relate it with their daily life and comment upon and address the issues pertaining to the content. In other words, in order to have the relevant, interesting and meaningful learning it is desired to have sufficient scope for using local/community knowledge in the teaching-learning activities. Teachers need to engage with ‘local knowledge’/indigenous practices in their local area, and relate these to school knowledge wherever possible.

Figure 2.2: Selection of Local Content
2.6.3 How to Use Local Knowledge in Social Science Class?

Before starting a chapter on ‘resources’, you may take your students out on a walk near the school and on returning they may be asked to write down names of several resources they came across. Students living in different geographical locations will be writing names of different resources found in their surroundings. Later on, you can ask them to classify these resources according to some categories. As our country is agrarian country, and still three-fourth of the children reside in rural areas, these children have sufficient knowledge of agricultural crops and agricultural practices. While dealing with a chapter on ‘agriculture’ you may use their local knowledge on agriculture to build on your classroom discussions.

Teachers while planning for pedagogical practices must provide space where students can compare their life with life around them in their local environment. If there is a discussion on rice cultivation in Brahmaputra valley, students in western Uttar Pradesh may be taught to compare it with wheat cultivation in their region. As we know that local communities have rich cultural resources, local stories, folk tales, folk songs, riddles, etc. All these can be utilised as cultural resources in classroom teaching. Every community has an oral history. This too can be utilized in classroom teaching.

Textbooks and other learning materials can incorporate local knowledge and traditional skills, and trigger teaching-learning environment that responds to the students’ home and community environment.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

3. What is the purpose of conducting action research in social science?

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4. What are the criteria the teacher should bear in mind while selecting local knowledge.

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2.7 UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF LEARNERS AND THEIR SENSITIVITY TOWARDS GENDER, CASTE, AND RELIGION, ETC.

2.7.1 Nature of Learner

We are aware of the fact that Indian society is diverse indeed. There is diversity with respect to gender, caste, religion, region and language. There is a need to ensure that children from different backgrounds with variations
7in physical, psychological and intellectual characteristics are able to learn and achieve successful learning in school. In this context, there is need to address the issue of diversity in education arising from inequalities of gender, caste, language, culture, religion or disabilities. The issue of diversity needs to be addressed through policies and schemes; and also through the design and selection of learning tasks and pedagogic practices, so that all students irrespective of their diverse backgrounds take interest and develop confidence to learn, and find the requisite space in teaching-learning process.

2.7.2 How to Address the Needs of Divergent Learners?

In social science classroom, issues pertaining to human rights, caste, religion and gender need to be critically reflected upon by students in order to see how these issues are connected to their everyday experiences. They can further discuss how different forms of inequalities becoming compounded and perpetuated. While teaching social sciences, there must be scope for critical pedagogy so that students can take collective decision through open discussions and recognising multiple views.

For a moment, visualize a picture of your own classroom and the composition of students therein. You may have recalled that there are learners in your social science class with diverse learning needs. In your class you must have come across learners with different type and degree of disability. Learners may have come from different socio-economic groups; they may belong to different religious groups; they may vary in their achievement level, as some of them might be high scorers whereas others may not be so. Then there may be students from certain marginalized groups who must be feeling stigmatized, helpless and inferior to others due to diverse socio-economic background and inappropriate pedagogical strategies practiced in the classroom. We must realize that differences among students must be viewed as resources for supporting learning rather than as a problem.

You may agree that since curriculum and textbooks are not designed and developed directly by school teachers, teachers have limited role in designing inclusive curriculum and textbook, but at the same time role of teacher is very important as she can construct a classroom culture that might provide an inclusive environment for children. Apart from that you may bring adaptations in your teaching strategies, learning resources and equipments to facilitate these learners to cope up with regular classroom teaching. Adaptation in learning resource include adjustment in organizing material, learning resource, presentation style, assessment of students performance, and providing them with self learning material to these children facilitate social science learning better. If teachers not bring adaptations in the content and methodology, then they will not be able to do justice to inclusive classroom.

As every child has right to quality education, it becomes the responsibility of all teachers to respect these variations and look forward to provide quality teaching in social science considering the needs of each and every learner. It is the responsibility of each school to provide conducive learning environment to all the children and the role of the social science is to take care of these students by adopting suitable pedagogical practices. Teaching and learning processes in the classroom should be planned to respond to the
diverse needs of students. Teachers can explore positive strategies for providing education to all children including those perceived as having disabilities. This can be achieved in collaboration with fellow teachers or with organisations outside the school.

### 2.8 INCLUSIONS AS A CURRICULAR STRATEGY
(SOCIAL INCLUSION/EXCLUSION)

#### 2.8.1 What is Inclusion?

Inclusion refers to the education of all children with various disabilities and/or diversities in the overall general educational structure by adapting the complete educational system including the school structure, infrastructure, methodology, and curriculum and classroom management. Inclusion is about a child's right to participate in activities carried out in classrooms. With inclusive education, the regular schools make provision for children with special needs. They make the school system flexible by adopting inclusive approach.

In an inclusive social science classroom there is enrolment of all children. It is the duty of school management and teacher to undertake functional assessment of children about what they can do and what they cannot do. Once the assessment is over, the teacher needs to plan learning strategies keeping in mind the specific educational needs of each category of disability, its degree, nature and set of occurrences and type of medical and educational intervention already attended by the child. Teacher need to make adaptations in learning activities (bilingual, multilingual learning), adaptations in evaluation related activities and also in co-scholastic areas. As a teacher you can attend refresher course on inclusive education organized by DIETs, CTEs, SCERTs, RIEs and NCERT, so that you can be equipped with the latest trends in inclusive education.

**Some common considerations for inclusive classroom**

- Visually challenged children may need to develop reading and writing Braille. Large prints, audio devices; talking books, etc. may be used in the classroom.

- Hearing challenged students may need hearing head, auditory training. Using 3-D (embossed) maps in teaching and learning of geography for visually challenged students can be practiced. These are available from Survey of India. At national level, NCERT is making efforts to come out with tactile maps for visually challenged children.

- You may form groups of students comprising mixed abilities. While teaching social sciences, you need to conduct field work, project work and several other activities. The entire class may be benefitted through peer and collaborative strategy.

- Experiential learning: Listening to others’ experiences.

- Creating situations where everyone can participate.

- A lesson plan or unit plan for an inclusive class should indicate how the teacher alters the ongoing activity to meet the diverse needs of children.
Teacher needs to create an inclusive environment for children, especially girls from oppressed or marginalised social backgrounds.

2.9 DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES

India is one of the largest and oldest democracies in the world. NCF-2005 is built on the understanding of this foundation. The fifth guiding principle of NCF-2005 states for ‘nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.’ Education defines the fabric of the nation, and has the capacity to provide each child a positive experience of democratic functioning. Each child can be enabled to not only participate in a democracy, but to also learn how to interact and form partnership with others to preserve and enhance democracy.

Democracy is based on faith in the dignity and worth of every single individual as a human being. ... The object of a democratic education is, therefore, the full, all-round development of every individual’s personality. ... i.e. an education to initiate the students into the many-sided art of living in a community. It is obvious, however, that an individual cannot live and develop alone. .... No education is worth the name which does not inculcate the qualities necessary for living graciously, harmoniously and efficiently with one’s fellow men.

(Secondary Education Commission, 1952 - 53, p. 20)

There is growing number of teachers, administrators, policy makers and decision makers who are raising the concern of making teaching-learning process more democratic for everyone, especially students. Democratic classroom stands in contrast to more traditional, authoritarian teaching and learning practice. It is based on the democratic principles of sharing control and power among students and teachers. Through this teacher-student partnership students are empowered to take more responsibility for their own learning.

2.9.1 What is Democratic Classroom?

Democratic classroom is a kind of learning environment where children’s voices are heard, and child-centered pedagogy is practiced. Teaching-learning process is executed by both teacher and students. They plan teaching-learning activities in a collaborative manner. They together decide rules and procedures for teaching-learning activities in the classroom. In a democratic classroom, it is not just the content for children’s learning but the medium through which their learning takes place also matters. Enabling democratic participation is also means of empowering the weak and the marginalised.

Characteristics of democratic classroom:

- **Democratic Values**: It provides students freedom to have their voice in what they learn and how they learn. Democratic classroom empowers them to become thoughtful human beings who think and reflect critically. In democracy ideals such as freedom, equality, care for fellow citizens, empathy, dignity and the common good find place. In democratic classroom learning goes beyond the classroom. The other values promoted
in a democratic classroom include being fair, being humanist, being open to communication, being consistent, being equal, being open to innovations, showing respect to individual differences, etc.

- **Responsibility of the Teachers:** In democratic classroom, teachers share their responsibility in decision making, provide equality and student centered education, create environment for effective communication, give importance to all the students, treat them equally and provide fair chance to all the students to express their views freely, establish rules and regulation along with students, encourage students to participate, and show love and respect to individuals.

- **Role of the Students:** In democratic classroom students have say in what they learn, how they learn, and how the classroom functions. The democratic classroom is centred around student choice and self-direction. If a student has the freedom to choose to learn in a way that interests him/her, then he/she will have more meaningful learning. Students have opportunities to choose reading materials and topics for their projects. It is also true that with freedom comes with responsibility. This means staying on track, meeting deadlines, working harmoniously in groups and being prepared. If students cannot handle the amount of responsibility, teacher assists them and structures the learning task without restricting the joy of learning in a democratic classroom. Students decide the agenda for classroom activities.

- **Classroom Environment:** Democratic classrooms function as a group. If one of the members has a problem, all of them try to address that problem. The classroom develops group feeling rather than individualistic feeling. Critical thinking is fostered in classroom. Students are asked to question and evaluate the learning task. They do not blindly accept what is taught to them. They discuss and discover so that they may judge themselves. Students are encouraged to be helpful, ask questions, and think for themselves.

**2.9.2 Why Democratic Classroom?**

NCF-2005 propagates Child-Centered Pedagogy. It means giving primacy to children’s experiences, their voices and their active participation. On the contrary, we have classrooms in our country where there is total domination of the teacher. Children's voices and experiences do not find expression in the classrooms. Often the voice heard is that of teacher. When children speak, they are usually answering the teacher’s questions or repeating the teacher’s words. They rarely do things, nor do they have opportunities to take initiative. We need to have our classrooms, where students can raise their voices, where they have opportunity to nurture their curiosity to do things and, to ask questions and to pursue investigations, sharing and integrating their experiences with schools’ knowledge. We need to have our social science classrooms where issues related to human rights, caste, religion and gender can be critically discussed and reflected on by the children in order to see how these issues are connected to their everyday life and how inequalities become compounded and are perpetuated. We need to have pedagogy that is sensitive to gender, caste, class and global inequalities. Activities for developing critical perspectives on socio-cultural realities need to find space in curricular practices. We need to have classroom where all children participate and learn meaningfully.
2.9.3 How can we have Democratic Classrooms?

Can we have democratic social science classrooms in real sense? There are several challenges to this idea. Our teacher training courses do not prepare teachers to come up with democratic classrooms. Our curriculum is heavily loaded with several activities. Still in most of the schools we rely on single textbook as a learning resource. ICT has yet to make its presence in rural classrooms. Examination is based on textbook questions. There is very less scope for evaluation of project works and fieldwork. The whole education system is very rigid which in return provides very less opportunities and choices for students and teachers.

In spite of all these limitations, you need to make an attempt to design your instructional strategies in such a way that all students can participate in classroom discussions. Everybody’s viewpoints must be appreciated and not to be condemned. In our classrooms we can have more of role plays, games, simulations, demonstrations, etc. While planning for these activities, involvement of students must be ensured. While teaching social sciences, students may be permitted to select their own activities for project works and assignments. They need to be part of framing deadlines, rules and regulations. It is expected that by following some of these practices, there will be better student teacher relationship and we can strive for democratic classroom.

2.10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

2.10.1 What is Professional Development?

Etymologically, professional (one who professes-practices a profession), is a characteristic of or befitting a profession or one engaged in a profession. There are several characteristics of each profession. A profession can be explained as an occupation which requires some specialized study and training, and the purpose of which is generally to provide skilled services and guidance in lieu of definite fee or remuneration. However some professionals may provide services without asking for payment.
Development is nothing but an act of improving by expanding, enlarging or refining. It is a process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage (especially a more advanced or mature stage).

Professional Development includes formal and informal experiences, it is a long term process, and it is multi-dimensional: content, process and context.

Now in order to be more specific, let us consider that as a teacher what we require, whether it is professional development or continuous professional development.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) “is the body of systematic activities to prepare teachers for their job, including initial training, induction courses, in-service training and continuous professional development within school settings.”

(The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD 2010)

The continuous professional development includes the attitude and process of being a lifelong learner, the conscious updating of professional knowledge and the improvement of professional competence throughout a person’s working life - a necessary requirement for ensuring survival and quality in any profession. Here lies the importance of Professional Development in a quote,

“You can train me, and you can educate me, but you can’t develop me—I develop”

You as a teacher need to assess your position whether you are placed at a novice stage or competent stage or at an expert stage. Once you have assessed yourself then you need to enhance your competencies and skills.

Fig 2.5: Means of Professional Development

A Powerful Learning Experience . . .

Question: Think about an area where you are an expert.
- What is your area of expertise?
- How did you gain your skill?
- Who helped you to become an expert?

You may raise a question that why should you strive for professional development? You must realize that when teachers are not responsible for
their career, they may experience stress, or burn-out, or they may even stagnate. They may feel much stress especially during the initial years of teaching. They burn-out as they no longer feel the capacity to meet external or internal demands. They experience this state as a reaction to chronic stress, or they stagnate as they continue to the same. They do not grow or develop in their career. You need to realize that teaching is quite a demanding job. It requires physical, psychological and intellectual abilities. Thus, in order to meet the requirements of teaching profession one needs to have professional development. Teaching sometimes is an emotionally exhausting experience. Students at all levels, in different ways, need, want, require, and demand diverse and up-dated learning experiences from their teachers but it can also be very rewarding at all levels if teachers are willing to grow and develop by updating their knowledge, skills and tuning themselves to the ever-changing needs of their students.

*A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge but merely repeats his lesson to his students, can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them.*

Quote from the famous poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who won the Nobel prize in literature in 1913.

Fig. 2.6: Professional Development of Teachers

### 2.10.2 Need and Importance of Professional Development

A social science teacher must fulfill the basic academic and professional qualification. S/he must have sound content knowledge of various components of social sciences like history, geography, political science economics and sociology. S/he must have good theoretical knowledge of the subject and command over the practical part of the subject. S/he must be able to exhibit communication skills. It is expected that social science teacher keeps abreast with recent developments taking place at the local, national and global level. S/he must be aware of recent research trends and approaches in their fields. Apart from that, it is essential to acquire teaching skills like, planning instructional designs, planning, organizing and management of social science room/corner/laboratory, planning and generation of learning resources, assessment practices and several others. A social science teacher must possess
certain attributes like scientific temper, innovativeness, inquisitiveness, empathy, tolerance, etc. She must also have the skills like planning and preparation of classroom instruction, classroom management, managing inclusive classroom, using innovative teaching techniques, guiding students, carrying out students’ evaluation, contact with parents and community.

With the changing times, tasks of a teacher have become complex. Deeper understanding of knowledge base will help a teacher in performing his/her tasks. As societal and national expectations of education are increasing, it becomes essential that teachers must attain professional development.

2.10.3 How can Social Science Teachers Enhance their Professional Development?

You may plan and take advantage of several opportunities that enhance your professional growth and development. You can even try to learn from each other through peer observation and reflect on their teaching skills in order to improve yourself. You need to update your content in all the components of Social Sciences like; History, Geography, Economics and Political Science.
You need to interact with teachers of different subjects so that you will gain knowledge from diverse fields. You can even learn from your students. You can ask them to provide feedback on your classroom experiences. You can attend conferences or seminars organized by several institutions like NCERT, NUEPA, SCERT, DIETs, subject associations, and teacher’s professional bodies. You can even subscribe to professional journals and have readings in areas other than education. You can try using new materials or revise old ones during your vacations. You can write and edit articles based on your daily classroom experiences, you may even develop learning resources may be by clicking few pictures on your mobile phone and use them in classrooms. You can enroll in free online courses or lesson for professional development. You can keep track of in-service training programmes and take part in in-service training. You may even plan your personal tour and have exposure to diverse geographical regions.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
       b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

5. Write any two features of an inclusive classroom.
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................

6. Define the concept of ‘democratic classroom’.
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   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................

7. Mention any three means of fostering your professional development.
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   ........................................................................................................
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2.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed about several issues and challenges of teaching social sciences. We acquainted you with reflection on curricular area of social sciences. We discussed several pedagogical practices in social sciences. In this unit, you have learnt the importance of textbook in classroom. You were provided insights to use new generation social science textbooks based on NCF-2005. In order to resolve classroom issues which keep on disturbing you, we discussed action research. Further, how to address the needs of divergent learners were discussed at length. You were also acquainted with ideas of democratic classroom and were familiarized with the need, importance of professional development. All these issues and discussion will help you in shaping your classroom transactions and also in enhancing your professional development as a social science teacher.
2.12 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS


2.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The two guiding principles of learning as mentioned by NCF-2005 are:
   a) connecting knowledge to life outside the school
   b) ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote method.

2. The two advantages of textbooks of social sciences are:
   a) They are very helpful for beginner teachers as the textbook contains course to be dealt in the class and the design of each lesson is carefully elaborated.
   b) They provide balanced and chronological presentation of information.

3. The purpose of conducting action research in social sciences is to find out solution to different kinds of problems that a social science teacher encounters while carrying out teaching-learning activities.

4. The criteria the teacher should bear in mind while selecting local knowledge are relevance, meaningfulness and interesting.

5. The two features of inclusive classroom are:
   a) It includes children with various disabilities and/or diversities.
   b) The infrastructure, curriculum, methodology of teaching, and classroom management, etc. are adapted to meet the learning requirements of children with various disabilities and/or diversities.

6. Democratic classroom is a kind of learning environment where children voices are heard, and child-centered pedagogy is practiced.

7. Three means of fostering professional development are:
   a) Attending inservice training programmes
   b) Attending seminars and conferences
   c) Interacting with fellow professionals through social media.