UNIT 1 SOCIAL SCIENCES: NATURE, CONTEXTS AND CONCERNS

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social Sciences include a body of knowledge, which deals with social and cultural aspects of human life. Social Sciences have emerged as distinct disciplines in order to be taught at different levels of education system (starting from school level to higher education level) across the Globe because of their immense importance for achieving better social cohesion, solidarity and development. Like many other countries of the world, in India, social sciences constitute compulsory aspect of school curriculum, both at basic/elementary school and secondary school levels, for promoting democratic and social values among students. Hence, teachers should possess basic knowledge on social sciences and their nature and importance of learning at school level. Referring to all these contexts, in the present unit, attempt is made to acquaint you with the nature of social sciences and their contexts and concerns at the school level especially at the secondary school level.
1.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you would be able to:

- define meaning and nature of social sciences;
- explain the contexts and concerns of social sciences;
- list out the aims and objectives of teaching social sciences at the secondary school level;
- identify disciplines of social sciences and illustrate their interrelationships;
- describe the interface of social sciences with the society; and
- illustrate different approaches to teaching social sciences.

1.3 MEANING AND NATURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Social Sciences constitute a broad field of knowledge and deal with human beings in relation to their social behavior. Social Sciences study the concepts or issues like culture, tradition, life styles, places and environment, power and authority, governance, economy, civic sense, etc. which have social implications. While physical sciences are concerned with physical concepts or issues like stone, matter, force, area, distance, heat, etc., social sciences deal with human beings and their relation to each other in the society at different places and time. Let us discuss below the meaning and nature of social sciences.

Social sciences are the sciences which study human beings in relation to their social system and institutions. Social sciences include the disciplines like history, geography, political science, economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, culture studies, public administration, etc. At the secondary school and university levels, different social sciences are taught to students as independent and/or distinct disciplines.

Social sciences differ from physical sciences with respect to their focus, contents, methods of study and analysis, etc. While physical sciences are concerned with studying the physical matters/materials like mass, volume, area, length, light, distance, pressure, density, chemicals, life, tissues, etc., social sciences are concerned with studying social issues like community living, state, administration, government, culture, tradition, ritual, social well-being and welfare, economic system, religious systems, etc. Hence, social sciences possess distinct nature, which is different from nature of physical sciences and many other sciences. The following points characterize the nature of social sciences:

1. Social sciences are basically concerned with human relationship. Study of the nature of human society is the ultimate goal of all social sciences.

2. Social sciences study mostly the social issues, and social issues are always more complex, more subjective and less verifiable than the issues of physical sciences.
3. Different social sciences like history, economics, sociology, anthropology etc. constitute an area or field of knowledge. And, this area or field of knowledge is functionally different from other areas or fields of knowledge like languages, mathematics, general sciences, etc.

4. Social sciences have their own/distinct content areas and methodologies for approaching and understanding knowledge. Some of the common methods used in social sciences for understanding knowledge are historical, thematic, participatory, non-coercive, quasi experimental, etc.

5. Concern for value attainment is an important tenet of social sciences. Therefore, social scientists bother always for goodness or value of something that they attain or deal with.

6. Social sciences are primarily interdisciplinary in nature. A concept or issue of social sciences may not be confined to one discipline of social sciences, rather the concept or the issue may be understood taking into account the perspectives of all disciplines of social sciences...

7. Social sciences facilitate plurality in thinking in understanding an issue. Since in social situation a single effect has numerous causes and a single cause has numerous effects, so, social sciences facilitate multiple thinking referring to a single issue.

8. Social sciences aim at making a sensitive, reflective and informed human being.

Check Your Progress 1

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

1. What are social sciences?
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2. What are the common methods used in social sciences for understanding knowledge?
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3. Why do social sciences facilitate multiple thinking referring to a single issue?
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Though social sciences are taught in schools of most of the countries of the world, but, the contexts and concerns of teaching social sciences vary from country to country and from time to time. This happens because the socio-cultural aspects of different countries aren’t the same and contexts and concerns of teaching any subject including social sciences in a country are determined by its socio-cultural aspects at different times. Let us discuss below the contexts and concerns of teaching social sciences in Indian school set up:

1.4.1 Contexts of Social Sciences

While teaching social sciences at the school level, the following important contexts should be taken into consideration.

i) Socio cultural Context

Indian society is a pluralistic society. People from large number of languages, races, religions, beliefs, customs, traditions, etc. live in India. Though these diversities are boon for India but in some cases they may cause inequalities and discrimination in India. Further, the issues like hierarchies of caste and class, uneven economic distribution, poverty, gender discrimination, unequal access to education, rural-urban difference, etc. are very common in India. The issues of regionalism, ethnic diversity, etc. are rampant everywhere. The country has a large group of socio-economic deprived section of population, which includes schedule castes, schedule tribes, other backward classes minorities, women, etc. All these issues need to be addressed through social sciences teaching. The constitutional goals of democracy, secularism, socialism, etc. should get appropriate place in social sciences teaching. India has a rich cultural heritage. The achievements of India in different cultural fields like literature, art, music, philosophy, architecture, science, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine, etc. are unparallel to many countries of the world. The achievements relating to all these fields are really pride for the country. Social sciences should make the students sensitized towards our rich cultural heritage.

ii) Learner Context

Besides socio cultural context, the learner context also plays significant role in curriculum framing and pedagogic transaction. The cognitive level, emotional state and physical development of the learner should get due consideration in the curriculum framing and its transaction. While designing the textbook and other curriculum materials, teaching plans, evaluation patterns, background needs, interest, creativity and other psychological dispositions, etc. of the learner must be taken into consideration. The surrounding environment and context of the learner would be taken as important learning resources. The stress related issues relating to the learner like curricular load, examination stress, etc. should be given due weightage.

iii) Context of Change and Development in Education

The rapid change in the different spheres of the society like economic, political, technology, etc. brings many changes and developments in education system of the society. Education system itself is also evolving continuously
both structurally and functionally. Hence continuous change and development in education are visible. The practice of new ideologies like globalization, privatization, liberalization, modernization, etc. suggest many reforms in education. The international bodies like United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) etc. are guiding the education system of the whole world. After independence, Indian education has taken a new mode. A number of committees, commissions like the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), the Education Commission (1964-66), etc. and policies like National Policy on Education (1968), and (1986) have been formulated in the field of education. In this new millennium, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Rashtriya Uchchattar Shiksha Abhiyan(RUSA), Right to Education Act - 2009, National Knowledge Commission - 2009, National Curriculum Framework - 2005, National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education - 2009, etc. are some of the important national initiatives in the field of Indian education. These initiatives suggested some new directions for bringing reform in education system in general and school education and/or teacher education in particular. Social sciences should consider all these contexts and need to be redesigned accordingly.

1.4.2 Concerns of Social Sciences

Social Sciences need to address multiple concerns in teaching of social sciences. Social sciences curriculum and pedagogy need a new approach in the light of the following concerns.

i) Balancing between Mainstream Knowledge and Local Knowledge

Mainstream knowledge is the knowledge that has wide circulation and is accepted by large group of people. Mainstream knowledge is the central knowledge and it has been spread everywhere. On the other hand, local knowledge is the knowledge that the individuals or people of a specific community experience or develop over a period of time.

There should be connection between mainstream knowledge and local knowledge. But, our traditional social science curriculum and pedagogic practices are dominated more by mainstream knowledge, where local knowledge is usually neglected. In this context, National Curriculum Framework (2005, page-30) remarks, “The child’s community and local environment form the primary context in which learning takes place, and in which knowledge acquires its significance. It is in interaction with the environment that the child constructs knowledge and derives meaning. This area has generally been neglected both in the conceptualization of text books and in pedagogic practices”. The integration of the local knowledge of the child with mainstream knowledge facilitates better learning. The linking of the local knowledge of the child, his/her surroundings and community and mother tongue with teaching learning process makes the teaching learning process more interactive. Hence, the child’s local knowledge should be used as a first step for understanding as well as constructing mainstream knowledge.

ii) Shifting from Subject based approach to Concept Attainment

Subject based approach is a basic feature of our present education system. Focus on the attainment of concepts hasn’t been given due weightage in our education system as required. In this context, National Curriculum Framework
Pedagogy of Social Sciences (2005, page-29) states, “In India, we have traditionally followed a subject-based approach to organizing the curriculum, drawing on only the disciplines. This approach tends to present knowledge as ‘packaged’, usually in text books, along with associated rituals of examinations to assess, knowledge acquisition and marks as a way of judging competence in the subject area. This approach has led to several problems in our education system”. Subject based approach considers the knowledge as fragmented entity, gives undue emphasis on the disciplinary value of knowledge base and doesn’t encourage flexible thinking. Concept orientation, which is one of the most significant purposes of an educational activity, gets the back seat in a subject dominated educational practice. Hence, the educational design should allow the learner to attain the different concepts cutting across the subject areas as well as grade levels. Interdisciplinary approach should be followed while learning a concept. Hence social sciences learning should change its focus from subject based to concept oriented.

Besides the above, there are many other concerns that social sciences education has to incorporate in its curriculum and pedagogical practices. Some of important concerns that social science education should address are:

1. Giving the learner the prime place in teaching learning process, i.e. learner centred.
2. Creating a strong bond between school knowledge and knowledge available in the community.
3. The role of text book shouldn’t be directive or instructive for the learner, rather should be suggestive for the learners.
4. Ample opportunity must be provided for field based, participative and experiential learning. Learners should be provided much scope for critical analysis and understanding of the learning contexts.
5. Social sciences should play vital role to facilitate values relating to normative dimensions of society like equality, justice, egalitarianism, etc.

Check Your Progress 2

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

4. Write the full form of the followings.
   RMSA
   SSA
   UNDP

5. What is mainstream knowledge?

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6. How does subject based approach consider knowledge?

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1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCES AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

The teaching of social sciences is important for many reasons. The basic purpose of teaching social sciences at school level is to make students informed and rational citizens. Students learn social sciences in the school in order to achieve the following important objectives:

1. To be good and active citizens.
2. To understand the society in which they live and its social, economic, political and geographical features and many other such features.
3. To understand the social, cultural, economic forces and dynamics that affect the society from time to time.
4. To enquire, judge and criticize the social system for its reformation and change.
5. To understand the values enshrined in the constitution in the context of making the nation secular, socialist, democratic and republic.
6. To appreciate their own culture, tradition and value system.
7. To learn and respect the multiple cultures and traditions which are found and practiced in society.
8. To become active and participative members of the society.
9. To work for the overall peace and goodness of the society.

The above mentioned objectives are general and applicable to students of any stage of school education. But, specific objectives of teaching social sciences vary from one stage of school education to other. The specific objectives of teaching social sciences at secondary stage of school education (class IX and X) are given the Box below:

The objectives of teaching social sciences at the secondary stage as stated by National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences of NCERT (2006, page-6) are as follows:

The objectives of teaching the social sciences at the secondary stage are to develop among the learner analytical and conceptual skills to enable him/her to:

- Understand the processes of economic and social change and development with examples from modern and contemporary India and other parts of the world.
- Critically examine social and economic issues and challenges like poverty, child labour, destitution, illiteracy, and various other dimensions of inequality.
- Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic and secular society.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of the state in the fulfilment of constitutional obligations.
- Understand the processes of change and development in India in relation to the world economy and polity.
- Appreciate the rights of local communities in relation to their environment, the judicious utilisation of resources, as well as the need for the conservation of the natural environment.
Check Your Progress 3

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

7. What is the basic purpose of teaching social sciences at school level?
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8. Write any two objectives of teaching social sciences at secondary stage as stated by National Focus Group on Teaching Social Sciences of NCERT (2006).
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1.6 DISCIPLINES OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIPS

A number of disciplines like history, political science, geography, economics, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc. are considered under the scope of social sciences. All these disciplines constitute the significant aspect of curriculum at university level and are taught as independent and/or specialized subjects at university level. At the school level, selected disciplines of social sciences are taught to the learners mostly in integrated and/or interdisciplinary manner. Let us understand the disciplines of social sciences and their interrelationships especially at the secondary school level.

1.6.1 Nature of Different Disciplines of Social Sciences

Social sciences are included as compulsory subjects in our school curriculum like other subjects i.e. mathematics, general sciences, languages, etc., but, the mode/approach of inclusion of social sciences in school curriculum differs functionally from one stage of school curriculum to other stage of school curriculum. For example, at the primary stage (class I - V), social sciences are taught to the children as an integrated component of ‘environmental studies’ curriculum. Environmental studies curriculum, at this stage, is a composite instructional area, which includes contents from social sciences, general sciences and/or many other subjects. At the upper primary stage (class VI - VIII), social sciences curriculum includes three broad composite instructional areas i.e. history, geography and social and political life (SPL). Social and Political Life draws its contents mainly from three disciplines i.e. political science, economics and sociology. At the secondary stage (class IX and X), social sciences constitute a composite instructional area and draw its contents mainly from four disciplines i.e. history, geography, political science and economics. At the higher secondary stage (class XI and XII), a number of social science disciplines are offered to students as optional/special subjects, and students study some of such subjects as per their choice and preference.

Let us examine the nature of different disciplines of social sciences at secondary stage:

**History:** History is concerned with different events that have happened in different parts of the world in different times. The teaching of history at this stage mainly acquaints the students with contemporary history of India as
well as significant developments in other parts of the world in contemporary time.

Geography: Geography is related to different place and space related issues like environment, atmosphere, resources, nature, temperature, transport and communication, etc. The teaching of geography at this stage mainly acquaints learners with natural, economic and developmental geography of India and the world.

Political Science: Political Science is concerned with the contents relating to democracy, authority, governance, etc. of the individuals in society/state. At this stage, teaching of political science acquaints students mainly with democratic values, mostly focusing on values enshrined in the Indian constitution.

Economics: Economics is the subject which is related to issues like production, consumption, distribution, marketing, exchange of goods and services, etc. At this stage economics is taught to learners in order to make them aware of the functions of different economic institutions and how economic inequality persists in the country because of the ill functioning of economic institutions. Introduction to Indian economics constitutes a significant aspect of learning economics at this stage.

All these disciplines of social sciences are meaningfully related to each other at this stage. Preparing students to face different socio-economic and political challenges of the nation is the main focus of all the disciplines of social sciences. For example, achieving sustainable economic development and creating egalitarian society is one of the significant objectives of teaching social sciences at this stage. In order to achieve this objective, there is need of practice of strong democratic politics, proper resources (both natural and man-made resources), identification and management and spirit of unity and integrity among the people in the country. Strong democratic politics can be taught through political science, proper resource identification can be taught through geography, proper resource management can be taught through economics, and spirit of unity and integrity among people can be taught through history.

In the context of social sciences curriculum at secondary stage, National Curriculum Framework (2005, page-53) remarks:

At the secondary stage, the Social Sciences comprise History, geography, sociology, political science and economics. The focus will be on Contemporary India, and the learner will be initiated into a deeper understanding of the social and economic challenges facing the nation. In keeping with the epistemic shift proposed, these will be discussed from multiple perspectives, including those of the SC and ST and disenfranchised populations. Efforts should be made to relate the content as much as possible to the children's everyday lives. In History, India's freedom movement and other aspects of its modern History can be studied, as well as significant developments in other parts of the world. History should be taught with the intent of enabling students better understand their own world and their own identities came into being as shaped by a rich and varied past. History should now help them discover processes of change and continuity in their world, and to compare ways in which power and control were and are exercised. Geography should be taught keeping in mind the need to inculcate in the child a critical appreciation for conservation and environmental concerns along with developmental issues. In Political Science, the focus should be on discussing the philosophical foundations that underlie the value framework of the Indian Constitution, i.e. in-depth discussion of equality, liberty, justice, fraternity, secularism, dignity, plurality, and freedom from exploitation. As the discipline of Economics is being introduced to the child at this level, it is important that the topics should be discussed from the perspective of the people.
1.6.2 Relationship of Social Sciences with Other Disciplines

The interdisciplinary or unified approach to knowledge states that knowledge cannot be divided like watertight compartments and there exists proper linkage among different aspects of knowledge. One discipline isn’t completely isolated from other disciplines and there is thematic relationship among different disciplines. When a concept or issue of a discipline is learnt in relation to other disciplines, the concept or issue is learnt meaningfully. Social science curriculum at the school level isn’t an isolated entity. It has meaningful relationship with other disciplines. Let us discuss the relationship of social sciences with other disciplines which are taught at the school level.

Language and literature: Social sciences deal with human beings and their social activities. Language deals with communication and expression of men/women through symbols and sound; and literature is the expression of feeling, emotion and imagination etc. of men/women through language. The skills and abilities relating to language and literature cannot develop in vacuum. Social sciences provide rich contents for the development of skills and abilities relating to language and literature. For example, the language and literature related tasks like writing essays, conducting debates and discussions, writing prose and poetry pieces, etc. can be taught to students with the help of social science based contents like Indian economy, environmental protection, cultural heritage of India, democratic politics, poverty, etc. The skills relating to language like listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc. and value and abilities relating to literature like appreciation, imagination, emotion, etc. can well be integrated in social science curriculum and accordingly developed among students.

Sciences: Sciences (or general sciences) allow for systematic and objective analysis of a phenomenon/problem. Sciences have a lot of interventions to analyze the issues of society or social phenomenon objectively and systematically. Some examples in this regard are given here. Scientific approach helps to analyze the different past social events like causes of famine, causes of revolution or mass agitation, etc. objectively. Further, sciences help to understand different issues relating to environment, temperature, rotation and revolution of earth, etc., which are the core components of social sciences. As sciences have intervention on social issues, in the similar way, social issues and problems affect sciences in deeper way. Sciences have no existence without society. Society gives valuable directions and guidance to sciences. Society provides different issues or contents which become the basis for scientific analysis. Scientists are the men/women who live in society and focus their work for goodness of society. The different problems like energy crisis, fuel crisis, environmental degradation, infrastructure and communication problem, etc. are basic social issues which are considered as the major theme of scientific analysis and research.

Mathematics: Mathematics is the computational science. In other words, it refers to number system and its various operations. Mathematical literacy as well as wise use of mathematical operations is needed for every citizen in order to adjust better in the society. Mathematics is required in order to understand social science related issues or concepts of budget, price list, money, expenditure, income, taxes, interest, saving, stocks, time, temperature, latitude, longitude, altitude, voting process etc. Similarly, examples of social
science issues can be considered while learning mathematics. For example, for learning mathematical concepts of average and percentage, examples of temperature, rainfall, etc. can be cited; for learning mathematical concepts of time and distance, the examples of latitude, longitude, altitude, etc. can be cited; and so on. The use of mathematics is required ultimately for achieving social well-being.

**Art and Aesthetics:** The nature, functioning, development and achievement of a society to a great extent are reflected through its art and aesthetics related activities like painting, architecture, music, etc. The art and architecture as reflected in Sanchi Stupa, Taj Mahal, Konark temple, Elephant caves etc. signify the richness of Indian history and culture. Lifestyle and history of a society are reflected in its art and architecture and form a part of cultural heritage. Hence, art and aesthetics are the significant aspects of a society and these are studied in social sciences. The way art and aesthetics enrich the contents of social sciences, in the same way social sciences enrich the content of art and aesthetics. The culture, traditions, beliefs, ethics, etc. of a society create core contents of art and aesthetics of that society. For example, the lifestyle, culture, tradition, ethics, moral principles, etc. of a society influence the art, architecture, drama, music, painting, etc. of contemporary society. If one would observe the art and architecture related activities of different parts of India, he/she would understand how art and aesthetics related activities differ from one part of India to other parts of India because of the change in social system and location.

**Work Experiences:** Work experiences enhance the vocational or productive capacity of an individual. Social well-being or development is to a large extent achieved through vocational or productive capacity of the individuals. At the school level, children are trained in work experiences through different courses like socially useful productive work (SUPW), craft education, etc. Work experiences provide the children opportunities for participating in different productive socio-economic activities like gardening, agriculture, machine repairing, sewing, etc. These productive activities help the children fulfill their vocational pursuits or life-skill education. And, these productive activities ultimately help to achieve the social progress and development. Social sciences also want to develop productive skills and competencies of the student. Social sciences intend to make the students self-dependent and economically viable through developing their productive skills. Therefore, the contents of work experiences like manual labour, productive work, carpentry, etc. are also the core issues of discussion, analysis and debate of social sciences.

**Health Education:** For the development of a society or social system, the health status of its individuals has a significant role. Like education and income, health also constitutes a significant parameter for development of a society or a nation. That is why health is considered as a determinant of Human Development. Therefore, the different health related tasks like balanced diet, safety and first aid, healthy environment, health mission, etc. constitute significant component of social science curriculum. Similarly, social science curriculum have issues of health education integrated with it. Hence, there is a thematic relationship between social sciences and health education.
1.7 INTERFACE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES WITH SOCIETY

Under the broad spectrum of society, many institutions like political, economic, education, religious, etc. are found. These institutions of the society are normally called the dimensions or aspects of society. All these dimensions contribute to the formation of society as a whole. The different dimensions of society have their own independent existence as well as they are interrelated among themselves in many ways. Social sciences interface and interact with different dimensions of the society meaningfully and incorporate the different issues of such dimensions in their contents and processes of teaching learning. Let us find below how social sciences interface with different intuitions of society.

Political Institution: Political institution deals with the administrative aspect of the society. Political institution includes the distribution / sharing of power in the society. The political institutions like state, government, political parties, etc. play the key role for social control, change and upliftment. The political issues like citizenship, constitution, election, bureaucracy, public opinion, etc. have the vital role in achieving social welfare and development. Hence, different dimensions of political institution occupy significant place in social sciences.
**Economic Institution:** Economic institution deals with finance related matters of the society. Production, consumption, distribution, exchange, investment, etc. of goods and services are some of the central concepts of economics. Wealth, welfare, scarcity and choice, etc. are some of the determinants of economic affairs of an individual or nation. Land, labour, capital, organization, market, property, work, occupation, etc. are common concepts of economics. Knowledge on economics activities and the skills to deal with the economic issues are required for each individual for living in the society. Hence, there is need to study economic issues in social sciences.

**Education System:** Education, a factor of human development, is one of the significant factors / determinants of quality of life of individuals within a society. Education is a major determining force for achieving economic upliftment, political stability, religious tolerance, healthy living, etc. in the society. Training, instruction, teaching, etc. are the important components or means of education and these are imparted to the individuals in order to achieve desirable behavioral change among them. Education makes a biological man/woman into a social man/woman. Education plays the vital role for preservation, transmission and promotion of culture and value system in the society. The overall development of any society or nation depends, to a large extent, upon its education system. That is why many societies invest a lot in their education system. Social sciences take into consideration the different education related issues like literacy, basic education, mass education, education for increasing productivity, etc. in their contents and processes of teaching - learning.

**Cultural System:** Culture is a distinguished feature of every society. Culture is a unique possession of human being and this possession makes human beings separate from other animals. Culture is a broad term, which includes art, morale, law, custom, tradition, value, modes of life, ethics, etc. that an individual acquires from society as a member of society. Culture is a system of behavior which is shared by the members of society. A society is composed of a group of people who interact themselves on the basis of certain cultural patterns and values. India is a multi-cultural society. Knowledge and respect of diverse cultures in our society constitutes an important component of social sciences.

**Religious System:** By nature human being is not only a biological being but also a religious or spiritual being. Religion may be defined as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people attempt to cope with the ultimate problem of human life. Religion and morality are the influential forces which guide human behavior in the society in order to achieve social change and control. Religion as a cultural need of human beings has strong impact upon economic endeavors, political systems, educational tasks, artistic creation, etc. in society. Religious system has strong impact on human life in society. India is a multi-religious society. Respect for different religions constitutes a significant part of social science curriculum.

**Art and Aesthetics:** Art is the creation with imagination and creativity that expresses important ideas and feeling. Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy which deals with beauty of art and artistic taste. Poetry, sculpture, music,
drama, painting, etc. constitute significant aspects of art and aesthetics. Art and aesthetics are considered as significant aspects of society and they characterize the beauties, goodness, values, creativeness, etc. of the society. The cultural height of a society is known a lot from its development in art and aesthetics. The greatness of Indian art and aesthetics is known from the creative works found in Indian temples, caves, monuments, etc. Since arts and aesthetics signify the cultural heights of a society, so, they are considered under the scope of social sciences.

**Health and hygiene:** Health is a state of personal fitness for leading a quality life. A healthy individual is physically, mentally and socially fit for leading a fruitful life. Hygiene is a condition that helps to maintain health and prevent the spread of disease. Hygiene helps to achieve a safe and healthy environment. For the healthy living in the society, there is need of maintenance of health and hygiene at different levels i.e. personal level, family level, community level etc. Hence, maintenance of health and hygiene is not only an issue at personal level but also an issue at societal level. So, health and hygiene constitute the significant theme for discussion and analysis at societal level and they are considered under the scope of social sciences.

**Environment:** No society can be understood properly without considering its environment. Environment has a significant effect upon the behavior of individuals within the society. Environment may broadly be two type i.e. physical or natural environment and human environment. The natural environment includes the phenomena relating to nature like climate, land forms, soils, temperature etc. Human environment includes man made environment which is dealt with transport and communication, military operation, trade and industries etc. The personal as well as social behavior of an individual is influenced a lot by his / her environment. Social sciences interface with different environment related issues and try to incorporate such

![Diagram of the Interface of Social Sciences with Different Systems of Society](image-url)
12. What is political system? Name at least four political institutions which play the key role for social control, change and upliftment?

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13. What are the important concepts of economics? Why is there a need to study matters pertaining to economics in social sciences?

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1.8 APPRAOCHES TO TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCES

There are different approaches to teaching social sciences. While some approaches to teaching are subject oriented and teacher centered, others are learner centric in nature. While in the past mostly there was use of subject oriented or teacher centered approaches to teaching social sciences, of late, there is a shift towards the use of learner centric approaches to teaching social sciences. In this context, National Curriculum Framework (2005, page-53) remarks, “Social science teaching needs to be revitalized for helping the learner acquire knowledge and skills in an interactive environment. The teaching of social sciences must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics and critical perspectives and enable children to draw relationship between past and present to understood changes taking place in the society”. Let us see some of the important approaches, which are used for curriculum framing and teaching of social sciences under the following heads.

1.8.1 Disciplinary, Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary

i) Disciplinary approach: Disciplinary approach was a dominant approach to curriculum designing and teaching till twentieth century. This is a traditional approach and this approach focuses on readily definable and measurable knowledge. This approach involves the students in studying different disciplines that are independent and distinct from each other; specialized teachers to teach disciplines as per their specialization; and assessment
techniques which are quite discipline specific in nature. This approach is based on the assumption that disciplines are designed in order to create an order in this complex world and they provide students the desired specialized knowledge that they need to adjust in the complex world. Disciplines are created and taught in order to answer the different questions about the world that the human beings generate. On the other hand, interdisciplinary approach allows for integration of different disciplines for the purpose of teaching and learning. Integrating the contents within a discipline is the main focus of intra-disciplinary approach. Disciplinary approach to teaching social sciences focuses on these points:

1. Social sciences have independent existence and they are different from other disciplines like general sciences, mathematics, languages etc., with distinct method of inquiry.

2. The contents/subthemes of social sciences are also distinct from other disciplines.

3. As social sciences are different from other disciplines, so, the different aspects of social sciences like objectives, contents, methods, evaluation procedure etc. need distinct treatment and knowledge-base, which are different from the treatment and knowledge of other disciplines.

4. Social sciences allow the integration of contents and/or sub-themes within their scope or jurisdiction. They hardly allow for integration of their contents / sub-themes with other disciplines.

The following diagram depicts the disciplinary nature of social sciences.

![Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 1.3: Disciplinary Nature of Social Sciences**

**Interdisciplinary:** Interdisciplinary approach to teaching is different in many ways from traditional approach to teaching like disciplinary approach to teaching. Interdisciplinary approach helps to integrate knowledge from different disciplines by using a real process of synthesis. This approach tries to create a holistic knowledge by integrating knowledge from different disciplines. This approach facilitates to cross the traditional boundary among academic disciplines or schools of thoughts in order to create an integrated knowledge. This approach believes that knowledge is a single entity and it cannot be divided into different disciplines like water tight compartments; the division of knowledge into different disciplines isn’t absolute division; and there is an ongoing interaction among the disciplines. Hence, this approach facilitates for integrating knowledge from two more disciplines at a time. This approach is more learner centered and in this approach a learner gets ample opportunity to achieve unified knowledge, which is meaningfully drawn from different disciplines. Integrating the concepts or issues of social sciences with the concepts or issues of other disciplines like mathematics,
general sciences, languages, etc. is an example of interdisciplinary approach to integration of concepts or issues of social sciences. The social science concept ‘money’ can be integrated with other disciplines for teaching learning purpose. Students may be asked to compose an essay relating to money. This is an example of integration between social sciences and languages. Many mathematical sums and puzzles relating to money may be presented in front of students. This is an example of integration between social sciences and mathematics. Relating to money, songs can be composed and this indicates the interdisciplinary relationship between social sciences and arts. In this manner, the social science concept ‘money’ can be integrated with many other disciplines like law, commerce, philosophy etc. from interdisciplinary perspective. Like money, many other social science concepts can be integrated with different disciplines in order to facilitate interdisciplinary relationship of social sciences with other disciplines.

The following diagram depicts interdisciplinary relationship of the social science concept ‘money’ with other disciplines.

![Interdisciplinary Relationship Diagram]

**Multi-disciplinary:** Multi-disciplinary approach is an approach, which allows for defining and/or understanding a concept from the perspectives of different disciplines. Multidisciplinary approach utilizes the viewpoints from different disciplines for understanding a case or issue, where each discipline has its distinct identity. This approach mostly involves solution of a problem separately by different disciplines. In multidisciplinary approach, the people from different disciplines work together on a particular issue, but approaching the issue differs from disciplines to discipline depending upon the nature of disciplines. In interdisciplinary approach, an issue is analyzed from the perspectives of different disciplines in an integrated manner whereas, in multi-disciplinary approach an issue is analyzed from the perspective of different disciplines in a non-integrative manner. In interdisciplinary approach, the integration of disciplines are made in such a way that it is difficult to disintegrate or separate the disciplines, but in multidisciplinary approach, the disciplines are united in such a way where each discipline has its own identity.

Take a social science concept ‘environment’. The concept environment is approached differently by different disciplines from multi-disciplinary perspectives. Medical sciences look at the environment from the perspective
of health and hygiene; physics considers environment from the perspective of matters or materials available in the environment like solid, liquid, gases, etc.; biology takes into consideration the life available in the environment (plant life and animal life); mathematics takes into account the calculation of different things/matters of the environment through the use of mathematical symbols, signs, formula, etc.; and language and literature consider the interactive and communicative aspects of the environment. In the similar way, environment can be understood and interpreted differently by different disciplines. The following diagram depicts the multidisciplinary perspective of the social science concept ‘environment’.

![Figure 1.5: Multidisciplinary Perspective of the Social Science Concept ‘Environment’](image)

1.8.2 Thematic

Thematic approach of teaching is such an approach to teaching in which the entire process of teaching centers around a ‘theme’. A theme is a topic of interest which connects the different teaching learning areas or subjects. Hence, thematic approach starts with identification of a common theme and allows for structuring or organizing contents of different disciplines based on it. The theme acts as a focus for integrating objectives and teaching-learning activities of different subject areas across a grade. It makes the teaching-learning process integrated and meaningful. For making this approach meaningful, teachers, learners and other resource persons working usually at a particular grade level collaborate among themselves in order to find a common or central theme, and in order to design educational tasks of different subjects areas based on the theme. The different educational tasks like curriculum and syllabus, instructional methods and materials, assessment, etc. revolve around the theme. Thematic approach helps to combine two or more disciplines under a single thread through a common theme. For integrating the different disciplines, thematic approach follows different models for integration, but the most common model for integration is interdisciplinary model. Thematic learning is based on the idea that meaningful learning occurs when the learning is provided as a whole but not as parts and when the learning is connected to the real world. The different social science concepts like environmental pollution, food habits, human right
violation, market, etc. can be integrated with other subjects like languages, physical sciences, mathematics, life sciences, physical education, etc. through thematic approach for their better transaction in the teaching-learning process. In this way, climate change can be thematically related with many other subjects. In the below a diagram is given which is based on the theme ‘human development’. The diagram makes a thematic description about components of human development and their indicators.

Figure 1.6: Components of Human Development

Source: hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI

1.8.3 Inductive and Deductive

Inductive and deductive approaches are scientific approaches to acquisition of knowledge. Inductive and deductive approaches are two opposing but complementary approaches to teaching learning. While inductive approach helps to develop theory or formula from examples, deductive approach helps to solve some problems on the basis of some given theory or formula. In inductive approach, one proceeds from particular instances to general principle or conclusion, but in deductive approach one proceeds from general principle or conclusion to particular instances. In induction, one studies a number of examples relating to a particular task; finds out the commonalities and/or differences among the examples; and draws the general principle(s) about the task from the examples. In deduction, a general principle or formula relating to a particular task is given. On the basis of the general principle or formula, one has to solve a problem or a number of problems relating to the task. Many social science concepts like rotation, revolution, calculation of time on the basis of longitude, calculation of inflation rate, administrative change and reform, weather, climate, soil type and its relation to cropping etc. can well be taught through inductive and deductive approaches. Here is
given examples regarding the use of inductive and deductive approaches to teaching social sciences. 1° longitude = 4 minutes. To prove this principle i.e. (1° longitude = 4 minutes), students would be asked to study the longitude differences among many places of the world and their corresponding time differences. In all the cases, students would find that the longitudinal differences among the places and their corresponding time difference conform to the principle 1° longitude = 4 minutes. Hence, students can generalize that 1° longitude = 4 minutes. Since in this case, students proceed from specific cases to general principle, this is an example of inductive approach. Let us examine an example of deductive approach. A principle presented in front of students is ‘up to a certain level of atmosphere, when altitude increases, temperature decreases’. With the help of this principle, students will be able to solve many temperature related problems of different places located in different altitudes. This is an example of deductive approach since in this context students proceed from general principle to particular instances.

Both inductive and deductive approaches are related with each other. Both go hand in hand. Both are considered as two sides of the same coin. Inductive approach helps to develop theory and deductive approach helps to use the same theory to solve specific problems. Inductive approach cannot be validated without deductive approach and deductive approach doesn’t have an existence without inductive approach.

### 1.8.4 Constructivist

Constructivist approach or constructivism is a learner centric and contextual approach to teaching-learning. This approach states that learning occurs in a social environment and a child must be given maximum freedom to construct his / her knowledge in the environment. This approach is contrary to behaviourist approach to teaching-learning. In behaviourist approach, learning is viewed as acquisition and accumulation of finite sets of skills and facts. In behaviourist approach to learning, students are told about the world and are expected to replicate the same in desired situation. On the other hand, constructivist approach emphasizes that learning is quite personal and it takes a meaningful shape in the environment itself. Therefore, learner constructs his / her own knowledge in the immediate environment and context. The learner determines, on the inputs from the outside world what he/she will learn and how he/she will learn. This approach considers learner as an active learner and provides a lot of scope learner to develop his / her creativity, spontaneity and many other abilities.

This approach provides learners ample opportunities to construct their knowledge by relating new ideas to the existing ideas in a guided situation. For example, a discussion on social science concept ‘corruption’ in the classroom allows learners to construct numerous ideas relating to corruption. The discussion on corruption in classroom will provide learners scope to remember the different types of corruption that they have experienced personally or they have watched on television or listened to in radio or read in newspapers. Learners may relate it to different types of corruption like corruption in personal life and corruption in public life. Learners may cite the different types of corruption found in different parts of the world as well as in their own state or country.
Learners may also think about the causes of corruption and evil effects of corruption on personal and public life. They may also suggest many ways through which corruption can be checked. In these ways, learners may generate numerous ideas relating to corruption individually as well as in group situation. Like corruption, may other social science concepts like natural calamity, gender inequality, unity in diversity, multicultural living, child labour, superstition, pollution, etc. can well be learnt through constructivist approach to teaching-learning.

Check Your Progress 6

Notes:

a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

15. Match the items in ‘Column - A’ with their respective answers in ‘Column -B’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column- A</th>
<th>Column -B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from general to particular</td>
<td>Inter disciplinary approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates integrated knowledge</td>
<td>Disciplinary approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplines are independent</td>
<td>Deductive approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from particular to general</td>
<td>Inductive approach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Differentiate between interdisciplinary approach and multidisciplinary approach to teaching social sciences.

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17. How is learning defined according to behaviourist approach?

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1.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we explained the meaning and nature of social sciences and contexts and concerns of social sciences. Further, we discussed aims and objectives of teaching social sciences especially at secondary school level. Interrelationships among different disciplines of social sciences and relationship of social sciences with other disciplines were discussed. We analysed the interface of social sciences with different aspects of the society like political institution, economic institution, education institution, cultural institution, etc. In the last section of the unit, we discussed some important approaches to teaching social sciences like disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches; thematic approach; inductive and deductive approaches; and constructivist approach. We will focus more on the pedagogy of social sciences in the next units of this block.
1.9 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS


1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Social sciences are the sciences which study human beings in relation to their social system. Social sciences include the disciplines like history, geography, political science, economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, culture studies, public administration, etc.

2. The common methods used in social sciences for understanding knowledge are historical, thematic, participatory, non-coercive, quasi experimental, etc.

3. Since in social situation a single effect has numerous causes and a single cause has numerous effects, so, social sciences facilitate multiple thinking referring to a single issue.
4. RMSA=Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
   SSA=Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
   UNDP=United Nations Development Programme

5. Mainstream knowledge is the knowledge that has wide circulation and is accepted by large group of people. Mainstream knowledge is the central knowledge and it has been spread everywhere.

6. Subject based approach considers the knowledge as fragmented entity, gives undue emphasis on the disciplinary value of knowledge base and doesn’t encourage flexible thinking.

7. The basic purpose of teaching social sciences at school level is to make students humane and rational citizens.

8. To develop among the learner analytical and conceptual skills to enable him/her to:
   - understand the processes of economic and social change and development with examples from modern and contemporary India and other parts of the world.
   - critically examine social and economic issues and challenges like poverty, child labour, destitution, illiteracy, and various other dimensions of inequality.

9. At the secondary stage, social science curriculum draws its contents mainly from four disciplines i.e. history, geography, political science and economics.

10. Geography is related with different place and space related issues like environment, atmosphere, resources, nature, temperature, transport and communication, etc. At the secondary stage, the teaching of geography mainly acquaints learners with natural, economic and developmental geography of India and the world.

11. Sciences help to analyze the different past social issues like causes of war, causes of famine, causes of revolution or mass agitation, etc. objectively. Similarly, sciences provide appropriate directions and guidelines through research and innovation in order to solve social problems like poverty, illiteracy, health hazards, etc. Further, sciences help to understand different issues relating to environment, temperature, rotation and revolution of earth, etc. which are the core components of social sciences.

12. Political system deals with the administrative aspect of the society. Political system includes the distribution / sharing of power in the society. The political institutions like state, government, political parties, pressure groups, etc. play the key role for social control, change and upliftment.

13. Land, labour, capital, organization, market, property, work, occupation, etc. are important concepts of economics. Knowledge on economic activities and the skills to handle the economic affairs are required for each individual in order to live happily in the society. Hence, there is need to study economics related concepts in social sciences.
14. Art is the creation with imagination and creativity that expresses important ideas and feeling. Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy which deals with beauty of art and artistic taste.

15. **Column-A**

   - Proceedings from general to particular
   - Facilitates integrated knowledge
   - Disciplinary are independent
   - Proceeds from particular to general

   **Column-B**

   - Deductive approach
   - Interdisciplinary approach
   - Disciplinary approach
   - Inductive approach

16. In interdisciplinary approach, an issue is analyzed from the perspectives of different disciplines in an integrated manner whereas in multidisciplinary approach an issue is analyzed from the perspective of different disciplines in a non-integrative manner. In interdisciplinary approach, the integration of disciplines are made in such a way that it is difficult to disintegrate or separate the disciplines, but in multidisciplinary approach, the disciplines are united in such a way where each discipline has its own identity.

17. According to behaviorist approach, learning is viewed as acquisition and accumulation of finite sets of skills and facts.