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# UNIT 1 NATURE, OBJECTIVES AND APPROACHES TO TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The term "Social Studies" is of recent origin. Its inclusion in the school curriculum has necessitated a change in the approaches to studying human-beings. Such study is now carried out in relation to man's historical, geographical, social, economic and political environments. Most states in India have introduced social studies in their school curriculum. However, the concept has remained adoptive. Also, different teachers teach the various components of the subject in different ways. It is, therefore, necessary to develop awareness among teachers to visualise social studies as holistic learning, which alone can help achieve the aims and objectives of teaching the subject. Keeping in the view the policy framework, i.e., the core curriculum (NPE 1986), instruction in social studies should promote the values and ideas of

humanism, secularism, socialism and democracy. It should impart knowledge, develop skills and inculcate attitudes necessary for producing healthy citizens. The curriculum, thus, needs to be reorganised cutting across different subject boundaries and not putting knowledge into water-tight compartments labelled as history, geography, civics, economics, sociology, etc. This would pave the way for integrating individual social sciences into social studies and evolving a holistic curriculum.

In the present unit let us first know about the meaning and concept of social studies, critically analysing the present status of teaching, highlighting the responsibility of the teacher to equip himself with the needed outlook and competencies to deal with the reorganised curriculum. This unit also deals with the introductory framework for the subsequent units of this course.

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## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- state the meaning of the term 'social' studies;
- describe the present status of social studies in secondary schools;
- describe the significance of learning social studies;
- explain the general aims of teaching social studies;
- state the objectives of teaching social studies in schools in relation to learners' need and expected outcomes;
- identify the alternative ways of approaching content organisation in social studies; and
- give an example of content organisation from the prescribed syllabus.

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## 1.3 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STUDIES — SOME BASIC IDEAS

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The school is a social institution. It imparts instruction covering a variety of subjects. Education is a lifelong process. Man is in the centre of all educational activities, processes, programmes or products.

Although one can say that language learning, the arts, mathematics and the natural sciences deal with human experiences in the form of ideas, skills and products, it is the special function of social studies to have the people as the subject matter. Consider, for a moment, yourself as an object of study. In order to arrive at a meaningful understanding of you, you would have to investigate your past (history), the environment in which you live (geography), your needs and desires (psychology), how you will place yourself in the society in which you live (sociology), how you are supported financially (economics), the influence you exert on others and vice-versa (political science), how your culture has influenced you (anthropology) and so on.

Thus social studies reveals to the learner where she/he is in the context of time, space and society. Hence, definitions and the nature of social studies range from a study of human beings favouring a separate subject approach to an integrated one in which the subject matter is indistinguishable as history, geography, civics and so on.

<p><b>Activity</b></p>
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<p>What does the term social studies mean?</p>
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You might define social studies as something similar to any of the following:

1. It is a study of the people in their environment.
2. It is a study of how people live and work together at the local, national or international level.
3. It is an inquiry to realise how the people today all over the world are economically and politically interdependent.

4. It is a study to enhance the understanding of the past to interpret the present or current trends to develop skills of becoming an effective member of the society in which one lives.

Yes, you are in the right direction. Let us now consider its relation to other areas of studies.

### 1.3.1 Understanding Social Studies in Relation to Other Areas of Study

The field of social studies is distinct from other fields of learning for the fact that its content as well as purpose emphasise human-beings and their various relationships. As already stated, all other fields of study also have a social purpose and utility. They form a significant part of the curriculum as they serve the needs of human-beings. Arithmetic has social utility and enhances human relationships too, but its content is not inclusive of human-beings and their relationships.

Science deals with material objects, language with communication, and mathematics with quantity but social studies deals mainly with the relationships among the people. While dealing with social studies, the emphasis is always upon relationships rather than individuals, upon social activities rather than individual performances, stressing that society makes the individuals and it is not merely composed of individuals. Its three main usually stated purposes are in terms of satisfying individual needs, acquiring academic, social, and scientific knowledge and providing citizens education relevant to societal needs. It clarifies that no human-being lives for himself/herself and that social studies is devoted to a study of the life of the people with reference to and in the context of the society where one lives.

### 1.3.2 Present Perception of Social Studies as a Subject-reality and Expectations

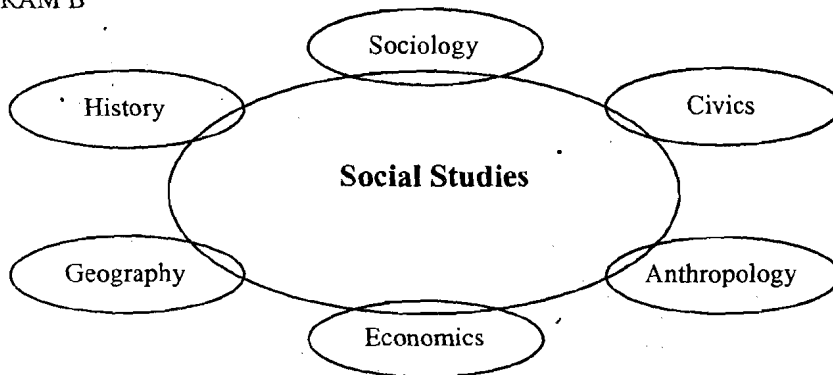
In almost all the states, of India, the subject of social studies forms a part of the core curriculum. However, the traditional content of history, geography, civics, economics, etc., is covered in the sequential organisation of the subject matter. Some teachers continue to teach individual social sciences in the name of social studies. Various commissions, committees and policy formulations have clarified the purpose of teaching social studies but in practice the old segmented type of teaching continues in most schools, barring some innovative schools. Hence, there is a need to develop awareness among prospective teachers as well as those already teaching about social studies as a significant part of the school curriculum.

#### Activity

#### DIAGRAM A

**HISTORY + GEOGRAPHY + CIVICS + SOCIOLOGY + ECONOMICS**

#### DIAGRAM B



From Diagram A & B state which one represents reality and which one expectations?

A ..... or B .....

- To see if you are making the right choice, you should consider the following formulations:

- Social studies should be considered as a compact whole.
- Social studies is not the sum total of various social sciences.

Let us get more clarity from the report of Secondary Education Commission (1952-53).

“It is not often realised that the complaint of overcrowding is largely due to the multiplicity of subjects, presented as separate entities, without bringing out their organic inter relationships. So, in framing the curriculum, an attempt should be made to see whether certain subjects can be grouped in large organically related units dealing with certain broad areas of human knowledge and interest. Thus, it is psychologically preferable to present subjects centering round the study of the social environment and human relations under the comprehensive heading of ‘social studies’ rather than to teach a number of separate subjects like history, geography, civics, etc., in watertight compartments.”

Let us try to examine the present status of social studies in the school curriculum.

**Check Your Progress**

**Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.

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

1. What does social studies as an area of study deal with?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2. What are the three main purposes of Social Studies?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

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## 1.4 PLACE OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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The curriculum is the pivot of the educative process. The subject of social studies forms that part of the school curriculum which includes subject matter and activities that enable the child to acquire an understanding of human relationships, a knowledge of environment, dedication to the principles and values of society and commitment to participate in the process through which society is maintained and improved. Thus, social studies serve as part of the core curriculum, the primary purpose of which is to let a person become “a good human-being first” and a good artist, doctor, scientist, teacher, engineer, advocate, etc., afterwards.

Social studies as core curriculum aims at enabling the student not only to adjust himself to the environment but also to improve his social, cultural, economic and physical environment as an active group member. The criticism of the traditional social studies curriculum was that it considered social studies as a bundle of subjects, but modern social studies includes development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through the activities of reading, writing, observing, discussing, creating, practising, playing, problem solving, exhibiting and developing relationships, etc.; while living in one’s own environment.

Though interest in the revision and improvement of the social studies curriculum by experts is continuously increasing, much remains to be done in this regard.

**Some Limitations of Social Studies Curriculum**

i) The social studies curriculum has been viewed as a body of information generally. Learning has mostly focussed on memorising facts rather than on the development of critical and analytical thinking.

- ii) Little distinction has been made between value clarification or value inquiry and value indoctrination. It is important to teach children the distinction between objective data collection, analyses and interpretation of phenomena and the making of reflective value judgements about these phenomena.
- iii) We have tended to make false assumptions about the learning potential of children and have expected too little from them.
- iv) The social studies curriculum does not adequately represent the disciplines that deals with human-beings and the environment. Psychology, sociology, anthropology and economics have been largely ignored while History, Geography and some aspects of Political Science dominate the curriculum.

There are three main approaches to education : child-centred, society-centred and subject-centred. Modern curriculum planners prefer a holistic view that seeks to reconcile the needs of the child with the needs of society and the need to pay regard to the structure of knowledge. The three main purposes, often stated, are in terms of satisfying individual needs, acquiring academic, social, scientific knowledge and providing citizen education relevant to societal needs. The three purposes should not be treated separately but appropriate integration and balance must be brought in. A good social studies curriculum is one which helps young individuals develop into responsible adults by relating them to their society by means of appropriate knowledge and experiences selected from the social sciences and other disciplines. The task of planning a social studies curriculum is primarily one of selecting content appropriate to this general aim. The actual format, however, will vary from time to time and from country to country, because assumptions about individual needs and societal needs vary. Also people think differently about which aspect of academic knowledge is of greatest worth.

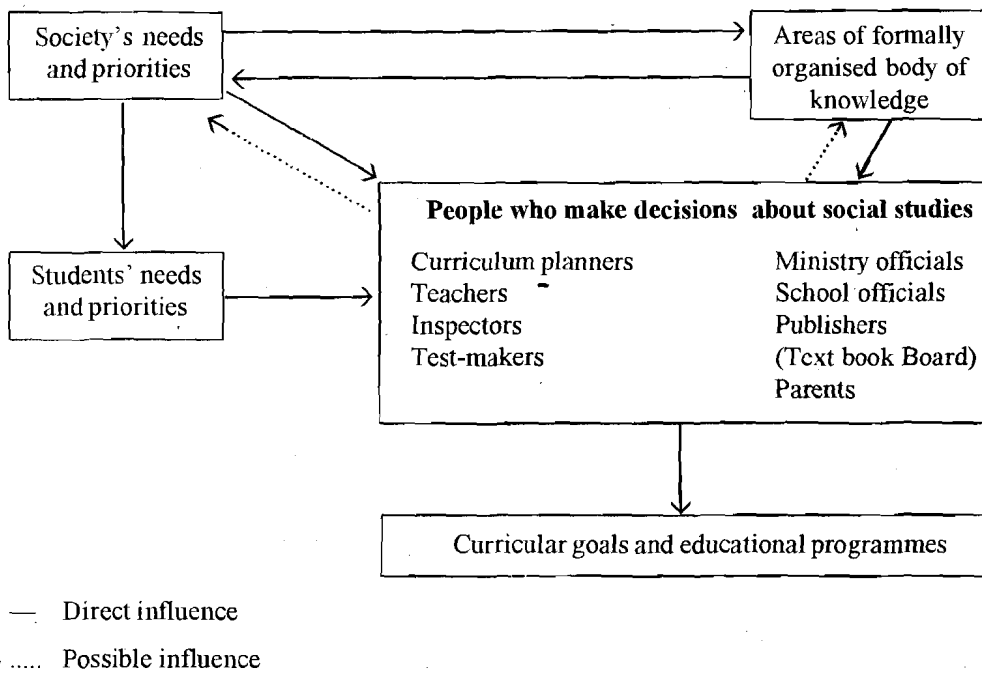


Fig. 1.1 : Influencing Factors on Design-making in Social Studies Curriculum

Source: Mehlinger (ed.) 1981.

What to learn? What not to learn? These choices are made by whom? All these will differ from one society (state) to another. In some states curriculum decision-making is done by a central agency, in others decisions are shared among various groups like curriculum planners, teachers, school officials, textbook boards, or even parents, ministry officials, etc. Whoever makes the decisions or influences the decisions should follow the process of rational planning. The above diagram appears to be appropriate in all settings whatever may be the differences among societies, states or decision-makers.

If one glances at the Model National Curriculum of Social Studies in India, recommended and developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training in 1989, the syllabus prescribed is not on integrated lines but in the form of independent units in history, geography and civics wherein the objectives, syllabus and practical/project work have also been dealt with separately.

While the evaluation procedures followed aims in general at paper/pencil test, the stress of examinations creates disinterest among the learners. Hardly any attempt is made to promote progress of the child from day to day, nor do the anticipated outcomes of learning social studies find any place in the evaluation procedures.

### 1.4.1 Learning Outcomes in Social Studies

<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>What according to you could be the learning outcomes in the teaching of social studies?</p> <p>i) .....</p> <p>ii) .....</p> <p>iii) .....</p> <p>iv) .....</p>
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Social studies can contribute to the wholesome development of the child. The expected outcomes are laid down in terms of :

- i) knowledge structure
  - ii) relevant understandings
  - iii) desirable attitudes
  - iv) essential skills
- i) Knowledge structures**

The subject of social studies is covered through content based on facts and information related to human-beings and the environment in the context of time and space. Hence, the structure of the subject content necessitates relevant sequences that would help develop the knowledge structure in the mind of the pupil.

**ii) Relevant understandings**

If the teaching of social studies is not the mere transmission of unrelated isolated facts, understandings relevant to the organised set of facts are very important. The teacher has to help the child to receive this information in the proper perspective. The teacher can help in promoting an understanding of concepts by encouraging relevant experiences and activities inside and outside the classroom.

**iii) Desirable attitudes**

An attitude is a feeling developed towards an object or an event or a person or a group or anything else. The facts are forgotten easily, while attitudes continue to last in an individual's mind. However, attitudes are also subject to change with circumstances. Hence, the teacher can help develop desirable attitudes by various activities and learning experiences. Attitudes are formed unknowingly and that is why the teacher should be more conscious in projecting the proper attitudes through his own model behaviour, to enable the child to imbibe the same.

**iv) Essential skills**

The development of skills is an equally important learning outcome among children. Skills are relevant to the organisation of facts, development of understanding and attitudes. Skills such as observing a phenomenon event, interacting individually or in a group, are of prime significance. Similarly, skills like drawing a figure or illustrating an abstract idea, listening, etc., are highly desirable. Again, there are skills related to various disciplines, personal development and competencies.

Servey (1981) referred the following skills to be essentially developed while teaching social studies.

- i) Interaction skills
- ii) Information-seeking skills
- iii) Information processing skills
- iv) Group participation/work-related skills

Another classification of skills suggested is as follows:

**i) Skills in studying and learning**

This means students should develop skills which pertain to finding, comprehending, organising, interpreting and evaluating information. Interpreting maps, tables, charts, graphs, timeline, reading newspapers, magazines, distinguishing facts from fiction, and facts from opinions, building a social studies vocabulary, classifying information, summarising data, arranging events in a chronological order, putting questions and ideas in a clear manner are all such specific skills that students are expected to develop in a graded manner.

**ii) Skills in enquiry and decision-making**

The skills related to enquiry and decision-making help in enhancing students' ability to think and learn. These skills can be acquired through guided discovery learning. Guided discovery learning occurs when students find their own answers to a problem designed by their teacher to meet the selected specific objective. This strategy for teaching enquiry skills include:

- i) skill in recognising a problem;
- ii) skill in developing hypotheses;
- iii) skill in exploring;
- iv) skill in using evidence to support hypotheses; and
- v) skill in drawing conclusions.

For promoting the development of the above skills, the teacher should develop respect for various points of views in areas having no certain answers. Students should feel free to raise questions and explore various types of evidence. Ultimately, group decision-making activities require the skills of tolerance and openness to a variety of opinions and judgements. Learning experiences may be planned in such a manner so as to develop these skills, again according to grade levels in schools.

**iii) Skills in responsible group participation**

These skills are connected with the studying, learning, enquiring and decision-making skills. Participating competently in group problem-solving requires the student to apply various types of knowledge and thinking skills. This requires the development of group participation skills such as the abilities to lead, organise, bargain, compromise and manage a group discussion or activities lawfully, cooperatively and effectively. These may involve learning experiences like small group problem-solving, role playing and participating in civic action projects.

Teachers must establish a supportive learning environment that encourages the students to participate and contribute in group activity and to understand and respect the efforts and contribution of all. As far as possible, teachers should see that no one is left out of group projects.

**Activity**

1. Design a sample teaching activity on interpretation of information from a map.
2. Plan a group project for developing city traffic improvement programme.

**1.4.2 Role of Teacher in Developing Outlook and Competencies  
Needed for Teaching Social Studies**

The expectations to be from the teaching-learning of social studies and the one who transmits the content are both equally important. The teacher of social studies has different roles to play, e.g., developing personality values, and attitudes and civic responsibility to live together

in a democracy. Specially with the lowering of the voting age to 18, schools through the subject of social studies develop the ability of rational decision-making. Hence, the teacher should be equipped with cognitive, affective, technical, professional and human competencies.

Ellis (1977) listed two major roles of the teacher of social studies :

- i) dispenser of information
- ii) facilitator of learning

In other words, the teacher has to integrate the role of teaching content with appropriate conditions to develop the social character of the pupils and the school into a centre of social reconstruction. He should possess a zest for knowledge and be a continuous learner himself to update his knowledge and skills.

To expect a thorough knowledge of the subject from a teacher is not an over-expectation. For that he should be competent to possess a quick, enquiring attitude and he should rise above personal biases and prejudices while dealing with facts. It is interesting to compare two lists of competencies of the teacher as given under:

- i) Edward Payson Smith (as quoted in Yajnik 1966), enlisted the qualities of the social studies teacher after examining over a hundred classroom situations as follows:
  - Impartiality
  - An imperative mind
  - Ability to inspire confidence
  - Sympathy
  - A dramatic instinct
  - Loyalty to ideals
  - Culture
  - Balance
  - Curiosity
  - A vigorous personality
- ii) Indian scholars have pointed out essential qualities of the social studies teacher as:
  - Scholarship
  - Professional training
  - Personality
  - Teaching skills
  - Human relations

These qualities emphasise the teacher, his training and in-service training as an essential component of an effective teacher of social studies. The teacher should be knowledgeable and continue to develop his proficiency through the cognitive skills. At the same time, he should possess affective skills and functional skills of dealing with subject matter with a proper approach method and techniques involving various processes of inquiry, questioning illustrating, describing, drawing, interpreting, collecting, exhibiting, discussing, evaluating, analysing, conducting, decision making, etc; through leadership. He will encourage the development of a desirable learning climate inside and outside the classroom. He will try to organise, plan and execute his teaching using appropriate school and community resources. While doing so he may adopt group activities, develop individualised responsibilities and develop a comprehensive manner of evaluating these activities in relation to development of learners' knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.

Let us try to understand why we should teach social studies.

There are a variety of responses to the question why we should teach social studies, there are variety of responses depending on various societal, national and curriculum expectations. By and large, three categories of aims emerge:

- i) Social studies can help students address their own individual needs.
- ii) Students need to acquire academic, social and scientific knowledge.
- iii) Society requires people who know their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

In most democratic countries social studies make the greatest possible contribution to citizenship education in the broad sense of maximum personal development, human relationship and loyalty to the principles and practices that support freedom. To put this broad idea specifically the social studies help students:



- i) to strengthen human relationships;
- ii) to utilise the physical world;
- iii) to assume political and civic responsibilities;
- iv) to exercise economic competence; and
- v) to live an enriched life.

The Education Commission (1964-66) pointed out, that the aim of teaching social studies is to help students acquire a knowledge of their own environment, an understanding of human relationships and certain attitudes and values which are vital for intelligent participation in the affairs of the community, the state, the nation, the world. An effective programme of social studies is essential in India for the development of good citizenship and emotional integration”.

### Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

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

3. Write any two limitations of the social studies curriculum.

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4. What are the skills required for enquiry and decision-making in Social Studies ?

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5. List any five qualities of the social studies teacher.

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## 1.5 WHY WE SHOULD TEACH SOCIAL STUDIES ?

As a result of the implementation of National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) invited experts and drew up the broad objectives of teaching social studies as given below:

### 1.5.1 Policy Framework

The child at this stage, could be initiated into the study of India’s past in all its major aspects such as social, cultural and scientific development. He should also be helped to appreciate the diversities in ways of living and the interdependence of various regions of India and the world. He should know the civic and political institutions and understand contemporary social and economic issues and problems. Social skills and civic competencies and a national perspective would, thus, equip him to participate in the task of social and economic reconstruction.

The direction and expectations put before the nation for achieving these purposes is a challenging task to be achieved through social studies.

### 1.5.2 Emerging Aims and Objectives of Teaching Social Studies

If social studies is the study of the people and their interaction with one another and their environment, some general aims of social studies instruction could be formulated as under:

- i) The teaching of social studies is aimed at helping learners to develop greater awareness of themselves, to clarify and examine their values and to establish a sense of self-identity.
- ii) The teaching of social studies helps promote in learners concern for the development of an understanding and acceptance of others with different values and lifestyles.
- iii) Social studies teaching helps provide learners with an understanding of past events and persons and their roles in shaping present day lives and a visualisation of future changes.
- iv) Social studies teaching helps provide learners with a knowledge of human systems in areas of economics, government and culture.
- v) Social studies teaching helps provide learners the skills necessary to carry out an independent investigation of problems and to react critically to the solutions posed by others.
- vi) Social studies teaching aims at providing learners with an awareness of possible situations and their possible roles in shaping the future.
- vii) Social studies helps provide learners with an appreciation of people's efforts to improve human conditions through creative expression and problem-solving.
- viii) Social studies teaching provides learners with an understanding of the decision-making processes involved in human interaction and with the skills necessary to become effective decision-makers.
- ix) Social studies teaching provides learners with the ability to utilise both cooperative and competitive circumstances for the achievement of goals.
- x) Social studies teaching provides learners with a sensitivity towards their own potential and towards the potentials of their fellow human-beings.

There may be many more elaborate goals that can be listed but the real measure of the worth of social studies instruction lies in the day-to-day enactment of these goals or aims. Hence, it is through special short-term objectives during the day-to-day curriculum transactions that these goals may be attainable.

This step is often known as specification of objectives. To develop the specific objectives, the first step is to state the objective and comprehend what we mean by it and then to seek answers to what the students will be able to do to exhibit to us by achieving the stated objectives. These objectives can be cognitive, affective or skill oriented, dealing with intellectual development, development of feelings, sensitivities, attitudes and skills in the learners.

Formulation of instructional objectives are based on certain guidelines/principles as listed below:

- i) An objective should include : 1) the kind of behavioural outcomes expected and 2) the content. The former is sometimes called competence or modification which is reflected in learners' behavioural change as a result of learning, while content is the means to achieve the desirable behaviour.
- ii) An objective should be conceived and stated in terms of pupils' behaviour.
- iii) Objectives should be stated in a simple and clearcut manner to avoid vagueness and complexity.
- iv) Objectives should be stated in such a manner to avoid confusion, repetition and contradiction.
- v) Objectives should be stated in such a manner to develop continuity of the growth process rather than the statement terminal point.
- vi) Objectives should be judged from the point of view of social acceptability.
- vii) Objectives should be realistic and attainable through available resources and within a prescribed time limit.
- viii) Objectives should be comprehensive enough to cover the three major domains of expected outcomes, i.e., cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Example

Objective : To know facts, concepts, principles and generalisations in social studies.

Specifications of the objective. To exhibit the achievement of this objective the pupil will be able to:

- 1.1 recall facts, concepts, principles, etc.;
- 1.2 recognise facts, concepts, principles, etc.;
- 1.3 read information from various textual sources, maps, charts, graphs, pictures, etc.

Activity

Now you try to translate the following objective into specific objectives.

To apply acquired knowledge and understanding to new situations.

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....
- 4. ....
- 5. ....

You may try a few more objectives on your own.

Now, you are quite familiar with:

- The nature of social studies
- The learning outcomes expected
- The curriculum of social studies
- The role of the teacher of social studies.
- Why it is necessary to teach the subject in school.

You may further have to think in terms of the organisation of the content of social studies to achieve the stated aims and objectives.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

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

6. Write any three objectives of teaching social studies.

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1.6 APPROACHES TO ORGANISING SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

A variety of ways and approaches to organising a social studies curriculum have been tried out. Each one of these has some limitations and strengths. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure the achievement of objectives according to learners' needs, age level as well as societal and national/international demands. Rigidity in organising the curriculum in a singular manner will generate an imbalance in achieving the goals earlier stated. The following section will focus on the various approaches of curriculum organisation of social studies and the governing factors in adopting alternative approaches too.

### 1.6.1 Integrated Approach

Let us examine two examples of the organisation of content when the purposes are similar.

Let us assume that a teacher wishes students to gain some understanding of the horrors of war and to be able to suggest peaceful alternatives to international conflicts.

- i) This objective can be fulfilled by a course in world history. Following a study of World War-I, students might explore the costs of that war, the way hostilities might have been prevented, how the war was settled, and whether the settlement laid the foundation of World War-II.

This teacher is using a specific war as a springboard for teaching students about the tragedy of war generally and why wars must be avoided.

- ii) Another teacher with the same objective might organise a two three weeks of teaching on the following questions :

“Can World War-III be prevented ?” During the study, students might discuss such topics as the nature of war in the twentieth century, the psychology of war prevention and nuclear deterrance, the economics of armaments, and international conflicts resulting from competition in ideology and trade, etc. Throughout their study, students would use information from a variety of disciplines.

Thus, the first teacher is teaching social studies as an academic subject while the second teacher is pursuing social studies as an integrated subject. There are three justifications for favouring an integrated approach to social studies:

- i) It is psychologically sound.
- ii) It is philosophically sound.
- iii) It responds to the changing nature of scientific study. An integrated approach can design the instruction in consonance with children’s stages of mental growth. Secondly, it is more likely to maintain focus on enhancing individual goals and promoting social goals. Thirdly, advances in scientific knowledge have broken boundaries between traditional academic disciplines and new disciplines. For example, areas such as political behaviour, economic history and cultural geography have taken the place of old singular disciplines, and new fields of studies like population studies, environmental studies, global studies, etc., have emerged and they draw their content from various traditional disciplines. Hence, the integrated approach is being justified on the above grounds.

Integration in the organisation of content can be achieved in many ways but at least three alternatives which are significant should be noted:

- i) Integrating while preserving discipline identification,
- ii) Integration through social science concepts and generalisations, and
- iii) Integration through unification.

Content organisations in an integrated way can be designed again in different ways as follows:

- i) **Topics or Themes** : It will be simpler and easier for a teacher to plan his teaching focussing on topics or themes. Although the relevant information could be drawn from various academic disciplines, the focus remains on the “topic” and not on the academic disciplines from which the information was taken.
- ii) **Fundamental questions** : These can serve as the basis of organising social studies instruction. In 1976, Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company produced an entire social studies textbook series for kindergarten to grade six (5-12 years old) around the fundamental question, “who am I ?” The authors of these textbook series developed the units and lessons to enhance four dimensions of human identity, namely, students should be helped to understand themselves as individuals, as members of groups, as human-beings and as inhabitants of the earth. The content throughout the series had borrowed perspectives, ideas and methods from various social science disciplines, from the natural sciences and from the humanities. They were blended together so as to be indistinguishable, but the focus throughout the entire series remained on the fundamental

question, “who am I?” Hence, fundamental questions are those that persist over time and perplex people worldwide. Examples of such questions are: Who am I? Why am I here? Why are there such differences among people? Why do nations go to war against each other? Why are some people objects of discrimination?

- iii) **Problems** : These also can form the basis of content organisation. Those who adopt this approach believe that one of the main objectives of social studies is to help students in understanding the social problems of their times. By focussing on such problems, students should be required to draw concepts, ideas and perspectives from many disciplines. Examples of social problems that are sometimes used for organising instruction are the threat of nuclear war, population explosion, world hunger, violation of human rights, environmental pollution, etc.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the integrated approach to social studies may demand more of teachers than instruction based on single-subject basis but it will be a more stimulating experience.

A serious limitation or obstacle to encouraging an integrated approach to social studies is that pre-service training of teachers mostly does not prepare them adequately for such a task, as their preparation is for single-discipline teaching and sometimes it is difficult for them to visualise integration. Even then, in spite of the limitations, the teaching of social studies in an integrated way is growing worldwide.

### 1.6.2 Interdisciplinary/Correlational Approach

Between the extremes of social studies perspectives— from separate subjects at one end to integrated at the other — lie other views, including interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. As per the title these approaches reject loyalty to one single subject. An interdisciplinary approach link two or more separate subject areas. For example, politics and economics may be linked together to form political economy. The new subject is a merger of major portions of two distinct disciplines. The term multidisciplinary approach is often used to describe efforts to take advantage of concepts, methods of enquiry and conceptual schemes from many disciplines, bringing them into a combination deemed useful to the course designer. The position that these two approaches occupy depends upon how they are used. Whenever the subject of social studies is being taught in separate segments like history, geography and so on, it would be a mistake to assume that history and geography courses are not influenced by other subjects. Within individual classrooms, teachers can and frequently do introduce multidisciplinary information and viewpoints. While the practice is not widespread, curriculum planners are giving increased attention to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. For example, while talking about our independence movement, if we talk about Indian democracy (freedom), this could be a correlation between history and civics.

### 1.6.3 Unit Approach

A unit means simply a group of related experiences covering a time span which is short enough to enable pupils to hold everything in mind, appreciate the connections and grasp the various segments as a whole.

A unit is part of a total programme, but it has an identity of its own. Unit plans commonly include reference to goals, objectives contents, methods, resources and evaluation plan.

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## 1.7 FACTORS INFLUENCING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

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The organisation of the social studies curriculum is not done by any fixed approach. No tailored path is suggested. The approach is always contextual and relevant to the needs of the individual society and nation in addition to teachers' potentialities.

A few factors are identified below:

### 1.7.1 Flexibility

A flexible syllabus in social studies can accommodate pupils experience and afford freedom to the teacher to plan curricular experiences according to the needs of the situation.

### 1.7.2 Availability of Resources

It is again according to local conditions and specific situations, Relevant resources which are available in and around schools could be organised to teach social studies. A teacher has to plan and develop awareness related to available resources to design the curricular processes.

### 1.7.3 Utilization of Community Resources

Resources are classified into various categories, like school resources and community resources. Sometimes the community has rich resources which could help in instructional organisation of social studies. For instance, a planetarium, zoo, museums, rivers, monumental buildings, etc., could be profitably utilized.

### 1.7.4 Utilization of Personal Experiences

While organising the teaching-learning process, it is very important for a teacher to keep in mind the personal experiences of the learner and teachers in dealing with content. This will help in proper concept formation with a clearcut understanding.

### 1.7.5 Learners' Characteristics

Learners' groups are different due to differences in grade, age, experience, exposure, rural or urban orientation, socio-economic placement, cultural background and so on. While designing the content plan, a teacher has to be sensitive to the learners' characteristics as the demands of one special group may differ from those of the general groups.

**Check Your Progress**

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

7. What are the merits of the integrated approach to the teaching social studies.

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 .....  
 .....

8. Name the factors influencing the alternative approaches of organising the social studies curriculum.

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 .....  
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## 1.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we have looked at the meaning and concept of social studies highlighting its context of study as man in relation to his environment. Even though in most of the States of India the term "social studies" has been replaced, the textbooks and evaluation procedures deal with matter and material of history, geography, civics and economics separately. The role of the social studies teacher is very significant to develop in pupils an outlook and the competencies to a expected learning outcomes.

The policy framework has given a clear direction to the aims and objectives of social studies. Even then it is up to the teacher to plan and organise the social studies curriculum keeping in view the proper aim and perspective either in an integrated manner or in an interdisciplinary way or unit-wise. The teacher needs to be sensitive to the governing factors of adopting a

proper approach relevant to the needs of the learner, society and the nation, keeping also in view the local conditions and resources available.

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## **1.9 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES**

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1. Explain the concept of social studies. Which concept do you consider the most appropriate for the Indian setting?
2. State three main views on social studies.
3. Why should social studies be taught at the school stage?
4. State the general aims and objectives of teaching social studies.
5. Enlist the desirable outcomes of social studies teaching.
6. Differentiate between general objectives and specific objectives of teaching social studies. Give examples.
7. State the importance of social studies as core curriculum.
8. Evaluate critically the curriculum recommended for social studies in your state.
9. Explain briefly the various approaches for organising a curriculum in social studies.
10. Discuss the role of the teacher of social studies.

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## **1.10 POINTS FOR DISCUSSION**

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1. "The aims and objectives of teaching social studies need changes". Discuss.
2. Analyse the implications of the National Policy on Education 1986 the course of social studies and its content organisation.
3. "A teacher cannot teach social studies unless he is still learning." Discuss.
4. "Social studies is the study of man's progress in relation to his environments, and his interactions with various environments". Discuss.
5. Discuss : Integration through social science concepts and generalisation vs. integration through presenting discipline identification.
6. Discuss : the thematic topical and unit approaches in social studies

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## **1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. As an area of study, social studies deals with the interrelationships among people.
2. The three main purposes of social studies are (i) satisfying individual needs, (ii) acquiring academic, social and scientific knowledge and (iii) providing citizen education relevant to societal needs.
3.
  - i) The social studies curriculum puts more emphasis on acquisition of information than the development of critical and analytical thinking.
  - ii) The social studies curriculum does not adequately represent the disciplines that deal with the human-being and the environment.
4. The following are the skills required in inquiry and decision-making in social studies.
  - i) Skill in recognizing a problem
  - ii) Skill in developing hypotheses
  - iii) Skill in exploring
  - iv) Skill in validating hypotheses
  - v) Skill in drawing conclusion

5.
  - i) Scholarship
  - ii) Professional training
  - iii) Personality
  - iv) Teaching skills
  - v) Human relations
6.
  - i) To develop in the learners an understanding and acceptance of others with different values and life-styles.
  - ii) To provide learners a knowledge of human systems in areas of economics, government and culture.
  - iii) To provide learners an understanding of past events and persons and their roles in shaping present day lives.
7.
  - i) It is psychologically sound
  - ii) It is philosophically sound
  - iii) It responds to the changing nature of scientific study
8.
  - i) Flexibility, ii) Availability of resources, iii) Utilisation of community resources
  - iv) Utilisation of personal experiences and v) Learners' characteristics.

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## 1.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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