



Disciplines of Social Sciences and their Interrelationships

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1. Introduction

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.

2. 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:

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

3. 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.

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 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 life style, 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 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 has issues of health education integrated with it. Hence, there is a thematic relationship between social sciences and health education.

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