

SOCIAL STUDIES

Class VIII

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Published by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

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New Edition
First Published 2013

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This book has been printed on 70 G.S.M. S. S. Maplitho,
Title Page 200 G.S.M. White Art Card

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Printed in India
at the Andhra Pradesh Govt. Text Book Press,
Mint Compound, Hyderabad,
Andhra Pradesh.

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FORE WORD

This book is a part of your Social Science Curriculum and a part of various things you would be doing to study the society around you. However, remember that it is only one small part of that curriculum. The Social Science Curriculum requires you to analyse and share in the class room what you know. It requires you above all to ask questions – think why things are the way they are. It also requires you and your friends to go out of the class room to the market, to the Panchayat or municipality office, to the village fields, to temples and mosques and museums and find out various things. You will have to meet and discuss with a number of people, farmers, shopkeepers, officials, priests and so on.

This book will introduce you to a range of problems and enable you to study them and arrive at your own understanding of them. So, the most important thing about this book is that it does not have answers. In fact this book is not really complete. It can only be completed when you and your friends and teachers bring their own questions and experiences and discuss everything threadbare in the class. You may disagree with many things in this book - do not be afraid to say so - only give your reasons. Your friends may disagree with you, but try to understand why they have a different view. Finally arrive at your own answers. You may not even be sure of your answer - you may want to find out more before you make up your mind. In that case list your questions carefully and request your friends, teachers or elders to help you to find out.

This book will help you to study different aspects of our social life - about diversity of land and people, about how people get their livelihoods, how people provide for their common needs and manage them, how all people in our society are not equal and how people try to bring about equality, how people worship different gods in different ways, and finally how they communicate with each other and build a culture which is shared by them.

To understand some of these matters you may have to study about the earth - the hills, plains and rivers and seas; to understand others you may have to know what happened hundreds or even thousands of years ago; but most of all you may have to go out and talk to different kinds of people around you.

As you study this book in the classroom, you will come across many questions - do stop and try to answer those questions or do the activity suggested before you proceed ahead. It is not so important to finish the lesson fast as it is to discuss the questions and do the activities.

Many lessons will suggest projects which may take a few days to do. These projects will enable you to develop skills of social science enquiry and analysis and presentation - these are more important than remembering what is written in the lessons.

Please remember that you don't have to memorise what is given in the lesson, but think about them and form your own opinion about them.

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USING THIS BOOK AND NOTE TO THE TEACHER AND STUDENTS

- In this book we have tried to adopt an integrated approach for social studies concepts. This is in continuation with the National and State Curriculum Frameworks which suggested disciplinary approach to teaching needs to begin only at Secondary school level. You have traditionally taught various disciplines of History, Economics, Civics and Geography. However there were various overlaps between the concepts that were discussed under them. This textbook brings together six themes under as you will have noted in the content page of the book, under which various concepts are discussed.
- Textbook is designed with the idea that social studies teachers and students need to bring it into the classroom and use it inside the classroom for learning. It is important to read the textbook in classroom and conduct discussion around it.
- The language of the text: Efforts have been taken to write the text of this book in child friendly manner. However there are certain terms and jargons that will need explanation and clarification. We have moved away from writing text that is information loaded. Text is often trying to give examples that may be suitable to the concept that is discussed. Each chapter has central ideas, these are often provided as subheadings. In a classroom, you may be able to cover 2 or 3 subheading in a period roughly.
- This textbook uses different style of writing. Sometimes they are fictionalised narratives like Kiran and Sarita in Chapter 9. These are often fictionalised but based on facts explanation of a scenario. Or there are passages that are in the form of case studies like in section on Singareni coalfields in Chapter 6. There are also texts in the tables where comparative elements are put together as in the case of Law making Powers in Chapter 14. Concepts are thus explained using different language styles.
- Use of in between questions and end text questions: You will note that there are questions in between the text. Do not leave out these questions. These are integral to the teaching learning process. These questions are of different types – some of them help you in summarising, evaluating the passages that you may have read out. Or they are for collecting more information that is around the concepts discussed in the previous subheading. Do not try to dictate the answers to these questions, allow children to find the answers on their own. Allow them to have discussions amongst each other in trying to figure out the meaning of these questions and talk about possible answers.
- There are different types of questions used in the book:
 - 1) asking children to write their experiences; 2) compare their experiences with that of the examples given in the text; 3) comparing two or three different situations given in the textbooks; 4) questions that ask children to give their opinion about the situation or case study (when these opinions are asked it need not be same for all children, allow them to express their opinion); 5) questions that are evaluating a particular situation given in the chapter.

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- Teacher may adopt different strategies in using these questions in the classroom. Some questions may be written down in the note book; others may be discussed in small groups; a few may be written as individual tasks. In all situations it is important to encourage the child to write in his own words. Avoid instructing all children to write the answers in same style and structure.
- There are certain boxes in each chapter. These are often additional information on the concepts discussed in the chapter. It is important to discuss them in classroom, and conduct the activities around but do not include them for your summative evaluation.
- Images used in the textbooks: In traditional textbook, images in it, serve only a visual relief. However our purpose in using images is as significant as text itself. There may be few sketches like in law and justice where narrative is illustrated or we use the image of leaders in various social and political movements. In all other occasions images are as important as the text, they are useful in explaining the concepts or are illustrative of the ideas used in the textbooks. We have also tried to use different styles of images: like photographs; line drawings; cartoons posters etc as well. These are also taken from different historical points of time. Hence just as different styles used in textbooks there is diversity in the images too.
- Maps, tables and graphs: Maps in these books tell us about geographic, economic, political and historical aspects. They are used to present the information in an interesting manner. You will also find the use of tables and graphs. Reading tables and graphs are essential in Social Studies. These often provide much more clarity in explaining the concepts.
- Projects: There are different projects suggested in the book. It may not be possible for all projects to be undertaken. It is important to remember we cannot teach all aspects of concepts merely by reading textbook. Projects thus enable children to interact with members of the society, collect new information, arrange and present them in their own manner. Making questions for an interview, planning for a visit to the bank, or creating a presentation that could include images tabulated data or graphs based on the information they collected are also important in Social Studies skills. These encourage children to work together in groups and conduct exchange and share ideas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Sri K. Joshi, State Coordinator, AP Human Rights Education, Dr. Ramani Atkuri, Medical Practitioner, Bhopal, Smt K. Bhagya Lakshmi, Manchi Pustakam, Hyderabad, Prof. M.S.S Pandian, JNU, New Delhi, Prof. E. Shiva Nagi Reddy, Stapathi, Dept. of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of A.P, Director State Central Library and reference section staff A.P and others who directly or indirectly participated in our workshops and contributed in improving the quality of specific chapters in the textbook. Some of the photographs used in the book are taken from flickr, wikipedia or other internet sources, under creative commons license.

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OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

- Rabindranath Tagore

Jana gana mana adhinayaka Jaya he
 Bharatha bhagya-vidhata
 Punjab Sindhu Gujaratha Maratha
 Dravida Utkala Banga.
 Vindhya Himachala Jamuna Ganga
 Uchchala Jaladhi taranga,
 Tava shubha name jage
 Tava shubha asisha mage
 Gahe tava jaya gatha
 Jana gana mangala-dayaka jaya he,
 Bharatha bhagya –vidhatha,
 Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,
 Jaya jaya jaya jaya he

PLEDGE

"India is my country; all Indians are my brothers and sisters.
 I love my country, and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage.

I shall always strive to be worthy of it.

I shall give my parents, teachers and all elders respect,
 and treat everyone with courtesy. I shall be kind to animals.

To my country and my people, I pledge my devotion.

In their well-being and prosperity alone lies my happiness."

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