

SOCIAL STUDIES

CLASS VI

A PUBLICATION OF

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A Word at the Beginning..

There has been a widely felt need for a fresh look at the curriculum of social sciences and the methods of teaching them. This has led to considerable debate on how to make social science teaching more relevant as well as interesting to the child. Should it focus on the immediate environment of the child? Should the child be 'given' information or merely helped in 'constructing' information? Should one introduce the child to the subjectivity of knowledge in the social sciences? Should social science education provide the child with ideals to emulate? Should it seek to develop positive values of a good citizen or instead develop criticality in children? These are not necessarily mutually exclusive and there is a need to see how these diverse objectives can be fruitfully assimilated in different stages of social science teaching.

Many teachers and institutions have been experimenting with these issues for quite some time now. In recent years, a large number of bodies like non-governmental organizations, trade unions, citizens' associations, etc. have begun to venture into this area, concerned by the challenges which the contemporary society and polity have posed before those who cherish democratic, secular and egalitarian values. These experiences, when put together, will certainly help us to redefine the contours of the debate on social science teaching. There, then, is a need to reach out to each other and share materials and experiences. The present edition is an attempt at making available Ekalavya's work to a larger audience.

The Eklavya Institute for Educational Research and Innovative Action initiated its Social Science Teaching Programme in 1984. The Government of Madhya Pradesh and the MP SCERT accepted Eklavya's proposal to develop new way of teaching the social sciences in the mainstream school system. Nine government middle schools were selected for this experiment. The textbooks developed by Eklavya were to be used in these schools instead of the conventional prescribed textbooks.

Thus Eklavya's Innovative Social Science Teaching Programme was launched formally in nine schools in 1986. The programme did not consist of new textbooks alone. Teachers were involved through training workshops and monthly meetings. The teaching of the lessons in actual classroom conditions was closely observed and feedback on each of the chapters was collected. A new scheme was evolved for evaluating children in accordance with the objectives of the programme and in order to minimise the negative impact of rote learning. It relied on open book examinations where the emphasis was on the skills of culling information from texts, pictures, tables, maps, etc. It also tested children's skills in comparing diverse situations, identifying causal links, applying understanding to new situations, etc.

Scholars from many universities and research institutions of the country were deeply interested in the progress of the program and actively participated in it. The feedback and reviews received from teachers, children, academicians, etc. enabled Eklavya to revise and improve the books further. There have been two major revisions of the books. The present English edition is based largely on the 1993 edition.

A large number of friends from non-Hindi speaking states and teachers of English medium schools have been demanding an English language version of these books. We hope that they will find this book useful. We would be grateful for suggestions which will enable us to make this book more relevant and meaningful to students and teachers who will use it.

We thank all those who have helped us prepare this book. The work of translating the text into English was inspired by the BGVS and done by many volunteers. Ms. Lakshmi Murthy undertook the difficult task of copy editing the entire book. We have used the illustrations prepared by Rajesh Yadav, Karen Haddock, Satish Chauhan, Asha Sharma, Cheenu Patel, A.R.Shaikh and Yograj Yadav. The photographs have been taken from too many sources for us to acknowledge them all. The photographs of several places in Madhya Pradesh were taken by Ashok Thudgar, Subir Shukla and H.K. Biswas. We are grateful to them all for their cooperation. The Hindi edition was published by the M.P.T.B.C. and English edition is being published by Eklavya with the kind permission of Government of Madhya Pradesh.

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CONTENTS

How to use this book	i
HISTORY	
1. The Hunter-Gatherers	2
2. Beginnings of Agriculture	10
3. The Growth of Villages	16
4. Cities in the Indus Valley: The Oldest Cities	22
5. The Pastoral Aryans	30
6. The Emergence of Small <i>Janapadas</i>	37
7. The Kings of the <i>Mahajanapadas</i>	45
8. Cities of the <i>Mahajanapadas</i>	52
9. New Questions, New Ideas	60
10. Raja Ashoka	65
11. Trade and Contact with Distant Lands	71
GEOGRAPHY	
1. Directions	76
2. Let Us Make a Map	81
3. Mountains, Plains, Plateaus	86
4. Kotgaon - A Village in the Plains	89
5. Pahavadi - A Village in the Hills	98
6. Balampur - A Village on the Plateau	105
7. Map of the <i>Tehsil</i>	112
8. The Earth and the Globe	114
9. Asia	120
10. Indonesia	123
11. Japan	132
12. The Polar Regions of Asia	142
13. Iran	149
14. Asia - Physical Features	156
CIVICS	
1. Inter-dependence	161
2. Weekly Markets and <i>Mandi</i>	166
3. Village <i>Panchayat</i>	175
4. Public Amenities in Cities	184
5. Farmers and Labourers	190
6. District Administration	197

USING THIS BOOK...

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS TEXTBOOK

Initiating the Lessons

It is best to start by generating excitement and curiosity in the children's minds about the lesson that they are going to read. To create this interest children are asked some questions at the beginning of every chapter. Maybe the children already know something about the topic of the chapter. Maybe they can make some guesses about the content of the chapter by looking at the pictures in it. After talking about their own ideas, they would be more active and alert in seeing if the chapter is the same as what they thought it would be and also in what the differences are. These interest-creating questions have been printed immediately after the title of the chapter, like this

Questions in the Middle

Usually, questions are given only at the end of the chapter in textbooks. But in this textbook there are many questions given in the middle of the chapters themselves. These questions keep children alert and let the teacher know if the children are comprehending what is being read. They also help to elicit what children already know about that topic. These questions should not be skipped. It is very essential to discuss these questions with the children. It is also necessary to make children write down the answers of some of these questions in their notebooks. These questions have been given in shaded boxes thus:

Difficult Words

We usually do not realise that children don't understand many words given in textbooks. In such a situation the learning process becomes difficult for them. There are only a few difficult words in this textbook and they are printed in bold letters. The teacher should be aware of these and move on only after having explained and discussed them with the children. Certain terms related to the subject matter have also been given in bold letters.

Sawaliram

Sawaliram is an imaginary person. Children can send their questions to him by post and *Sawaliram* would write back his answers. The exercise section in some chapters invites children to write questions to *Sawaliram*. Children enjoy asking questions, and they would be delighted to receive letters in reply. This encourages children

to ask questions and to think. At the end of every lesson you could ask them if they have any questions for *Sawaliram*. They could mail them on a postcard.

CHAPTER 1
THE KINGS OF THE MAHAJANAPADAS

This text has several difficult words. What do you think about them - who is a king? what does he do for the people, and what do the people do for him? What does he give the people, and what do the people give him? Look at the pictures in this chapter and find out more about the kings and their subjects. Are the things you mentioned about kings reflected in these pictures?

You read in the previous chapter about the emergence of many small janapadas. Here we will read about the activities that took place in the hundred years after that. This is called the age of the Mahajanapadas.

1. How would you describe the political situation in the Mahajanapadas?

2. What do you think about the social conditions in the Mahajanapadas?

3. How do you think about the economic conditions in the Mahajanapadas?

4. In what way do you think about the cultural conditions in the Mahajanapadas?

5. How do you think about the religious conditions in the Mahajanapadas?

6. How do you think about the scientific conditions in the Mahajanapadas?

7. How do you think about the artistic conditions in the Mahajanapadas?

We have shown only 16 mahajanapadas in the map. In addition to these there were many smaller janapadas. There were several new developments taking place in the mahajanapadas. We get information about these from books and stories of those times written in Pali language. With the help of these we can also imagine how the kings of the mahajanapadas must have been.

Kings of a Mahajanapada - A Story

This is the story of a king of a mahajanapada. His name was Puranjit. He had won many wars against several janapadas and had acquired their wealth. He had also accumulated a lot of wealth by collecting tributes from the people of his mahajanapada. With the help of all this wealth, Raja Puranjit collected huge armories of weapons and a large number of horses. He also wanted to build a beautiful palace for himself.

As he became powerful, Puranjit frequently attacked all the neighbouring janapadas in order to bring them under his control. He was feared by one and all.

Plan to Build an Army

As was the practice, Puranjit had to distribute a part of the conquered wealth to the *bhayukas*, perform huge sacrifices in which he had to feed all the people, and give large gifts as tributes to the brahmins. In those days, the same life long depended on how much he spent on sacrifices.

However, Raja Puranjit began to waste spending his wealth in this way. He wanted to wage war on many more janapadas. He was also being threatened by kings of some other janapadas. Therefore Puranjit wanted to make

Sawaliram's address:
Sawaliram
c/o Eklavya
Kothi Bazar
Hoshangabad 461 001

Stories

Children love stories. They enjoy learning through stories. Many chapters in this text use stories. These stories are imaginary, but the situations they represent are based on well researched facts. They are intended to explain certain concepts. The stories are italicized to distinguish them from the rest of the text.

Pictures

There are many pictures in this textbook. They play a big role in helping the child to grasp and understand what is being taught. There are many questions which are based on these pictures. While answering these questions encourage children to use their own language. You should also discuss the pictures with the children. This enables them to develop their skills of careful observation and of expressing ideas and concepts.

Sub-headings

It is necessary to train children to use sub-headings. Along with learning information and concepts, we also want the children to learn how to search for information from books. That is a skill that they will find very useful for the whole of their lives. Books provide information and they are classified and arranged in a pattern. One can locate information in books by the headings and sub-headings of chapters. It is necessary to draw the attention of children to the sub-headings of the lessons. They should have a basic grasp of what kind of information is available under each sub-heading. The exercises also have a few special questions which are meant to develop and test their information-retrieval skills.

Maps

A lot of effort has gone into making large and clear maps in this book. They help children in getting a better picture of the world around them. Children should be encouraged to find information in the maps by themselves. To get them used to reading these, questions based on maps have been included in many chapters.

Their answers are usually not to be found in the text of the lesson and can be worked out only from the maps. The children should go through the maps and find the answers by themselves.

O f t e n children do not understand the most basic aspects of maps. For instance, they may fail to distinguish between land and sea. To solve this problem we have made 'waves' on the sea or shaded the sea

differently. Children also get confused between the lines representing rivers and the coastal boundaries of nations. In our maps we have shown rivers around their origins with thin lines which gradually thicken as tributaries join them. It is important to focus on these details while helping children to learn how to use a map. Please note that the maps given in the book are no substitute for wall-maps or atlases. Please use them along with this book.

Exercise Questions

There are different kinds of questions in this textbook. They encourage the child to understand and discuss the information given



The Sanga had been every corner of the place. They knew where to find fruits, roots, wild grasses, tubers and insects and when to go to the river to wash fish and crabs. Throughout the year, they gathered food from some part or the other. Now they did not wander from place to place in search of food and made beds to sleep in. Only during floods did they go up the mountains, and after a while they came down again.

The ancestors of the Sanga had not known as much about the forest. They had to wander a lot from place to place in search of food. Now the Sanga had time to search about the forest that they gather and food for the whole year from around the same place.

Goma and Goma's Discovery

There were two children in the land called Goma and Goma. Both liked to eat sprouted grain. One day, they were sitting and eating it beside the river when a wild dog came along. It frightened both of them and ran away.

After a few days, when they went to the river bank, they saw some shoots of plants. Goma said, "The grain that we were eating had fallen here. Has the grassman taken them?" Goma answered, "No, I think these shoots have come out of those grains. Just the way mango trees come out from the seeds in the rainy season."

Goma said, "Shall we throw some grains a gain and see?" In both of them want to show their father and asked for more grains. He refused saying, "This grain has been collected with so much effort. Now we have to make do with it for long." But the next day, Goma and Goma quietly picked up some grains and threw them at the back of the hut.

Everyday they went to see whether the shoots had come out. But it was summer. The seeds rotted in the dry soil. Birds and insects ate them up. Goma and Goma started shouting. Then they found an answer. Goma said, "Let's cover the seeds with soil. Then the birds will not eat them." Goma said, "Yes, and let's pour some water on them. Maybe shoots sprout only when they get water."

So they planted the seeds and watered them with water from the river. With a few days, the shoots came out. Goma and Goma's happiness knew no bounds. They watched the plants growing everyday.

All these facts about cultivation may seem very simple and plain to us now. But at one time, people must have taken quite long to discover and understand them.

After some time there were grains on Goma and Goma's plants. Yes, because now the people of the Sanga had found a new place. The children could watch the grain grow on

in the book. Children should not just blindly memorise the contents of the book. Hence the questions both examine and encourage understanding. *Children should be encouraged to write the answers of these questions in their own words.*

Questions for locating information

In which section is the Rajsuya yagna discussed?

What were the differences between the rajanya and the common people. What did they do for each other? Answer these questions after reading pages 33-36 of the textbook.

Questions for writing precise answers

While answering questions children may include many unrelated aspects of information given before and after the specific point that is sought. This means that children do not know what or how much they should write as the answer. Children should be encouraged to write precise answers. This can be done by exercises like:

What is bali? Write in two sentences.

Questions for expressing understanding

There are questions which encourage children to understand and express themselves using their own words. The answers for these questions are either scattered over several places or not directly available in the textbook. Examples of such questions are:

What did the kings of the mahajanapadas have which the kings of the janapadas did not have? Write and explain three such things.

(This is a comparison between two chapters.)

Write 10-12 important points about the life of hunter-gatherers.

(This asks the child to summarize a chapter.)

Read the following incomplete passage about the beginning of agriculture and complete it.

If it were possible for us to understand the script used at the time of the Indus civilisation what information would we get about those people?

Reinforcing map-reading skills

There are special questions to improve skills related to maps, pictures and tables:

Compare and contrast map no. 2 and map no. 3 and say which among the following statements is true:

Both the maps are of India.

Both the maps are of the same period.

There is no difference in the information given in the two maps.

There is a picture of the time of the Mahajanapadas on page 51. Describe what you see in this picture in 6 to 7 sentences. Compare this with the picture on page 24 and write the differences and similarities that you see.

You may keep these exercises in mind and use similar questions for your tests and examinations. Children should be encouraged to understand and not to cram. So new questions should be given every time. Children should not be expected to mug up information, rather they should be expected to read, understand and express themselves.

Clay Models and Displays

Children enjoy making clay models or displays of what they read in the textbook. These activities are not difficult to organise. The children can bring their own clay and water. They have a lot of fun making models of terraced farming, mines, caves of hunter-gatherers, etc. This helps them to give a concrete shape to their understanding. Even children who are very shy to answer questions, because their writing and reading skills are weak, would be able to express themselves through such activities. Such activities will also deepen children's conceptual understanding. As most chapters make use of detailed descriptions, it is easy to do such activities.

Evaluating Children

Examinations should not merely test the ability of children to memorise and recall information but also evaluate a wider range of skills which go to shape a thinking and articulate individual. For this purpose it would be useful to combine the usual closed book examinations with open book examinations. It is necessary to allow children to use their textbooks in a part of the examination. This will enable them to attempt new questions which require them to use some important skill even if they do not remember the relevant facts. One important skill which can only be tested with an open book examination is that of referencing. This relates to the child's ability to pick out, when asked for, the precise relevant information from a book.

However, children need to be adequately trained in the concept of open book examination. Often children can misunderstand the purpose and regard the exam as a cakewalk. It needs to be communicated that unless they are familiar with the content and structure of the chapters they will not be able to locate and write the answers within the given time.

HISTORY

