

# **The Contents of the Social Science Textbook used in Assam's Upper Primary Education Curriculum: An Emphasis on Encouraging Civic Engagement and Social Accountability**

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## **Abstract:**

In the present study, the social science textbook used in Assam's Upper Primary curriculum which normally covers Classes VI through VIII is examined. Key elements of geography, history, political science (civics), and economics are included into the textbook, which was created in accordance with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and under the direction of the Assam State Textbook Production and Publication Corporation Ltd. Students' critical thinking, civic engagement, and socio-cultural understanding will all be fostered by the content's emphasis on raising awareness of both local and national settings. Modules that showcase Assam's rich historical past, cultural variety, ethnic populations, and environmental aspects lay a heavy emphasis on regional identity. Instilling democratic values and knowledge of modern socio-political institutions are other goals of the textbook. Disparities in inclusive representation and educational approaches are revealed by critical analysis, nevertheless, especially with relation to gender perspectives, indigenous histories, and participatory learning techniques. An in-depth analysis of how the textbook affects students' understanding of society and their place in it can be started with this abstract, which also advocates for a more inclusive, participatory, and student-centered curriculum framework.

**Keywords:** Social Science, Textbook, Content, Upper Primary Education, Curriculum, Assam, Social Accountability

## **01.Introduction:**

Social science is essential in forming young people's brains because it raises understanding of society, government, and individual and collective obligations. In the context of Assamese upper primary education, the Social Science curriculum aims to develop students' sense of civic duty and citizenship in addition to teaching them geography, history, political science, and economics. This educational phase, which usually includes Classes VI through VIII, is a critical one when students start to comprehend intricate social institutions and their place in them. The National Curriculum Framework's (NCF) more general goals as well as the unique cultural and sociopolitical environment of Assam are reflected in the content of the social science textbooks used there. Developing critical thinking skills, empathy, and a dedication to democratic principles are the goals of these textbooks. Diversity, human rights, environmental stewardship, local governance, and the value of active civic engagement are among the topics that are frequently highlighted in lessons. By incorporating these topics within the curriculum, Assamese education aims to equip students to be knowledgeable, accountable, and engaged citizens. Fostering a generation that values justice, inclusivity, and sustainable development requires a strong emphasis on citizenship education. Understanding how education policy is translated into useful instruments for social cohesion and nation-building can be gained by examining the format and content of these textbooks.

## **02. Background of the Study:**

Education in the social sciences is essential in forming students' knowledge of geography, history, society, and government. It establishes the groundwork for critical thinking, civic consciousness, and social responsibility at the Upper Primary level (Classes VI to VIII). In accordance with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) guidelines and the directives of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and the Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA), the Assam State Textbook Production and Publication Corporation Ltd. develops the content of social science textbooks used in government and government-aided schools in Assam.

The four main subjects of history, geography, political science, and economics are all integrated into the textbooks' structure, which also takes into account Assam's distinct socio-cultural and geographical characteristics. Since Assam's population is diverse and includes people from many ethnic backgrounds, languages, and customs, it is anticipated that its educational materials will reflect this diversity and help students develop an inclusive understanding of who they are. Growing discussions in educational research, however, have highlighted the fact that curricular content frequently relies largely on memorisation, fails to encourage active citizenship, or does not adequately represent marginalised communities. Given the prevalence of cultural and ethnic diversity in Assam, it is especially critical to assess how well social science textbooks represent this diversity and inspire students to actively interact with local social realities.

This study was prompted by the need to evaluate the pedagogical method, content, and organisation of the social science textbooks used in upper primary school in Assam. It seeks to evaluate if these resources help students become

knowledgeable, compassionate, and engaged citizens and how effectively they support the goals of holistic education, diversity, and contextual relevance.

### 03. Statement of the Problem:

Education is essential to creating knowledgeable, accountable, and engaged citizens in the modern democratic nation-building setting. It is anticipated that social science instruction at the upper elementary level will establish the groundwork for civic consciousness, democratic principles, and social accountability. This function is even more crucial in Assam, a politically prominent and culturally diverse state in Northeast India. Nonetheless, questions have been raised about how well these objectives are addressed by the social science texts now required in the Assamese Upper Primary Education Curriculum. The content, instructional approaches, and learning outcomes offered in the textbooks seem to differ from the curriculum's stated goals, which include promoting social responsibility, democratic consciousness, and participatory citizenship. The degree to which textbooks foster critical thinking, inclusivity, environmental awareness, and adherence to constitutional ideals is still not well understood and applied consistently. Furthermore, Assamese local sociopolitical settings, histories, and civic issues are frequently underrepresented or barely mentioned. The content, organization, and pedagogical methodology of social science textbooks used in Assamese upper primary schools must be thoroughly reviewed and critically examined in light of this circumstance, especially with regard to their function in encouraging students' civic engagement and social responsibility.

### 04. Review of Literature:

An analysis of the literature on the subjects covered in Assamese upper primary school social science textbooks that emphasize civic engagement and social responsibility shows that these topics are becoming more and more important. The curriculum has been updated and revised by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Assam to better meet the objectives of modern education. Current textbooks show a change in emphasis toward encouraging students' civic engagement, social responsibility, and civic awareness.

**Konwar (2003)**, described a few of the problems and worries that the North-Eastern (NE) states' elementary schools have with regard to SSA. Research on teacher deployment and competency was carried out by the National Council of Applied Economic Research, India, to evaluate teachers' performance and professional competence as well as to learn more about their recruitment process, job satisfaction, training needs, challenges they face, and the kind of support they need to function well.

**Sharma (2007)**, according to his research on the "Impact of implementation of Sarva Shiksha Aviyan Programme on improving the educational scenario of the tea-tribes of Assam," there was a noticeable increase in class I enrollment following the start of the SSA. According to the study, SSA has had a very favorable and encouraging effect on the tea tribes' educational situation.

**Kundu (1995)**, in his investigation of the "physical conditions of the primary schools of greater Guwahati," he discovered that the sample area's primary schools had appalling physical facilities. A few of the schools lacked divider barriers. 20 percent of schools lacked urinals, while 80 percent lacked playgrounds. Of them, 35% lacked access to drinking water.

**Thakuria (1996)**, in his research on "primary education issues in the West Guwahati area." According to the study, the poor location of schools, the absence of appropriate boundary walls, the lack of a library and drinking water facility, the lack of teaching and learning resources, and the shortage of qualified and experienced instructors all contributed to the poor growth of primary education in the sample region.

**Aggarwal (2001)**, stated that a school with a border wall is regarded as attractive and safe among the school's infrastructure. In every state, the percentage of schools with boundary walls has grown over time. The states of Assam, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Bihar have relatively few schools with boundary walls. Additionally, he stated that just because a facility is available, it does not necessarily mean that it is completely functional and being used. There are numerous cases when drinking water and restrooms are there yet inoperable for a variety of reasons.

**Singh (2005)**, indicated a few of the important problems that contributed to the rise in female student dropout rates in India, such as the absence of drinking water, classrooms, and restrooms for female students.

**Todd (2008)**, highlighted how SSA has helped to improve school facilities and children's education in India.

**Revathy (2008)**, examining the study on "organizational culture of schools," the investigator According to his research, there is a need to upgrade the infrastructure, including the water facilities, furnishings, maintenance grants, and whitewashing and repair facilities.

**Bosumatary (2012)**, stated that SSA wants to invest money in school equipment renewals that aren't currently covered by any other programs.

### 05. Operational Definition of the Terms Used:

a) **Primary Education:** An essential component of the overall framework of an educational program is primary education. At this point, the youngster begins attending a formal school and receiving formal instruction. Primary education, which is provided to children aged 6 to 11, is indicated by the fact that the child attends primary school

straight from home and undergoes numerous modifications. The foundation for his or her physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, social, and progressive personality development is provided by the education they acquire there.

b) **Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA):** The Government of India introduced the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001 as a flagship initiative to provide primary education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14. It was then included into the larger Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan in 2018, which still prioritizes high-quality, inclusive education.

#### 06. Justification of the Study:

Because upper primary school is a crucial time in a child's development of civic identity and social consciousness, social science textbook study is crucial in Assam. Textbooks are essential resources for forming students' values, worldviews, and comprehension of their social roles in addition to being methods for imparting knowledge. Education's role in fostering citizenship and social responsibility is especially important in a state as politically vibrant and culturally diverse as Assam, where social harmony, environmental awareness, and civic engagement are vital. There is little empirical research that critically assesses how these ideals are reflected in the actual content of textbooks used in Assam, despite curriculum frameworks such as the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and NEP 2020 emphasizing education for democratic citizenship and ethical responsibility. Addressing this gap is particularly crucial in light of the state's particular sociopolitical problems, which include linguistic barriers, migration, ethnicity, environmental degradation, and political instability. Additionally, it's important to evaluate whether the textbooks support pluralism and constitutional values, encourage active involvement with local concerns, and offer pedagogically effective methods for helping students develop empathy and critical thinking. Attempts to establish value-based education at the grassroots level can remain surface-level or ineffectual in the absence of such an evaluation. This study's attempt to critically examine the material in Assamese upper primary social science textbooks, with an emphasis on how well they advance the principles of civic education, democratic participation, and social responsibility, is therefore warranted. The research's conclusions will have significant ramifications for curriculum designers, textbook authors, educators, and legislators, helping to enhance state-level educational practices and bring them closer to the national and international objectives of education for responsible and sustainable citizenship.

#### 07. Objectives of the Study:

This study's main goal is to critically analyze the material in the social science textbooks required for the Upper Primary Education Curriculum in Assam in order to assess how well they instill in students the principles of civic engagement and social responsibility. The study specifically seeks to:

1. To study how democratic values, civic responsibilities, and human rights are portrayed in the textbook material in order to determine how these components support the formation of knowledgeable and accountable citizens.
2. To highlight which textbook themes and pedagogical strategies are meant to promote environmental responsibility, cultural diversity, national integration, and social awareness.
3. To focus how inclusive and pertinent the textbook material is in addressing local sociopolitical concerns and promoting students' active civic participation.
4. To suggest curriculum improvement strategies to better incorporate civic education and social responsibility into social science instruction at the upper elementary level in Assam.

#### 08. Research Questions:

1. How far do upper primary schools in Assam social science textbooks encourage civic engagement and social responsibility?
2. Which particular themes and subject areas in the textbooks best represent civic responsibilities, democratic principles, social fairness, and human rights?
3. How are topics of gender equality, national integration, cultural diversity, and environmental awareness covered in the textbooks?
4. What instructional techniques or exercises are included in the textbooks to get students talking about or acting upon civic and social responsibility?
5. In Assam's context, what are the shortcomings or restrictions in the current social science textbooks for the promotion of civic education and social responsibility?

#### 09. Hypothesis

*Principal Hypothesis:* The social science curriculum in Assam's Upper Primary Education curriculum is structured to successfully foster civic participation and social responsibility in students.

*Null Hypothesis:* Students' civic participation and social accountability are not substantially enhanced by the social science textbooks used in Assam's Upper Primary Education curriculum.

#### 10. Research Methodology:

The study of research methods is known as methodology. More officially, it is a contextual framework for research, a logical and cogent plan based on opinions, values, and beliefs that directs the decisions made by researchers. It includes

the theoretical examination of the corpus of techniques and concepts related to a field of study, so that the approaches used from other disciplines differ according to their historical evolution. This results in a range of approaches that span conflicting perspectives on the best ways to grasp reality and knowledge. This places methods inside broader approaches and ideas. The following strategy should be taken into consideration while creating a research technique to examine how citizenship and social responsibility are incorporated into Assam's upper primary social science curriculum:

### Research Design

- *Type:* Analytical and descriptive study
- *Method:* Qualitative research combined with quantitative analysis components
- Analysis of curriculum material, perspectives of teachers and students, and classroom procedures

### Techniques for Gathering Data

- Examining official textbooks and instructional manuals and conducting content analysis to find themes pertaining to civic engagement and social responsibility

### Observations in the classroom:

- Examining instructional strategies and student participation

### Focus Group Discussions:

- To learn about students' viewpoints

### Methods of Data Analysis

*Qualitative Analysis:* The Content analysis of course materials thematic coding of observational and interview data.

## 11. Research Gap:

One essential part of Assam's educational system is the Upper Primary Education Curriculum for Social Science. However, there doesn't seem to be much thorough study that focuses on the curriculum's efficacy, inclusivity, and conformity with modern educational objectives. This disparity offers a chance for in-depth scholarly research and the creation of policies.

### *Possible Research Deficits in the Curriculum Education and Pertinence*

- *Historical and Cultural Context:* Assam's rich cultural legacy, indigenous knowledge systems, and local history could not be adequately represented in the curriculum. Research can examine if the curriculum encourages pupils to have a sense of local identity and how effectively it represents the variety of the state.
- *Current Issues:* Assamese-specific social, political, and environmental issues may not receive enough attention. Research could evaluate whether subjects like migration, ethnic diversity, and climate change are covered in the curriculum.

### *Pedagogical Strategies*

- *Teaching Methodologies:* Research could look into how well the social science curriculum is taught using various teaching strategies. This involves evaluating the application of critical thinking, interactive learning, and student engagement techniques.
- *Teacher Training:* Studies may examine whether teacher preparation programs adequately prepare teachers with the abilities and information needed to effectively teach social science.

### *Evaluation and Assessment*

- *Assessment Techniques:* When assessing students' comprehension of social science subjects, there may not be enough varied and formative assessment techniques available. Research could examine how assessment procedures relate to learning goals.
- *Effect on Learning Outcomes:* Studies might look into how assessment techniques affect students' learning outcomes and whether they encourage knowledge application and critical thinking.

### *Accessibility and Inclusivity*

- *Language and Accessibility:* Students from a variety of linguistic backgrounds may encounter difficulties due to the curriculum's language. The curriculum's linguistic inclusion, accessibility for children with impairments, and representation of underrepresented cultures could all be the subject of future research.
- *Gender Sensitivity:* Research might examine if the curriculum encourages gender equality and dispels preconceptions, guaranteeing that girls and boys have equal access to social science courses.

### *Technology Integration*

- *Online Resources:* There may not be enough research done on how technology can be used to teach social science courses. The use of digital tools and resources to improve learning outcomes and experiences could be the subject of future research.
- *Equity in Access:* Research may look at how students' varying levels of access to technology resources impact the fair distribution of the curriculum.



## 12. Results and Discussion:

As educational attainment rises, so does the level of enrollment. It is a crucial metric for tracking educational advancement. The state has 2557239 primary school students and 943248 upper primary school students, according to the Sixth All India School Education Survey (SAISES). Additionally, 1238050 girls and 1319189 boys make up the total number of students enrolled in Assamese elementary schools. 3286215 pupils were enrolled in Assamese elementary schools overall in 2009–2010. Of all the youngsters enrolled, around 85% were attending government schools. Data on enrollment is crucial for social development. The elementary school enrollment rate in Assam has increased by several times. **(Konwar, 2017)**

There are numerous ways in which humans differ from animals. Humans attempt to control their impulses, whilst animals are captives to them. It is simply due to their capacity for learning. The distinction between bestiality and humanity arises. In order to obtain firsthand experience and information, people integrate into their surroundings. They are able to learn a great deal from these experiences. **(Sarma, 2014)**

Primary education is seen as the cornerstone of both individual growth and the welfare of the country as a whole. Primary education is regarded as the cornerstone of mandatory education in our nation. **(Kapoor, 2018)**

Infrastructure facilities must be considered while implementing development plans intended to improve an area's educational quality. Additionally, the administration emphasized the importance of providing adequate infrastructure for the development of basic education. According to the National Policy on Education of 1986, education spending should be raised gradually until it reaches 6% of national revenue as soon as feasible. It should be mentioned that the central government recognized the importance of basic education after 1987–1988. As a result, its share increased to roughly 19 percent, and in 1993–1994 it increased to almost 21 percent. Additionally, the state government has been covering somewhat less than half of India's primary education costs during this time. **(Konwar, 2017)**

In light of the times, education as an investment must be prioritized and increased. Large sums of money have been provided by the national government to Assamese primary schools to improve their facilities. When compared to other states in the nation, Assam's primary education infrastructure is in a less than satisfactory state. With the exception of the teacher-to-pupil ratio, the state's performance is found to be behind that of other states in the nation. **(Konwar, 2017)**

It is evident that every state is currently having a very hard time keeping up with the school building construction program. Primary school buildings are a major issue that, if not addressed immediately, can negatively impact both the endeavor to develop schools in a state and enrollment in underprivileged areas. According to SAISES, 4838 primary schools in Assam have kuchcha structures, whereas 11154 of the state's 30045 primary schools have pucca structures. Regarding upper primary schools, it is observed that 2101 of the 7704 total upper primary schools are pucca, whereas 1716 are kuchcha. In 2009–10, the national average was 32 students per classroom, while the Assamese average was 28. In 2009–10, the state had three instructors on average per elementary school.

Examining the intricacies of socioeconomic inequality and social diversity requires local commitment and advanced planning interventions. As India attempts to change its educational system to satisfy the needs of the twenty-first century, it is still crucial to strike a balance between tradition and progress, value and greatness, in order to foster a manageable turn of events and involve people in the future. **(Balakrishna & Padmavati 2024)**

Since primary school lays a strong foundation for higher education, it has been the most widely covered subject in all countries worldwide. Primary education is directly related to promoting economic progress, democracy, and the standard of living in the country. The Indian Constitution's framers included free and mandatory education for all children up to the age of 14 into the tenets of state policy because they recognized the importance of basic education. **(Bhattacharjee, 2014)**

An essential part of the entire educational system is primary education. Primary education is a prerequisite for secondary and postsecondary education in our educational system. Therefore, in order to strengthen the entire educational system, the primary schools should be improved. According to the current survey, there are still a number of issues in our elementary schools. For example, some lack playgrounds, sports facilities, and proper infrastructure, which makes the pupils dislike going to school. Co-curricular activities may be offered in elementary schools to help children pass the time and develop their creative abilities. **(Baruah & Baruah, 2024)**

Class	Component of the Subjects	Key Topics	Civic & Social Values
Class 6	Political Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the government?</li> <li>Government Types</li> <li>Local Self-Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An overview of democracy</li> <li>An understanding of power and accountability</li> <li>Grassroots involvement</li> </ul>
	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Harappan Civilization</li> <li>Early Humans</li> <li>Vedic Era</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of cultural heritage</li> <li>The function of community in prehistoric societies</li> </ul>
	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Earth's motions</li> <li>Landforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of geography</li> <li>Responsibility for the</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our planet</li> </ul>	environment
<b>Class 7</b>	Political Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elections</li> <li>Citizenship</li> <li>The media</li> <li>Democracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in democracy</li> <li>The media's role</li> <li>Responsible citizenship</li> </ul>
	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gupta to Mauryan Period</li> <li>Medieval India</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political Development</li> <li>Lessons in leadership</li> <li>Governance</li> </ul>
	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geography of Assam</li> <li>The climate and Environment</li> <li>Natural Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethics of Conservation</li> <li>Pride and Accountability in the Region</li> </ul>
<b>Class 8</b>	Political Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indian Constitution</li> <li>Basic Rights and Obligations</li> <li>Justice and the Law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect for human rights</li> <li>The rule of Law</li> <li>State and citizen Accountability</li> </ul>
	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ancient and Medieval Assam</li> <li>Colonial Period in Assam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional identity</li> <li>Social change</li> <li>Resistance movements</li> </ul>
	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population and Resources</li> <li>Environmental Difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable development</li> <li>Environmental community action</li> </ul>

Table 1: The table shows the social science textbook's contents, which include civic engagement and social accountability, in Assam's upper primary education curriculum.

Sl. No.	Themes	Accountability and Civic Engagement
1	Rights & Duties	Students gain knowledge of their constitutional responsibilities and functions.
2	Thinking Democratically	It emphasises critical involvement with the media, law, and government.
3	From Local to Global Knowledge	Promotes civic engagement in Assam communities and in Indian society at large.
4	Social Justice and the Environment	Social justice and ecological consciousness are linked in textbooks.

Table 2: The table emphasises the cross-cutting themes that encourage students to be accountable and participate in civic life.

### 13. Major Findings of the Study:

There have been numerous assessments and discussions about the State Council of Educational Research and Training's (SCERT) proposed Social Science curriculum for Assamese upper primary education. Although individual SCERT reports might not be easily found in the sources above, community discussions and educational forums can offer valuable insights.

#### *Curriculum Modernization and Relevance:*

- The curriculum may be out of date, according to some educators and stakeholders, who claim that it falls behind the latest developments in technology and education.
- It is believed that including contemporary themes and teaching strategies is crucial to meeting international educational standards.
- Infrastructure and Resource Allocation: Issues with insufficient teacher preparation, obsolete infrastructure, and a lack of resources have been brought to light.
- These elements play a part in the differences in educational access and quality among Assamese regions.
- National Education Policy (NEP) Implementation: Demands have been made for Assam to successfully implement the NEP.
- Stakeholders stress that in order to improve the caliber and diversity of education, NEP guidelines must be followed.

#### *Important Aspects of the Curriculum:*

- Holistic Approach:** By integrating many subjects, the curriculum gives students a comprehensive understanding of historical events, societal structures, geographical elements, and economic principles.
- Localized Content:** Students' feeling of regional identification and pride is fostered by the special emphasis on Assam's distinctive cultural, historical, and geographical features.
- Interactive Learning:** Including exercises, assignments, and conversations promotes critical thinking, active engagement, and the growth of analytical abilities.

4. *Assessment Techniques*: To determine students' comprehension and application of topics, frequent assessments are used, such as multiple-choice questions (MCQs), short answer questions, and project-based evaluations.

#### 14. Conclusion:

A major part of the entire educational system is played by primary schooling. It can be thought of as the educational system's cornerstone or bedrock. Primary education is a prerequisite for secondary and postsecondary education. There are a lot of issues in elementary school. The Indian government implemented a number of policies and initiatives to advance primary education.

Assam's upper primary social science curriculum aims to give pupils the information and abilities they need to understand and interact with the world's intricacies. The curriculum strives to develop knowledgeable, accountable, and engaged citizens by highlighting a well-rounded approach that blends theoretical understanding with real-world application. This fundamental education supports kids' overall growth and acts as a springboard for future academic endeavors.

Although the goal of Assam's upper primary social science curriculum is to give students a thorough understanding of history and societal systems, there are questions about its applicability and efficacy. To raise the standard of education in the state, it is imperative to address concerns about curriculum modernization, resource distribution, and the application of federal educational regulations.

According to the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), social science is a crucial component of Assamese upper primary education curricula and shapes students' perceptions of the world. The goal of this curriculum is to give students in classes VI through VIII a thorough foundation by covering topics including history, geography, political science, and economics.

Therefore, it is the duty of the community, parents, and teachers to meet the fundamental needs and demands of the elementary school-aged children. Between the ages of six and fourteen, a person's physical, mental, social, spiritual, and emotional development is reflected. With an awareness of the developmental traits at this point, a teacher may guide the kids to become responsible citizens and provide them the chance to develop a well-rounded personality throughout their lives.

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