Chapter - 7

Conclusion and Suggestions
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India is a country with rich social and cultural traditions. These traditions act as a backbone. They help in binding the people together in a society. The proper knowledge of our social and cultural traditions is essential for the youth of our country. These can be imparted through education. There is a relationship between society and education. A good educational system moulds people into good human beings in order to form a developed society. A well developed society is a basic requirement for educational excellence as well. This is how socio-cultural aspects play a crucial role.

There are a number of socio-cultural issues prevailing in our society which need to be examined and analyzed. The best way to highlight these issues is through textbooks. When these socio-cultural problems are discussed in class, their positive and negative affects come out and the students with the help of the teachers understand them in a better way. For the students need to be alert in the class. It is the responsibility of the parents also to guide their children and to maintain a healthy environment at home.

The purpose of my research is to find out the interweaving of social and cultural strands in the NCERT English textbooks prescribed at Secondary and Senior Secondary level. The other purpose is to determine the suitability of the socio-cultural content and context of these textbooks. My work begins with the analysis of the English textbooks namely:

- *Literature Reader* for class Ninth
- *Literature Reader* for class Tenth
- *Snapshots* and *Hornbill* for class Eleventh
- *Flamingo* and *Vistas* for class Twelfth

*Chapter one* of my thesis constitutes the *Introduction*.

*Chapter two* presents the review of the related literature. This chapter has four sections. They are concerned with the published works on books, articles, theses and e-sources.
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Chapter three offers the analysis of Literature Reader for Class Ninth and Tenth.

In Literature Reader for Class Ninth, I have discussed the following social messages:

- Importance of education
- Respect for elders
- Hypocrisy
- Freedom of speech and action
- National integrity
- Help and love for fellow human beings

Education has been a major issue in India especially for women. A society must focus on women’s education as the empowerment of one woman can bring about a change in a family as well as in a society as a whole. The Indian government has been taking several measures regarding the education of women. Another reason for not sending girls to schools and colleges is the increasing incidence of sexual abuse. Such reasons make the parents reluctant in not sending girls for doing jobs.

Moral degeneration among the youths is another issue confronting the society. Children share a special bond with their parents as well as with the other family members. To maintain this bond, they need to respect elders. In this twenty-first century, everybody wants freedom. Everyone wants to live their life freely. But the youngsters should not forget that their elders are more experienced and the suggestions they give might help them in their life. As the condition has been becoming worse day by day, within the next few years there will be a need to educate not only children but also adults to love and help fellow human beings.

Directly or indirectly what people do, not only affects the people in their home but also others around them. To make a healthy society, it is the mindset which needs a change.

In Literature Reader for Class Tenth, I have discussed several life-ennobling messages and the social issues presented in this textbook such as

- Family matters
- Domestic violence
- Relationship between family members

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Families in India have been undergoing vast changes. Issues like domestic violence, intergenerational conflicts have been becoming more common. Such issues indicate the inability of people to cope with the pressures of modern life. This pressure is more on women as the Indian family is by and large patriarchal. So it is necessary for women to be educated as to deal with these changes. The generation gap which youngsters feel, is nothing but their notion of being superior to their elders. They do not realise the importance of elders in a family. When young people live and grow with their grandparents, they grow up living, admiring and appreciating them and their ideas. The intergenerational conflicts, however, make it difficult to maintain joint families.

Superstition is another issue which has been focussed on in this textbook. In this twenty-first century, some people in India still believe in superstitions. There is a need to make students aware about it. There are several notions existing in the India society which have no logic but people follow them blindly. Illiteracy is one of the major reasons behind superstitious activities. People are not intelligent enough to understand the tricks being played on them. Therefore, children need to be educated. Poor children cannot afford education as they lack money. Owing to poverty, they start working at an early age. This is what is called child labour. All the socio-cultural issues are linked with each another.

**Chapter four** presents the analysis of *Snapshots & Hornbill for Class Eleventh* and *Flamingo & Vistas for Class Twelfth*.

**Snapshots for class eleventh** addresses the following socio-cultural issues:

- Issues of generation gap
- Consequences of war
- Child marriage
- Importance of mother tongue
- Education system
- Family unity
- Professional attitude
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The problem of generation gap is universal but it is experienced intensely in India as families comprise of members of different age groups. People of different generations with different mindsets are unable to adjust with one another leading to the breaking up of families. Youngsters need to understand the value of elders in their life. The teachers by way of explanation make it more clear to the students.

Another issue affecting the world is war. It causes destruction, bloodshed and violence. Mostly young people participate in it who are the future of a country. Indulging in any kind of violence destroys the present and the future of the young people. Knowledge about the ravages of war is important for students to know and understand.

The development of a society or a country depends upon a good educational system. The main idea of rote learning has been clearly focussed on in this book. It is highly discouraged by many curriculum experts as it stunts an individual’s talent. There is a need to focus on this issue with great effort as it is prevalent in many top schools in India.

Issue of Kashmiri Pandits still waiting to return to their homeland has been pointed out. Such stories make students aware of what is happening in their country and how much people are suffering. Some of the incidents described in this lesson throw light on the importance of unity in a society and also on the removal of religious discrimination.

One of the chapters in this book focuses on the changing relationship between a doctor and a patient. For doctors, patients are no longer patients. They have become a source of making money. Patients do not get enough time by doctors and are not diagnosed properly. Doctors nowadays keep patients in hospitals longer than necessary so as to earn more from them. This dysfunction affects patients and their families both, especially poor people who cannot afford treatment. Students aim to become doctors, engineers, civil servants etc. to serve the people of their country in future. They should know that being a doctor or a lawyer is not only to just to earn money but to be loyal to the people they serve. The real purpose of their profession must be there in their minds. Discussion about the various issues in class plays a crucial role in students’ life. Here comes the role of a textbook as well. Therefore, it is important to select the lessons according to the level of the students, their background ethos, culture and most importantly, the pedagogic context.
The following socio-cultural concerns appear in Hornbill for class eleventh:

- Unity in a family
- Weakening relationships leading to broken families, divorce etc.
- Effect of urbanization on human relationships
- Superstition

India has been a country where much importance is given to a family and the relations we share with the various family members. For example, parent-children relationship, brother-sister relationship, relationship of grandparents with their grandchildren, husband-wife relationship etc. But increasing modernisation has been adversely affecting these relationships.

Basic education begins at home with family. The knowledge children acquire from family acts as a base. So it is important to create a positive environment at home. In today’s India, family problems have been increasing at a very fast rate. When children see all this, it badly affects their minds. They will not be able to respect people and the relations they share with them.

Unity is strength and this unity is important in a family too. Whenever some family member needs help, all others stand together to help him. With this comes a feeling of security that somebody is always there to help us. This develops well balanced self-esteem and a sense of individual’s worth in a family.

The bond that a daughter shares with her father or the advice children get from their grandparents, all relationships play a major role in one’s life. Children do not realise this when they are young but it is important to make them realise at this stage of life with the help of lessons prescribed in their textbooks. Here teacher plays a major role. Students should also have an alert mind to observe and learn, what is taught in class.

The following socio-cultural issues are taken up in Flamingo for class twelfth:

- Child Labour
- Poverty
- Caste System
- Poor living conditions
- Domestic violence
- Consequences of war
Child labour, poverty, caste systems have been prevailing in India for a very long time. These act as hurdles in the development of our country. It is children who face these problems more than elders. They have to work in order to earn money for the family. Thus they do not get an opportunity to live their life like other children, to study and improve their standard of life. Such stories act as a lesson for the students to realise how fortunate they are. Their parents have been working hard for them. So it is their responsibility to study properly and be successful. They should be aware of the difficulties faced by the poor people, especially children.

Caste system is making people more exposed to prejudice, stereotyping and other such evils. These issues come in the way of unity and integrity in India. In order to remove it completely, there must be a strong public opinion against it. This can be done by teachers as their words are more effective and leave a long lasting impression on students’ minds.

At present the issue of domestic violence afflicts rural areas, towns, cities and metropolitan cities as well. In order to control this, education is important not only for men but also for women. This might affect the thinking of men as they feel superior to women and exploit them in order to be in a commanding position. When women will also get an opportunity to study, they will become independent and will be able to stop men from exploiting them.

**Vistas for class twelfth** focuses on the following socio-cultural issues:

- Stress free living
- Professional attitude
- Caste system

The main purpose of this book is to promote extensive reading. Therefore, general issues prevailing in the society have been focussed on.

Nowadays, life style has made people more worried even for minute things. This is all happening because of a busy life people lead. Even students face stress in their studies as parents expect their children to score high marks. They keep comparing their children with others. This leads children to commit suicide in order to escape from this pressure of studying.

Doctors, engineers, lawyers etc. have become a menace for our society as they are looking at their profession as the source of income and not as the service towards
the society or country at large. Their negligence is making people suffer more. Therefore, these professions have been losing the respect they used to get from the people.

In this twenty-first century, it sounds weird when people talk about caste system. Children in India face discrimination on the basis of caste, colour etc. Children from lower castes are treated badly by the teachers. They are not allowed to sit with the children of upper caste people. They face various kinds of prejudice not only in society but at school as well.

The idea behind including lessons and poems with messages is to provide knowledge to the students about what is happening around them. The lessons must be such so that the students can relate the characters with themselves. Both content and context must be according to the students as that will make it easier to understand the situation which they have to deal with in day to day life. Family plays an effective role in providing moral education. The society is also an important source of inculcating moral values into children. Students must also realise their responsibility towards the family and the society.

In order to initiate discussions, about the cultural issues, in a classroom, the teacher should first break cultural barriers. Teaching culture on a positive note is to emphasize similarities between students’ family, between families and between cultures.

I developed questionnaires for collecting data both from the students and the teachers.

In chapter five the findings from the Students’ questionnaire are discussed. They are as follows:

- The question regarding the background of the students indicated that female students do not get the same opportunity to study as compared to male students. It is one of the major issues in India.

- Majority of male students find their English textbooks alright. But the majority of female students find their English textbooks good. This indicates that either male students are not taking interest in their textbooks or the teachers are not making them understand the messages imparted by them.
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- Class ninth and tenth students agree that they do not find anything offensive in their textbooks. This may be because of their age. However, textbook designers must avoid including politically incorrect statements. In case of class eleventh and twelfth, male students do not find offensive issues in their textbooks. But female students report their dissatisfaction with their socio-cultural content.

- English textbooks contain lessons with specific messages. This is important for students as they should get some message from the textbooks they study.

- English textbooks influence students only to some extent.

- Majority of male students are not satisfied with the way teacher teaches them English textbooks. Female students are more satisfied with the teaching methodology their teachers use in teaching them English textbooks. This maybe because male students do not pay much attention in class as compared to female students.

- Male and female students agree that English textbooks prescribed in their syllabus do teach them the values of peaceful coexistence.

- Majority of male and female students agree that their English textbooks do teach them respect for other religions, cultures, races and linguistic groups. This is necessary for the students as they live in a country where people belong to various religions, speak different languages etc.

- English textbooks prescribed by the NCERT do teach the students to be honest, truthful and dutiful.

- Male students get influenced more by their friends and social groups. Female students get more influenced by their teachers and family members. This is perhaps because boys spend more time outside their homes as compared to girls.

In chapter six the findings from the Teachers’ questionnaire are discussed. They are as follows:

- In the prescribed textbooks, socio-cultural issues are present.
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- The issues included in the textbooks are mostly not according to the level of the students.
- Teachers are satisfied that the socio-cultural issues are addressed in the textbooks in terms of objectivity, moderation and tolerance.
- The teachers do discuss the moral thrust of the lessons with the students in class.
- The teachers also encourage discussions on the socio-cultural and moral issues.
- Majority of teachers find it awkward to discuss socio-cultural issues as students belong to different social and cultural background.
- Majority of students do not raise issues taken up in the lessons.
- Majority of teachers agree that students take only some interest in discussing social and cultural issues in the classroom.
- English textbooks are partially marred by promiscuity, chauvinism, xenophobia, fundamentalism or ethnic superiority.

Suggestions

The above diagram indicates that textbooks are used by both teachers and students. What is important is to ascertain how much a teacher understands his/her students and how much students grasp what their teachers want them to know.

Every lesson in a textbook imparts a message or focuses on issues, either social or cultural. Teacher reads out a text in the classroom and explains it to the students. At this point what a teacher requires is the technique to be used in order to bring out that message to the students who belong to different social and cultural...
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background. At every university, students come from different countries, states, cities and villages. They belong to different religions, castes and cultural traditions. Some students are from rural areas but majority are from urban areas. Therefore, an English teacher first needs to understand their mindset, which is actually not possible due to the little time limited for English classes. Students also do not give much importance to the subject as they feel that English textbooks contain stories and poems to read and enjoy. So first of all, teachers should make students realise that they are not mere stories but stories with a message. These messages might help them in their present and future life.

The teachers need some extra training:

- To discuss socio-cultural issues without being biased.
- To make lessons interesting for the students.
- To develop clarity and lucidity in expression.
- To communicate to the students the need for moral values and awareness about the social and cultural issues confronting the society.

Textbooks play a major role in every syllabus. It is important to include lessons after thorough checking. Teachers must get an opportunity to read the lessons before being included in the syllabus because it is the teacher who teaches them in class and not the syllabus designer. Discussion mostly leads to a positive result. So this way the textbooks might be improved as lessons in the textbooks should be revised and replaced from time to time keeping in view the needs of the students. Current issues should be included in the textbooks.

The prescribed textbooks give an idea that there exist socio-cultural issues but some of the lessons need to be replaced.

There is a need to include lessons focussing on:

- Moral values
- Gender issue
- Tolerance and catholicity of mind
- Human relationships
- Global unity
- Interfaith understanding

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