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Political Theory

Textbook for Class XI



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days is actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child

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psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory group in Social Sciences, Professor Hari Vasudevan and the Chief Advisors for this book, Professor Suhas Palshikar and Professor Yogendra Yadav for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairmanship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

New Delhi
20 December 2005

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

Preface

The NCERT this year has introduced a separate paper on Political Theory for students of Class XI. This change has come as a part of the larger project to revise and redesign the school curricula. Previously students were exposed to political ideas and theories primarily through the study of political ideologies, such as, Liberalism, or Marxism, or Fascism. Concepts like freedom and equality entered the picture only indirectly in terms of their place in a given system of ideas. In the new course the central focus is on concepts rather than ideologies. The objective of the course is to introduce students to some of the important ideas and concepts which form a part of the living tradition of political thought in the world.

In the writing of this book the approach which was followed was to try and involve the students in the process of learning, both as recipients and creators of knowledge. The objective was to encourage students to *do* political theory by training them to scrutinise and reflect upon the ways we make sense of and conceptualise our world, as well as to develop and extend their understanding. Hence, even as each chapter begins with some minimum, and at times commonsensical, understanding of a concept, it tries to introduce students to different dimensions of the concept and give them a feel of the range of ideas that can be marshaled while taking positions and offering reasons.

For all of you, the students, who will study political theory and be examined in this subject, we hope will be this approach to the study of political theory more engaging. We wanted you not only to learn about the ideas which have been developed by thinkers over the ages but also to be able to respond to them on the basis of your own experience of the world. As you will see, the concepts included in this book – freedom, equality, rights, nationalism – are used in everyday life not only by politicians and governments but by all of us. We speak frequently of our freedoms and rights, of the fairness and unfairness of things, of our desire to be treated equally, of our sentiments about nationalism or peace, or other such ideals. The concepts that we are going to study in this book are thus already part of our lives. We apply them in our personal life, in the family, in the school, or among our friends, and we also use them when we take positions on public policies or political debates.

The starting point of our study is not therefore unfamiliar. But we hope that through the study of political theory you will be able to refine your