

Civics Textbook

Introduction

A textbook is not accepted as important in the modern times as per the modern thinking as it used to be in the past. Some educationists, influenced by the modern thinking, are quite antagonist to the use of textbook. They are against prescribing any textbook in schools. Such thinking became prevalent in America, and several experiments were conducted there to make schools textbook-free. However, it was a setback for the proponents of this thinking that these experiments failed altogether there, as the outcomes were just the opposite. It was inferred that textbook is inevitable in school life.

Meaning, Type and Characteristics of Text-Book

The process of education which every school going child wades through is midst of prescribed text-books with which the child's satchel lies packed up. The prescribed books are everything for the learner. They are his main source of attention of studies both in the school and at home. They serve the purpose of a tool in the hands of the teachers. Thus they are able to carry on their routine of teaching in the classroom situations. The school text-books need be excellent through and through. Only then the teachers in the schools are able to discharge their duty more efficiently.

Meaning of Text-Book

A text-book is a prescribed book for the student of a particular age group. It covers items are given in the syllabus. Such a book forms the basis of teaching learning in the class. Later on the students can revise their syllabus by studying that book whenever they feel like doing so.

Text-books are standard works or manuals of instruction in a subject of study. They are the never failing friends of the students as well as of the teachers. A text-book has been defined as a instrument of instruction that facilities syllabus in which the major Ideals of the subject-matter are selected and summarised judiciously. They are organised logically according to the mental make-up and psychological requirements of the students so as to facilitate teaching, sometimes a text book is called "The teacher in print." Nevertheless, it can by no means, replace the teacher. Rather it is to be used to aid and supplement his work.

Definitions of Text-Book

According to **Webster's Dictionary**, "A text-book is any manual of instruction, a book containing a presentation of the principles of the subject used as a basis of instruction."

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary says "A book used as a standard work for the study of a particular subject, a manual of instructions in a subject of study."

According to the **Encyclopaedia America**, "In the strict sense of the term, a text-book is a book that presents a body of knowledge in an organised and usually simplified manner for purposes of learning. Text book is frequently the most important teaching tool because it can determine not only what will be taught but also how it will be taught. Although television and other new media are rivalling printed materials of communication, text books remain major resources in schools and colleges."

Education Commission Report (1964-66) puts forth the view, "A good text-book written by a qualified and competent specialist in the subject and produced with due regard to quality of printing, able illustrations and general get up, stimulates the pupils' interest and helps the teacher considerably in his work. The provision of quality text-books, and other teaching and learning materials can thus be an affective programme for raising standards."

Among various instructional aids such as text-books, supplementary books, reference books, maps, charts, film strips, films, **Misra** says, "The text-book is presumably the most important because it is used in formal as well as in informal situations of instruction and also in situations of self study. This is the cheapest of all the aids enumerated above and this is the only aid available to a large majority of the pupils and also the teachers."

According to the writer's Handbook for the development of education materials, "Text-book is the term for a book used in a course as the base around which the course is built."

L.J. Lewis says that text-book is a tool both for the pupils and the teacher.

According to **Mukerjee**, "Text-books may be looked upon as the symbol of National Culture. They are not national symbols in the same sense as Ashoka Chakra, but they are perhaps more revealing of national ideas, ideals and values than the figures on our coins and flags."

The term text-book is broader than the term school book. To Hall-Quest it is "a record of racial thinking organised for instructional purpose."

To Lange, "It is a standard book for any particular branch of study."

Bacon means by text book, "a book designed for classroom use, carefully prepared by experts in the field and equipped with the usual teaching devices."

According to **Encyclopaedia of Educational Research (Third Edition)**, in the modern sense and as "commonly understood, the text-book is a learning instrument usually employed in schools and colleges to support a programme of instruction. In ordinary stage, the text-books is printed, it is non-consumable, it is hard bound, it serves as an avowed instructional purpose, and it is placed in the hands of the learner."

About the text-book **Dictionary of Education** says, "It is any manual of instruction, a book dealing with a definite subject of study, systematically arranged, intended for use at a specified level of instruction, and used as a principal source of study material for a given course."

Importance of Text-Books

Text-Book occupy a very important place in the field of education. In Indian situations, their importance is all the more as we have shortage of instructional materials like films, T.V., teaching machines, etc.

According to the Encyclopaedia of Education, "Text-books have been associated with schools for as long as schools have been known....Undoubtedly text-book is the core around which subjects are taught. In a very real sense, the text book is the curriculum."

1. They determine not only the subject-matter to be taught but also the methods of teaching.
2. They are the only tools in the hands of teachers in Indian situations with which they are able to run their teaching programme smoothly.
3. They are good learning instruments for the students as they can revise their lessons whenever they want to do so.
4. They are the chief vehicles for attaining the goals of curriculum.
5. They indicate clearly what the teacher is required to know and what the pupils are supposed to learn.
6. They always focus the attention of the teacher as well as the learners. Thus chances of deviations are reduced to the minimum.
7. Text-Books give concrete form to the curriculum. Scope of any topic can be better known with the help of text-books.
8. Text-Books usually have graded material which is arranged according to the needs and requirements of the learners.
9. They lead to economy in effort and save much time and emerge. Thus the teacher need not dictate notes in details.
10. Text-Books encourage the students for self-education.
11. They give uniformity to teaching in different classroom situations where text-books are used.

Thus the use of text-books, undoubtedly, have good advantages. A few drawbacks are also there which explained here below :

Drawbacks in Using Text Books

1. Too much dependence on text-books gives temporary bookish knowledge.
2. There is lack of direct experiences. The students acquire second hand knowledge.
3. Teaching and learning become very rigid. The teachers has to teach whatever is given in the books. The learner too has to learn the things given in the book exactly.
4. The text-books oppose the dynamic methodology of teaching learning. They are, in fact, not suitable for teaching according to new progressive methods.
5. The text-books are sometimes exploited for inculcating wrong ideology like narrow nationalism, racial prejudices etc.
6. Sometimes the text-book replace the teacher. When the student find material better explained in the text-book, they do not shown due regard to the teacher.

It is, undoubtedly, right to say that there are some drawbacks in the text-books used in the schools. At the same time advantages cannot be set aside especially Indian classroom situations. Here in this country we need well graded, organised printed material in the form of text-books and this we shall ever need in times to come. Without text-books our system of education may lag behind. The best way out is to have good books written by distinguished writers.

By means of books, knowledge is accumulated into a permanently available store or fund and of all books, text-books are the most Important for such funding. There is need of new book for new purposes and revision of existing books to meet special needs. It goes without saying that text books back bone of school structure.

With the advent of independence and acceptance of free and compulsory education, new trends in the field of education have made fresh demands. Our educational system is to be reoriented. For bringing about the necessary changes in the importance in text-books ranks high in order of priority. There is a great need of standard text-book ranks high in order of priority.

Text-Books for Different Subjects

There is need of different types of text-books for students belonging to different levels of learning. A good text book remains according to the mental level of the learners. For subjects like science, social studies, etc. we need text-books, where knowledge is important to the learners. For languages we need the type of books which help the student to have better command over the language. In such books there is repetition of vocabulary items, structure patterns of sentences so as to enable the learners have full command over the language. In the same way text-book of Mathematics are expected to give sufficient practice to the learners.

Good Text-Books

A text-book is called good one if it contains some specific and general qualities. General qualities are found in all type of similar books. The specific qualities refers to some books which are written with specific purpose. Usually in a books, the general qualities include binding, get up, printing, quality of paper etc. The specific qualities are seen differently in different type of books. Thus the language text-books, Science text-books, Mathematics text books, History text-books etc., will differ from one another in many respects. Only merits of the book will win applause for it.

The general qualities are seen externally in a book whereas internal qualities are specific and they are known if we make efforts to find them out.

Physical aspect of the text book can be seen externally. We may see to it under the following heads : (1) Physical aspect and (2) Academic aspect of the text-book.

(1) Physical Aspect of Text-Book

I. Size of the Book

- (i) It is suitable for the learners.

- (ii) It is convenient in handling and carrying.
- (iii) It is neither too big nor too small for the students for whom it" is meant.

II. Printing of the Books

- (i) The printing is neat and clean.
- (ii) It is free from any type of errors.
- (iii) The inking in the printing is balanced throughout.
- (iv) The blocks are clearly printed in the book.
- (v) There are sufficient margins on all sides of the page.
- (vi) The spacing between the words is even.
- (vii) The spacing between the different lines contained on a page is suitable.
- (viii) The spacing between the different paragraphs is satisfactory,
- (ix) Design of the pages is open rather than crowded.
- (x) Each chapter begins on a fresh page.
- (xi) Length of a line is within the eye span of the child.

III. Type Size of Text-Books

- (i) Different type size are used for the cover page, title, text and captions.
- (ii) The type size used in the book is suitable for the age group.
- (iii) A balance in the use of different type size is maintained.
- (iv) It does not strain the eye sight of the pupils.

IV. Paper Used in Text-Books

- (i) Paper used in the book is of white colour.
- (ii) It is adequately thick.
- (iii) It is smooth.
- (iv) It is durable.
- (v) It is reasonable of good quality.

V. Binding of Text-Books

- (i) The binding of the book is sufficiently strong.
- (ii) It opens flat easily.
- (iii) The sides of the book are properly trimmed.
- (iv) The folding of the paper is proper.
- (v) The cover page of the book is durable.

VI. Price of Text-Books

The price of the book is reasonable. It suits the pockets of majority of the parents.

VII. Over all get up of Text-Books

- (i) The get up of the book is fine.
- (ii) Its title page attractive.
- (iii) The material is presented according to some accepted norms.

(2) Academic Aspects of Text-Book

From academic point of view, a good text-book has the following characteristics :

I. Thematic Content of Book

1. The subject-matter is according to the mental level of the learners.
2. It is capable of sustaining interest of the student.
3. It is related to the physical and social environment of the learners.
4. There is a variety of themes.
5. The facts given are correct and up-to-date.
6. It provides new information to the learners.
7. It is free from such incidents and references as may hurt the feelings of the children.
8. It inculcates the qualities of good citizenship.
9. It contains enough humorous material.

II. Organisation of the Contents and Its Presentation

1. The subject-matter is divided into convenient units.
2. Length of each lesson suits the learners.
3. The reading material is graded in order of difficulty.
4. The presentation suits the nature of the contents.
5. The different themes are presented through variety of forms such as essays, stories, poems, dialogues and plays.
6. The style of presentation is simple and clear.
7. The title of each lesson is brief, meaningful and suitable.

III. Textual Language

1. The textual language is according to the mental level of the learners.
2. The language used is correct.
3. It is appropriate to the situation or context.

IV. Illustrations (Visual Aids) Used in Text-Book

1. Abstract concepts of the book are clarified with the help of pictures and diagrams. It makes easy to comprehend.
2. The pictures used in the book are drawn well.
3. They are realistic.
4. They are relevant to the text.
5. They motivate the learners.
6. They are properly distributed throughout the book.

V. Textual Exercises in Book

1. Every lesson is followed by exercises.
2. Instructions to do the exercises are clear.
3. There is a variety of exercises are on each lesson.
4. They help the teachers in diagnosing the areas of difficulty.

5. The exercises for each lesson are purposeful and adequate.
6. They help the teacher to evaluate the achievements of the students.

Need for Textbook

The need for textbook in schools can be explained under the following points :

1. As per the **Textbook Committee of Central Advisory Board of Education's** report : "A modern system without books is as difficult to imagine as Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark."
2. The level of mental development of students is not so high that they can assimilate everything taught in the school. They need to read the content again, and repeat and review it too. The textbook is needed for all these purposes.
3. The knowledge of both teachers and students is unorganized, unsystematic and insufficient. Teachers need to organize their knowledge, while students need to expand their learning. The textbook helps both of them in their respective functions.
4. The textbook helps in compiling the content. In other words, the textbook is a teaching aid which presents the content in a very organized manner.
5. The Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53 too has approved of importance and need of the textbook.
6. The textbook is very helpful to students during examination time.
7. India is a poor country. Most of the schools here are passing through a pitiable economic condition. Their libraries are not in a position to possess books on all subjects, that too in several copies. So it is beneficial for students to have their respective textbooks.
8. There are limitations of the lecture method; it has effect only on those students who listen to it attentively.
9. The textbook presents the content in a very logical sequence, it helps to make it easy and simple.
10. The textbook removes several shortcomings of class teaching. Individual attention cannot be paid to each student under the class teaching system. The textbook helps all students to study as per their interest.

Application of Textbook

A teacher can use the textbook for the following purposes :

1. Exploratory Reading : A textbook can be used to obtain general information on the content. It is very useful in obtaining primary information on a subject. It helps to prepare a background for the content. As per **Jarolimiek** : "The textbook can be used as a point for departure in the early stages of new unit to help the children to find out what it is all about and to establish a common background of basic information for all pupils." If a textbook is used in this way, then students are able to get key ideas. If a textbook is used in this capacity, then a teacher has to keep in view the following points :

1. Prepare students for reading the necessary part of the book with the help of picture, globe, map, lecture, etc.

2. Acquaint students with the objectives for which they have to study. It would be better to tell : "Read the text under so and so heading." It would not be adequate to say : "Read from page 5 to 6."
3. Eradicate students' difficulties related to vocation.
4. Draw students' attention towards important pictures, illustrations, maps, explanations etc.
5. Undertake follow-up activities.
6. Pay attention to backward students. Give higher order books to sharp students.

2. Securing Facts Related to the Unit : When teaching is being undertaken through a unit, the textbook can be used to obtain useful information. If it is being done, then a teacher should keep the following points in view :

1. Assistant students in ascertaining the utility of information. They should be told which are the important texts in the textbook so far as the unit is concerned. If students face any difficulty in it, they should be helped.
2. Students should be told to use content, terminology, bibliography, contents etc.
3. Students should be told about other resources by which the authenticity of the facts given in the textbook can be found out.

3. Study of Maps, Charts, Graphs and Pictures : There are different types of maps, charts, graphs and pictures in a textbook. They function as teaching aids in civics teaching. Therefore, they can be beneficially utilized for much the same purpose for which additional aids are used. A teacher should keep all those points in view which he should during the use of teaching aids.

4. Summarisation of Learning : The textbook can be used to arrive at the essence of the entire learning. With its help, we can make our knowledge systematic, orderly and organised. For it, a teacher should keep the following points in view :

1. A discussion should be held on the content that has already been studied, in order to prepare them for new knowledge.
2. Remove their terminology related difficulties.
3. Special attention should be paid to backward and slow-reading students.
4. A fully planned discussion should be held on the topic.

Characteristics of a Good Textbook

Textbooks have several advantages and uses. It is the most effective tool of teaching. It is teachers' friend and students' source of knowledge. If a textbook is not good, all those advantages cannot be realized for which it is being used. A good textbook should possess the following characteristics :

1. The content in a good textbook is done in a very psychological manner.
2. A good textbook arouses curiosity in readers.
3. A good textbook simplifies a subject simpler with the help of analysis, illustration, explanation, etc.
4. A good textbook includes maps, pictures, graphs, diagrams, charts, etc., at relevant places, which make the content interesting.

5. A good textbook has a fluent and lively language style.
6. A good textbook is shaped conveniently.
7. A good textbook is as per the mental level of students.
8. A good textbook stimulates students towards thinking.
9. A good textbook does not hurt feelings.
10. A good textbook is divided into suitable units, which are further divided into sub-units. The text is divided into suitable paragraphs for necessary explanation.
11. A good textbook contains content, terminology and bibliography.
12. A good textbook has the characteristics of vividness, fullness and concreteness.

Selection of Textbook

While selecting a textbook, we should keep the following points in view :

1. Writer : We should first look at the writer of the textbook in view of his ability, qualification, experience, position and opinion.

2. Publication : The details regarding the publishing house should be looked at, such as its name, date of publication etc.

3. External Form : The external shape as to the size of page, number of pages, format, fonts used, cost, titles, designing of text, covering, paper quality etc. should be paid attention to.

4. Organisation of Content : It should be seen how the content has been organisation in the textbook. The general plan, sequence of lessons, summary etc. should be seen.

5. Presentation : It should be seen how the textbook presents the content. For it, we should look at its language style, concreteness, modernity, clarity, etc.

6. Teaching Aids : It should be seen how much teaching aids are given in the textbook; for it, the following points should be examined :

- (i) **Examples and Illustrations :** What are the types and number of examples and illustrations, how far do they meet the objective and how far do they influence students?
- (ii) **Maps, Charts etc. :** How abundantly or scarcely have they been used in the textbook and what are their types?
- (iii) **Exercise :** What types of exercises and drills have been given for practice? Do they motivate students for learning?
- (vi) **References and Bibliography :** Are they adequate?
- (v) **Contents, Terminology etc. :** Are they adequate and standardised?

Textbook in India

The condition of textbooks in India is quite pitiable. The fallen standard of textbooks does more harm than good. It is due to several facts, chiefly because they lack basic qualities which are sine qua non for a textbook. Writers generally overlook so many such facts in view which they should ordinarily do. The greatest shortcoming in textbooks is due to their writers. Secondly, publishers to intervene

and interrupt the process due to which textbooks lose their quality. And the final nail in them is driven by the teachers. All these factors lead to make textbooks inferior in quality. Stating this situation, the **Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53** has in its report stated : *"Most of the books submitted and prescribed are poor specimens in every way : the paper is usually bad, the printing is unsatisfactory, the illustrations are poor and there are numerous printing mistakes."*

Besides, presentation and content are unsatisfactory. It is due to the fact that authors write these textbooks with a commercial viewpoint. We can better call them professional writers. They don't hesitate to write books even on those subjects which they know little about.

The cheap books available in the market too negatively influence textbooks. Good textbooks cannot find a place for them unless these cheap books are thrown out of circulation. To compete with these books, the writers have to pay attention to populism.

The standard of books falls due to the tendency of publishers too. They keep their profits in view, and pay no attention to the quality and standard of textbooks. They use inferior paper, don't like to spend money on proof-reading, leading to several typographic and other errors. Even their compositors are untrained. They get cheap coverings and thus contribute to low standard of books.

Some Suggestions

If textbooks have to realize the aims and objectives for which they are written, their standard will have to be improved. For it, the following steps can be taken up :

1. A textbook committee should be formed at the national level for improvement in textbooks.
2. Textbooks should be written at the national level; those written at local level should not be encouraged.
3. A definite standard of format should be specified for textbooks.
4. The art for illustrations in textbooks should be developed, an independent institution should be created for it.
5. The tendency to change textbooks every now and then should be checked.
6. In place of having only one textbook, there should be several good textbooks for each subject.
7. Writers should not undertake writing work without government approval. Besides, only able and experienced writers should be appointed for this purpose.
8. Textbooks should abound in patriotism and nationalism. They must not hurt any religious sentiments.
9. Publishers should get approval of books from the government.
10. The government should exercise control over pricing of books.
11. Cheap books should be discouraged.
12. A committee of scholars should look into the manuscript before it is submitted for final publication, and its recommendations should be kept in view.