



INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING HISTORY

Dr. Venkatarao Palati
 M.A. M.Ed. M.Phil. Ph.D.
 Principal, Navodaya College of Education,
 Raichur (Karnataka)



ABSTRACT

The study of history has been changing very fastly over these years perhaps, over the last generation. New vistas, new techniques, methods, devices, and new bonds with other subjects have emerged to make history a growing subject. The old leisure time interests of the superfluous study of history have given way to the scientific research in the quest for history and its teaching too.

KEY WORDS- new techniques, methods, devices, and new bonds.

1.INTRODUCTION

In the same way, methods of teaching history have changed in others countries, particularly in the west. This is due to partly in response to shift in research, partly as teaching methods have changed in general. This general change in teaching history is a result of what happened in their countries-politically, socially, and economic. In the words of Sadler, "the things outside schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside".¹ This new shift in teaching of history has brought about new problems to the history teachers, the text book writer, the syllabus framer, and the curriculum constructor the country.

2.THE PROBLEM OF CURRICULUM :

Ours is a situation of puzzles hurdles. Almost all subjects are be made sciences-natural sciences, social sciences, and other sciences, even, each subject is to be studied in a wider form compared to the study of the older days. There is an increase in the amount learning of each subject resulting a heavy pressure on the curriculum of the school "Education does not proceed in a vacuum; its character is determined by the group culture, and schools are institutions created by society to attain specific ends".

There are people in some countries w are opposed to place history in the school curriculum. Even, if it is placed, they contend, it should not be given an import; place in the curriculum.

History is an important ingredient of the school curriculum. This is being realized by many countries. They have increased the portion of history in the overall share of different subjects in the curriculum. Our school curriculum must be revised to equip our pupils to prepare themselves for survival in this age where man has found new ways to utilize the energies of nature, which can be either terrifying or beneficial, in an age where the interdependence of world nations has forced us into new relationships with our fellow human beings.

This problem of curriculum can be averted by increasing the portion of history in the curriculum. And instruction may be organized through separate-subject-appro-ach, the correlated-approach and the unified or

fusion-plan. The formulation of the objectives of social studies requires a consideration of both the end and means of teaching history.

3. HISTORY-SOCIAL STUDIES :

We have a new trend of bringing social studies in the school curriculum in the place of former History. We have no counter arguments for the inclusion of this new subject in the schools; but, we do oppose the way in which it is being thrust upon the curriculum and the pupils. For us, social studies, now, is meant the mixture of history, geography, and civics. Is it the concept of social studies that we imported from, notably U.S.A. ? The answer is 'no, it is inevitable for an Indian educationist to probe into the curriculum in which the American school system. U.S.A. does not have a history of its own except of two hundred years in their new adopted land. U.S.A, is a country of recent past. The inhabitants, except the Red Indians are the migrated people from different parts of the world. In order to naturalise all these peoples U.S.A. thought of social studies. This may not be a solution to India.

India is a country of not less than 10,000 years of traceable history. Traces of human stay are found on the banks of Malaprabha, Varada, Krishna, and Tunga-bhadra as 5 lacks of years. We have a continuous living of humanity throughout these millenniums.

This new feature of Indian history is a challenge to the framers of the history syllabus for our schools. We cannot neglect our past culture, traditions, and the civilizations. Many recent scientific studies have opened the gates of our hoary past of thousands of years. These studies and their findings need to be included in our history. And what is to be taught as history needs to be reconsidered in the light of the present day life of the people.

4. WORLD HISTORY AND THE SCHOOL :

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides a goal to education to become an indispensable path to world peace. Education shall promote understanding tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. It will be a revelation to go through some of the books in India and abroad written on world history. In major cases they include the biographies of great men and women, the invasions of different peoples in the world, the religious prejudices, and the various wars. They fail to say anything about the contribution of these peoples to world culture and civilization and about the positive values of these cultures to humanity. Take the case of our own history; our history has been written from the European

5. WHAT CAN BE DONE ?

We have to change our ways of teaching history. Our children have to become anthropologists to study other people, rather historians. Wars should be studied not as events of certain causes, but they should be studied as illustrations of human conflict. They should know that these conflicts can be averted by other means than war. Many social psychologists recommend that instead of curbing the prejudice among the pupils, it should be allowed to emerge openly. The teacher has to undermine these prejudices by providing correct information about the matter. A complete recheck of the history we teach, to our pupils, needs to be undertaken. Also, it is a dire national necessity to teach our children to be very highly objective in their outlook.

6.WHAT HISTORY SHOULD WE TEACH?

In the present day world there is the dilemma of the new emphasis on the selection of history to secondary school classes. We cannot teach all the history that is available now. Here arrives the problem of the selection of history to different students in our schools. The questions are: How much of local history? In the same way, is it the political history, social history, cultural history, religious history or economic history? We are planning to train our children who will be pioneers of the 21st century. How should they be equipped to face the life of the next century? V hen we are thinking to teach local and national history, can we teach them in isolation? Finally, what is the role of contemporary history in the life of the secondary school child? An awareness of the objectives that we seek to realize through the teaching of history is necessary. These objectives of teaching

history should be further guided by the national goals of developing a socialist secular democracy in which we have planned for emotional and national integration. An N.C.E.R.T. publication lays down six important objectives of teaching history."

1. "... the teaching of history in schools lead to the realization that history is the study of the process of social change and development".
2. "This involves the development of time concept."
3. History teaching should help in deepening the pupils' knowledge of the character of the society they live."
4. "History should also provide a deepening of the awareness of social and political weaknesses, so that the necessary conclusions in eliminating these weaknesses may be drawn".
5. "The study of Indian history should arouse in them the feeling of love for their motherland by promoting their understanding of their true national heritage".
6. " Teaching history should also make the pupils familiar with human heritage."

These objectives may become the guide lines for the selection of teaching material in our secondary schools.

7. FAMILY AND STATE IN TEACHING HISTORY :

'Many historians are too little alive to the importance of the history of the family.' We cannot overestimate the importance of family in the life of the child. The child learns many valuable things from the family. His mental attitudes, his modes of conduct, his ideas, ideals and even taboos are the contributions from his family. He will learn them all and may transfer many of them to the next generations. We rarely help our pupils to study the role of family in their lives. This may be begun with the study of the family of the individual child. I have a doubt: How can a boy recognize mother India when he has not recognized his own mother. Even, the state cannot become a rival to the family. The study of family should lead the boy to understand the larger family, the country, and the world ultimately. The family life in India is in transition since many centuries. The economic and social pressures have moved the individuals to adopt new habits of family formation. Once upon a time, the family was a social and economic unit; and also it was a reproduction unit. We can develop many structures with this main building block- the family, It is interesting to note that changes in the family as an institution were never sudden; even now the family is a centre of social, economic, and demographic activity in the country. A history teacher will make a beginning in this direction to encourage his pupils to study their own families or the families round about. This will be a great beginning of studying history in the new way.

8. LOCAL V/S NATIONAL AND WORLD HISTORY:

'In accordance with the accepted educational principle that teaching should begin with the known, and work towards unknown many teachers feel that the history of the lower forms in the secondary schools should begin with the history of the immediate locality-town, village, district and so on.' "This is ignored by most of us. -This approach is quite popular in many countries especially in the west, Teaching local history has become a basis for the concentric method of teaching subject and it moves on to the study of Europe and the world subsequently. We have to encourage our pupils to study their own locality. Our social studies should begin with our local studies. This study may include history, geography, natural history, and literature. This is a way to bring the locality to life.

Here comes the balancing of our syllabus in history with local-national and world history. In another way, we have to begin with a movement of diverting our students from the point of view of the study of the study of political history to social history and the history of culture. Social and cultural history has not yet conquered the whole of our syllabus. A balancing may be had by sparing political history to the higher classes where the students will study it with clear advantage to their future career.

It will be a new effort for all of us if we start teaching the history of sciences. We have the difficulty that few history teachers know much about science and its thought processes: and few science teachers are trained in a historical approach in phenomena. In the light of the needs of the future society the teaching of the history of science should find a place in the syllabus of history in our secondary schools.

9. RETHINKING ON THE INDIAN HISTORY :

We celebrated our 27th Independence year recently with pomp and gay abandon. The day has come to us now to rethink on the Indian History in the light of our own present day Indian society. What should be our aims of teaching history to Indian students? Positively, it cannot be the same as it was during the British regiera. We are feeling the speed in other countries in Education in their educational systems, in types of schools, in syllabuses in history and in the methods of teaching. They are presently engaged in recasting their whole educational system. As a result of their dissatisfaction many are revising their methods of teaching of history. Everywhere the subject has been broadened and it continues. America thinks in terms of social studies. France teaches history and geogra-phy as one subject. In many countries civics is a part of history. Now a time has come to India to rethink about history which is taught in our schools. It should teach a total perspective' with a full inte-gration of the human sciences.

It is obvious that we need drastic change in our syllabus is history. It is necessary to study the history of our own neighboring countries-notably, Russia, China, the Middle East, the south East Asian countries and Afro-Asian countries.

This means much more time must be found for history in our classes, or we have to select history suitable to the present day Indian school situation. We have to decide 'what', and "how much" of our former history we must abandon. We have to eliminate unimportant events. Unnecessary names, superfluous details will be left out mercilessly. We have to give pride of place to historical developments, centred round a few important events. We will be studying these events giving preferences to the consi-deration of political, social, economic, and cultural structures. We stress the study of the deeper causes behind all these events. We have to rewrite our text books in history with the new ideals in mind; the mistakes of the past should not merely corrected but conveniently avoided.

10.HISTORY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES :

There was a time when history was just a handmaid of literature; the situation is changed now. Many other subjects have their historical aspects which enrich the formal history lessons in our schools. They have contributed much to the enrichment of history and its teaching. Geography, Economics, Art, Science, Civics, Social Studies, Philosophy, Ethics, and Religion, and many other subjects have actively shared the evolution of the present history. All these subjects should help our young pupils to understand the modern world in its historical foundations and its diverse tendencies.

There cannot be a thing like pure history. Historians are seeking positive forms of alliances with other subjects. Gradually history may give way to social science. In other way, it may become the meeting ground of many disciplines.

The present day Indian syllabus in history is heavily loaded with much of geography and politics. This imbalance is to be avoided in the future reconstruction of our curriculum. An interdisciplinary approach is a dire necessity of our own times. The relationship of history and social science, history and biology and many more subjects are revealing to us, the still unknown facets of history. As Wright Mills puts it, "history is and must be the very shank of social sciences."

11.THE ROLE OF HISTORY TEACHER:

As teachers of history we are being challenged to re-think the contribution of our subject to education. We are criticized as the most conservative subject group. There is a tendency in us to ignore the changes going on around us or, it may happen, we may adopt a defensive attitude towards some of these problems. The changing organization of secondary schools has influenced many speedy developments the present day history teacher has to grasp the need of making his subject relevant and vital to day s children. In the words of Jardine, 'history must (cease) to be a nasty medicine which has to be swallowed and become a pleasant tonic which, when sampled, will build up the individual. The history teacher has to become a world minded teacher. He is on his way to becoming rooted in his own family, state, country and culture. Also he should be able to identify himself with the peoples of the other countries He has to become a guide to the total development of each child by revealing

to him his capacities and enlisting his interests in his own development. He should know his pupils' capacities, traits, interest, and habits; this can be possible by his keen watch on the developing interests and attitudes of his pupils.

Now it is high time to reappraise the significance of our subject and argue for it, or for ourselves, from a position of strength. There is a need for the birth of the new history teachers who have insight in the subject and foresight for the future humanity.

12. CONCLUSION :

History teaching in secondary Education needs change. This is not only in the content area but also in methodology. History cannot be considered as a separate subject. We need a revolution in the field of methodology also. A teacher's leadership over the class may be replaced by group work, projects, discussion lessons, problem methods, excursions, etc. History teachers should be aware and alert to what is happening in other countries in the field of their own subject.

There are three more points to be noted here. One is the provision of a room which will be history laboratory. When we think of science laboratories why do we not have history laboratory also? Secondly the availability of more periods to teach history to our classes. There are other subjects which have similar claims on the number of periods to cover the portion. With a bold demand for the extended history syllabus in the country, there is no harm for a demand for more periods for history. Thirdly, there is already a very strong move towards the teaching of science in the country at all levels. Nobody will object to this important consideration when the goal is to bring our country on a par with the scientific advancement elsewhere. But this will be lop-sided development if we develop science at the sheer neglect of other subjects; we cannot sacrifice other subjects. All these subjects will be helping Science' to bloom itself to certain greater heights.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. J. M. Rich: Readings in the Philosophy of Education; Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., Belmont, California.
2. A. H. Shuster & M. E. Ploghoft: The Emerging Elementary Curriculum, Charles E. Merrill Books Inc., Columbia Ohio.
3. R. Vajreshwari : A Hand Book for History Teachers; Allied Publishers Bombay
4. N.C.E.R.T.: Teaching History in Secondary Schools; N. C. E. R. T. New Delhi,
5. L.S.Kensworthy: Guide to Social Studies Teaching, Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., Belmont California.
6. E.H.Dance: The place of History in Secondary Teaching George G. Harrp & Co., Ltd. London.
7. V. D. Ghate: The Teaching of History, Oxford University Press, London