# INTRODUCING SOCIOLOGY

TEXTBOOK FOR CLASS XI

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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 are 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 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.

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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 Advisor for this book, Professor Yogendra Singh 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 Chairpersonship 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.

*Director*
National Council of Educational
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# A Note to the Teachers and Students

This book is an introductory invitation to sociology. It is not meant to be a comprehensive and exhaustive account of the discipline. Instead it seeks to give a sense of what sociology does and how it helps us understand both society and our own lives better. The book hopes to familiarise students with the sociological perspective, its concepts and tools of research. It seeks to show how sociology as a discipline engages with the fact that each of us, as members of society have commonsensical ideas and understandings about society. How is sociology as a body of knowledge distinguishable from the body of common sense knowledge that necessarily exists in society? Is it distinguishable by its method and approach? Is it different because it continuously asks critical questions, because it accepts nothing as taken for granted?

We could keep adding many more such questions. For sociology is a subject that trains us to question and understand why and how society functions the way it does. And hence there is a need to be clear about the terms and concepts that sociology uses, for they are necessary tools in our sociological understanding.

Apart from the critical perspective that sociology entails, it is also marked by diverse and contending approaches. This plurality is its strength. The different views within sociology about society can be fruitfully understood as debates. Debates often help us understand a phenomena better.

In keeping with the questioning and plural spirit of sociology, the book continuously engages with the reader to think and reflect, to relate what is happening to society and to us as individuals. The activities built into the text are therefore an intrinsic part of the book. The text and activities constitute an integrative whole. One cannot be done without the other. For the objective here is not just to provide ready made information about society but to understand society.

Society itself is plural, diverse and unequal. The book seeks to capture this complexity in each of the chapters. Both examples and activities seek to bring this in. The activities are therefore, essential part of the text. Yet like all books, this is just a beginning. And much of the most exciting learning process will take place in the classroom. Students and teachers will perhaps think of far better ways, activities and examples and suggest how textbooks can be bettered.

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**JUSTICE,** social, economic and political;

**LIBERTY** of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

**EQUALITY** of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all;

**FRATERNITY** assuring the dignity of the individual and the [2][unity and integrity of the Nation];

**IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY** this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

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