

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SCIENCE

1. SOCIAL SCIENCE — MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

Definition

Social Science is the systematic study of human society.

It helps us understand:

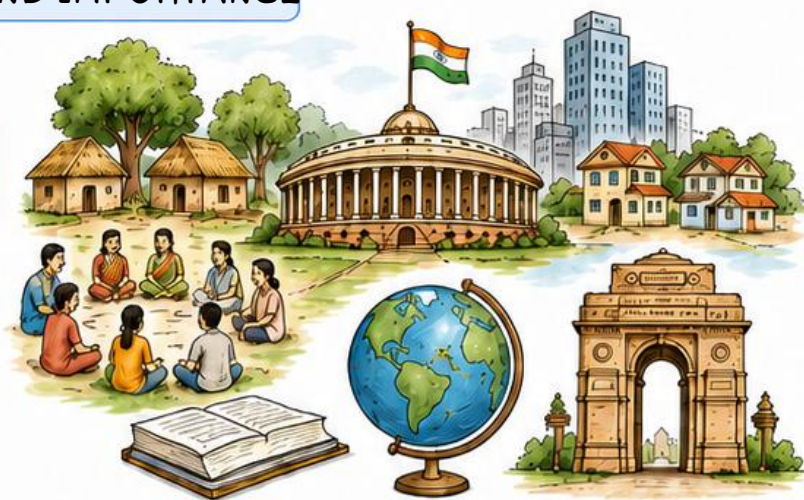
- How people live together.
- How the environment influences life.
- How governments function.
- How economies operate.
- How the past and present shape society.
- How different aspects of life are interconnected.

How Social Scientists Study Society

Observation + Evidence + Logical Reasoning
They may use:



- Interviews and surveys
- Documents
- Comparison of different times and places
- Information from multiple sources



Social Science vs Natural Sciences

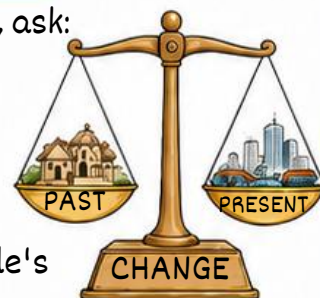
- Natural Sciences → Study the natural world.
- Social Science → Studies society, institutions, cultures and human interactions.



Understanding Social Change

To study a change in society, ask:

1. What was the situation earlier?
2. What has changed?
3. What caused the change?
4. How has it affected people's lives?



★ Key Point

Society is shaped by: History + Geography + Institutions + Resources + Human Choices

MCQs

1. Social Science is the systematic study of:
 - A. Natural phenomena
 - B. Human society
 - C. Only governments
 - D. Only history
2. Which combination represents important methods used in Social Science?
 - A. Guesswork and imagination
 - B. Observation, evidence and logical reasoning
 - C. Memorisation only
 - D. Experimentation only



2. SOCIETY THROUGH TIME & INDIAN KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS

CHANGES IN HUMAN SOCIETY

Over thousands of years, human societies developed through:

- Agriculture
- Domestication of animals
- Settlements
- Tools
- Exchange of goods
- Systems of governance



Villages

→ Towns

→ Cities

New ideas, inventions and cultural exchanges transformed ways of life.

Pañchamahābhūtas

Pañchamahābhūtas = Five Great Elements

	Elements	Sanskrit
	Earth	Prithvī
	Water	Āpaḥ
	Fire	Agni
	Air	Vāyu
	Space	Ākāśha

The concept views nature as an interconnected system and explains relationships between living beings and the environment.

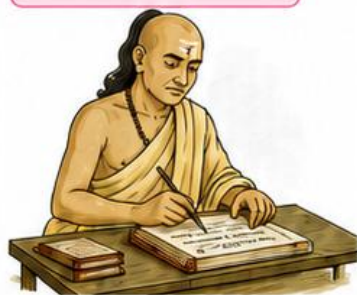
Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam

"The world is one family."

It expresses the interconnectedness of human societies across regions and cultures.



Arthaśhāstra



- Attributed to: Kauṭilya
- Composed: About 2,300 years ago
- Deals with:
 - Administration
 - Economic management
 - Taxation
 - Duties of rulers towards people

Important Idea

Early Indian political thought linked:

Political authority

+

Public welfare

+

Ethical responsibility

MCQs

1. Which of the following is NOT a Pañchamahābhūta?

- Prithvī
- Āpaḥ
- Agni
- Sūrya

Answer: D

2. "Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam" means:

- Duties of the ruler
- The world is one family
- Economic well-being
- Rule of law

Answer: B

3. The Arthaśhāstra is attributed to:

- Kauṭilya
- Samudragupta
- Krishnadeva Raya
- Jahangir

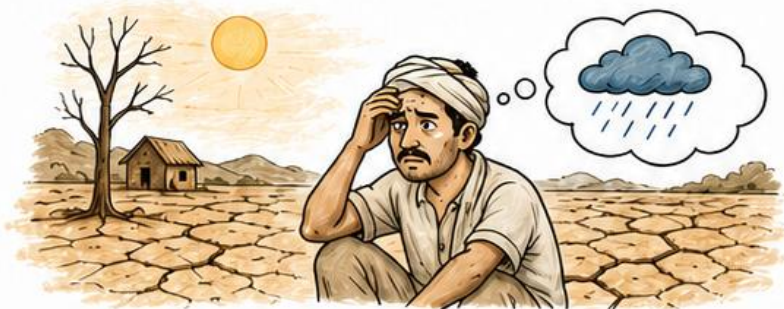
Answer: A



SOCIAL SCIENCE AS A GROUP OF DISCIPLINES

Why are there different disciplines?

Human society is complex, so no single field can fully explain it.



A drought may affect:



Environment → Crops



Economy → Farmers' incomes



Politics → Government relief



Society → Migration



Culture → Traditional coping methods

Thus, different disciplines provide different perspectives and together give a comprehensive understanding of society.

Four Core Disciplines

Discipline	Main Focus
Geography 	Earth, environment and people
History 	Human past and change over time
Political Science 	Governance, power, rights and responsibilities
Economics 	Production, distribution and use of resources

Other Social Sciences include:

- Sociology
- Philosophy
- Anthropology
- Psychology



Key Point

The disciplines are different but interconnected and together provide a holistic understanding of society.

MCQs



1. Why does Social Science consist of different disciplines?

- Society is simple
- Human society is complex and requires different perspectives
- All disciplines study exactly the same thing
- Only History studies society

2. Which is correctly matched?

- Geography — Human past
- History — Human past
- Economics — Elections
- Political Science — Only climate



GEOGRAPHY

Main Definition

Geography studies the location and distribution of places, objects, materials and people, and the relationships between human societies and their surroundings.



Geography asks:

Where? → Why there? → How are places connected?

It studies:



Physical features of Earth



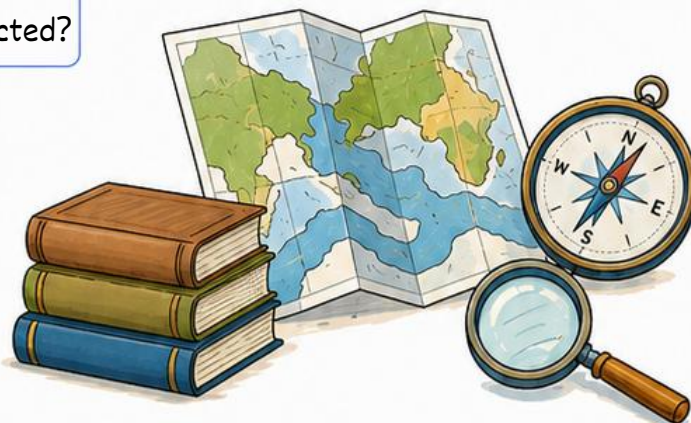
Human communities



Human-environment interaction



Influence of places on human life



Spatial and Temporal Perspectives

Spatial Perspective

Location and its significance



Temporal Perspective

Change over time

Geography views the world as a:

System of interdependencies



Past

Present

Future

Interdisciplinary Nature of Geography

Natural Sciences: Physics, Chemistry, Biology



Geography draws from:



Social Sciences: Political Science, Economics, History



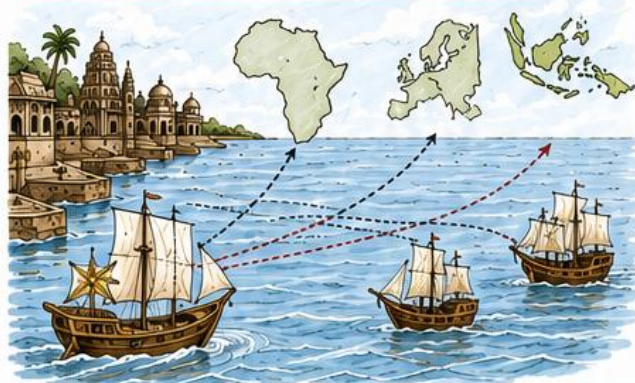
This allows Geography to study both the physical environment and human activities



India and Global Interaction

India's long coastline helped facilitate historical contact with:

Africa + Europe + Southeast Asia



GEOGRAPHICAL TOOLS



Maps Globes Atlases GIS Infographics

School Bhavan is an NCERT portal that can be used to map and explore one's village/city.



MCQs

1. Spatial perspective mainly deals with:

- A. Change over time
- B. Location and its significance
- C. Production
- D. Governance

Answer: B



2. India's long coastline historically facilitated contact with:

- A. Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia
- B. Europe only
- C. Africa only
- D. North America only

Answer: A



3. Which of the following is a geographical tool?

- A. GIS
- B. Atlas
- C. Map
- D. All of these

Answer: D



5. HISTORY

Definition

History is the study of the human past through which societies seek to understand people's experiences, values and changes over time.



Itihāsa-Purāna Tradition

It is one of the oldest and influential traditions of preserving cultural memory in Bharat.



Shares historical information.



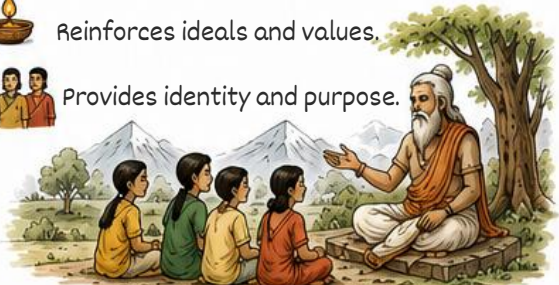
Gives cultural meaning to events and people.



Reinforces ideals and values.



Provides identity and purpose.



Modern Historiography

Modern historiography increasingly relies on:

Empirical Evidence

Empirical evidence is information collected by actual observation or experimentation.

Methods include



Human genetics



Archaeology



Carbon-14 dating



Other scientific methods



Sources Used in History

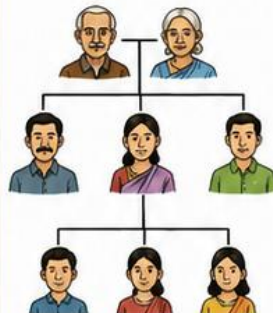
Important sources include:

- Travelogues
- Memoirs
- Correspondence
- Genealogical records
- Folklore
- Oral traditions
- Revenue documents
- Archaeological remains



Genealogical Records

Sources that trace family lineage and ancestry by recording relationships between generations and events such as births, marriages and deaths.



Continuity and Change

Social Science explains:

What endures + What changes

It shows:

How the past shapes the present and how today's actions influence the future.

PAST → PRESENT → FUTURE



MCQs

1. Empirical evidence is based on:

- A. Guesswork
- B. Actual observation or experimentation
- C. Fiction
- D. Rumours

Answer: B



2. The Itihāsa-Purāṇa tradition preserves cultural memory mainly through:

- A. Coins
- B. Stories
- C. Maps
- D. Experiment

Answer: B

3. Which of the following is an example of a genealogical record?

- A. A record tracing family relationships across generations
- B. A coin
- C. A map
- D. A sculpture

Answer: A

6. HISTORICAL SOURCES

Four Important Types



Literary



Archaeological



Epigraphic



Numismatic

A. Literary Sources

Written sources such as:

- Manuscripts
- Travelogues
- Memoirs
- Correspondence



Textbook Examples

Samaveda manuscript
-National Museum, New Delhi



Tirukkural palm-leaf manuscript -
ancient Tamil text of ethical wisdom



7. Archaeological Sources

Definition

Material remains used to study the past.

Examples

- Monuments
- Architectural structures
- Excavated sites
- Artefacts
- Sculptures
- Objects
- Paintings



Textbook Examples

- Terracotta figurine from the Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilisation



- Vishnu sculpture 12th century CE



C. Epigraphic Sources

Definition

Historical texts, decrees or records inscribed on durable materials such as stone, metal plates or rock surfaces.

Examples

- Brahmi inscription
- Gupta period



- Kannada inscription of Emperor Krishnadeva Raya at Hampi



They provide direct evidence about:

- Paste
- Rulers
- Administration
- Society



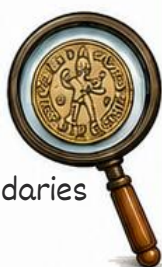
D. Numismatic Sources

Definition

Historical sources comprising coins, currency or medals.

Numismatics helps study:

- Economy
- Chronology
- Rulers
- Trade
- Political boundaries
- Culture



through:

- Metal content
 - Inscriptions
- Symbols on coins.



Examples

- Samudragupta's coin → 4th century CE



- Jahangir's coin → Sagittarius





Quick Comparison

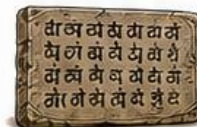
Source	Identification
Literary 	Written records/manuscripts
Archaeological 	Material remains
Epigraphic 	Inscriptions
Numismatic 	Coins/currency/medals

Important Dates / Periods

- About 2,300 years ago
→ Arthaśhāstra



- Gupta period
→ Brahmi inscription



- 4th century CE
→ Samudragupta's coin



- 12th century CE
→ Vishṇu sculpture



MCQs

- 1 A stone inscription is a:

- A. Literary source
- B. Epigraphic source
- C. Numismatic source
- D. Genealogical source



Answer: B

- 2 Coins are studied under:

- A. Epigraphy
- B. Numismatics
- C. Genealogy
- D. Oral tradition



Answer: B

- 3 Which pair is correctly matched?

- A. Samudragupta's coin - Numismatic
- B. Brahmi inscription - Numismatic
- C. Terracotta figurine - Literary
- D. Tirukkural manuscript - Epigraphic

Answer: A

7. POLITICAL SCIENCE

Definition

Political Science is the study of governance, including how and why power is distributed, decisions are made and policies are implemented.

It studies:

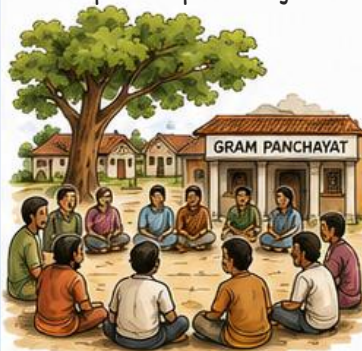
- Constitutions 
- Governments 
- State institutions 
- Social movements 
- Nation building

- Foreign policy 

- Exercise, sharing and regulation of power 

Panchayati Raj

Panchayati Raj is an example of grassroots democracy because it gives citizens a voice in local development planning.



It promotes:

- Local self-governance
- Public participation
- Village-level democracy



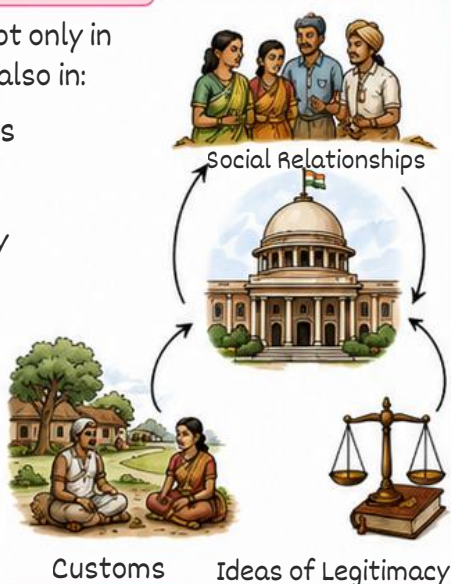
Political Power

Political power exists not only in formal institutions but also in:

- Social relationships
- Customs
- Ideas of legitimacy

Therefore, Political Science also examines:

- Social hierarchies
- Effective governance
- Accountable governance



Indian Political Thought

Dharma

Moral duty

Artha

Economic well-being

Rājadharmā

Duties of the ruler



Important Texts

Vedas, Upanisads and Purāṇas



→ Justice, authority, social order, responsibilities of kings and citizens.



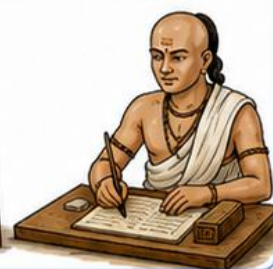
Mahabharata and Shukranīti



→ Governance, law and ethical leadership.



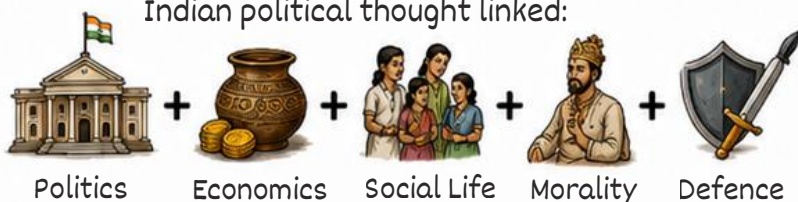
Arthaśāstra



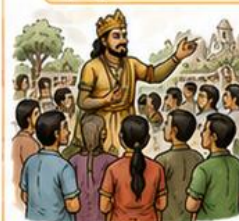
→ Politics and administration; governance, taxation, army and welfare.

Key Concept

Indian political thought linked:



Important



Power was viewed as a responsibility rather than merely a privilege.

MCQs

1. Panchayati Raj represents:

- A. Centralised administration
- B. Grassroots democracy
- C. Foreign policy
- D. International trade

2. Rajadharma refers to:

- A. Economic well-being
- B. Moral duty
- C. Duties of the ruler
- D. Trade



3. Which text is described as a foundational text on politics and administration?

- A. Arthaśāstra
- B. Tirukkural
- C. Samaveda
- D. None of these



8. ECONOMICS

Definition

Economics studies how individuals and societies use limited resources to meet their needs.



It studies how goods and services are:

Produced + Exchanged + Distributed



Economic Decision-Makers

Consumers



What to buy



Producers



What and how much to produce



Governments



Frame policies to balance:

- Growth and stability
- Efficiency and fairness



Economics is also concerned with:



Well-being



Equity



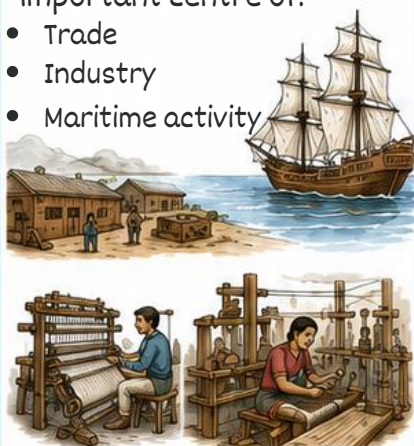
Justice

India's Economic History

1. Historical Strength

India was historically an important centre of:

- Trade
- Industry
- Maritime activity



2. Impact of Colonial Rule

- Widespread poverty



- Recurrent famines



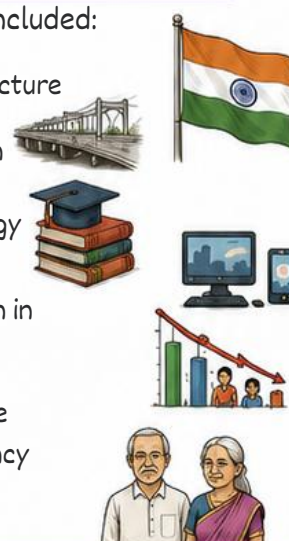
- Decline of traditional industries



3. After Independence

Progress included:

- Infrastructure
- Education
- Technology
- Reduction in poverty
- Rising life expectancy



4. Continuing Challenge

Ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach all sections of society.



Sustainable Growth

Sustainable growth meets present needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs.



★ Remember

Present needs Future generations

MCQs

1 Economics studies how societies use:

- A. Unlimited resources
- B. Limited resources to meet needs
- C. societies use: money
- D. Only markets

Answer: B

2 Which was an effect of colonial rule mentioned in the chapter?

- A. Expansion of traditional industries
- B. Decline of traditional industries
- C. Elimination of poverty
- D. Complete economic stability

Answer: B

3 Sustainable growth considers:

- A. Present needs only
- B. Future needs only
- C. Present and future needs
- D. Markets only

Answer: C

9. WHY SHOULD WE STUDY SOCIAL SCIENCE?

Understanding Society

Social Science helps us understand:

- How systems such as roads, schools, markets and digital spaces develop and function.
- How they affect different groups of people.



Understanding Diversity

Differences in:

- Languages
- Customs
- Occupations

can be understood through:

Historical + Geographical + Cultural + Economic factors

This promotes:

- Respect
- Cooperation
- Understanding

among communities



It also helps recognise an underlying unity in Indian culture and a shared sense of belonging.



Responsible Citizenship

Understanding:

- Governments
- Laws
- Rights
- Responsibilities

helps citizens participate responsibly in civic life.



Understanding Social Problems

Social Science helps us analyse:

Causes



Effects



Possible Solutions

Examples:

- Environmental protection
- Public health
- Employment
- Urban growth



Past, Present and Future

Past



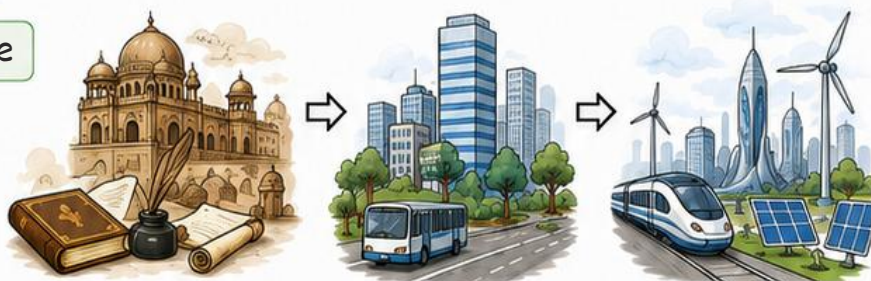
Present



Future

Understanding how past decisions shaped the present helps us make:

Wiser choices for the future.



MCQs

1 Differences among communities can be understood through:

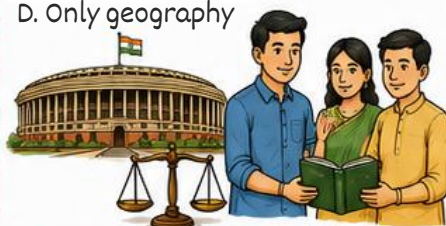
- Geography only
- History only
- Geographical, historical, cultural and economic factors
- Politics only



Answer: C

2 Social Science helps citizens participate responsibly in civic life by understanding:

- Only history
- Governments, laws, rights and responsibilities
- Only markets
- Only geography



Answer: B

3 Social Science encourages us to study social problems through:

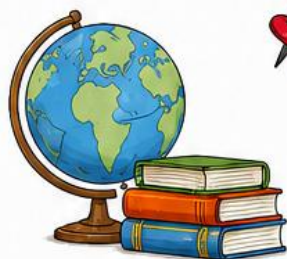
- Causes only
- Effects only
- Causes, effects and possible solutions
- Opinions only

Causes → Effects → Possible Solutions



Answer: C





FINAL ONE-PAGE REVISION

SOCIAL SCIENCE

→ Systematic study of human society



FOUR CORE DISCIPLINES

Geography



History



Political Science



Economics



METHODS



Observation



Evidence



Logical Reasoning

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS



Pañchamahābhūtas

→ Five Great Elements



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

→ The world is one family



Arthaśhāstra

→ Kautilya, about 2,300 years ago

GEOGRAPHY

- Spatial Location
- Temporal Change over time
- India → Long coastline → Global interaction
- Tools → Maps, Globes, Atlases, GIS, Infographics



HISTORY

- Human past
- Itihāsa-Purāṇa tradition
- Empirical evidence
- Continuity and change



POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Dharma Moral duty
- Artha Economic well-being
- Rājadharmā → Duties of ruler
- Panchayati Raj → Grassroots democracy
- Power Responsibility



ECONOMICS

- Limited resources
- Needs
- Consumers → What to buy
- Producers What/how much to produce
- Government Policies.
- Sustainable growth → Present Future needs



HISTORICAL SOURCES



Literary



Archaeological



Epigraphic



Numismatic

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL REFERENCES

- Gupta period Brahmi inscription
- 4th century CE Samudragupta's coin
- 12th century CE Vishnu sculpture
- Jahangir Coin showing Sagittarius



QUICK OVERVIEW



Geography: Studies the Earth, location, space and interaction.



History: Explores the human past and how it shapes the present.



Political Science: Studies power, governance and citizenship.



Economics: Studies how society uses limited resources to meet needs.



Social Science: Helps us understand society and build a better future.

FINAL CONCEPT



PAST



PRESENT



FUTURE



Understanding the past helps us make wiser choices for a better future.





Q1. Competency-Based Case Study - Understanding Social Science



A village has changed considerably over the last ten years. A new road has been constructed, agricultural land has decreased, more houses have been built, and many young people have started working in nearby towns. The local market has also expanded.



Answer the following:

(a) How should a Social Science student investigate these changes?

The student should:

- 1 Find out what the situation was earlier.
- 2 Identify what has changed.
- 3 Investigate possible causes of the change.
- 4 Examine how the changes have affected people's lives.
- 5 Use observation, evidence and logical reasoning to form an explanation.



(b) Name two factors that could be studied to understand why these changes occurred.

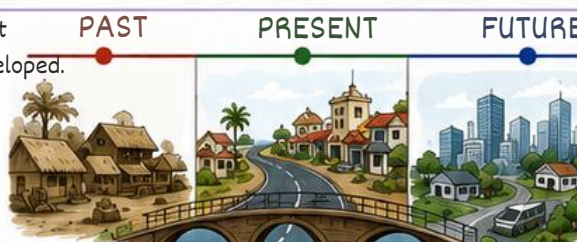
- Geography: changes in land use, settlement and surroundings.
- Economics: changes in occupations, markets and employment.
- Other relevant factors could include history, institutions and human choices.



(c) Why would studying only the present situation be insufficient?

Studying only the present would not show how or why the situation developed.

Social Science connects the past with the present and helps us understand how earlier changes shaped current conditions.



Key Learning



Observe →



Compare past and present →



Find courses →



Analyse effects →



Use evidence





Q2. Historical Sources - Application-Based Question



A historian discovers four objects while studying an ancient settlement:

A: A palm-leaf manuscript containing written material.

B: A terracotta figurine.

C: A stone inscription mentioning a ruler.

D: A coin containing the name and symbols of a ruler.



Answer the following:

- (a) Identify the type of historical source represented by each object.

Object	Historical Source
Palm-leaf manuscript	Literary source
Terracotta figurine	Archaeological source
Stone inscription	Epigraphic source
Coin	Numismatic source

- (b) (Which source would be particularly useful for studying coins, rulers, trade and chronology?)

D Numismatic source.

Numismatic evidence can provide information about:

Economy

Trade

Chronology

Political boundaries

Rulers

Culture

through the metal, inscriptions and symbols on coins.



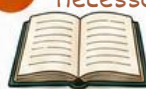
- (c) Which source provides evidence through inscriptions?

Epigraphic source.

Epigraphic sources consist of texts, decrees or records inscribed on durable materials such as stone or metal.



- (d) Why are different types of historical sources necessary for understanding the past?



Written records may provide information through texts.



Archaeological remains reveal material evidence.



Inscriptions provide direct records



Coins can reveal information about rulers, economy and chronology.



Therefore, using different sources gives historians a more comprehensive understanding of the past.



Different sources, when used together, help us reconstruct a clearer and more accurate picture of the past.



Q3. Competency-Based Question - Geography



Suppose two regions have different patterns of settlement. One region has a large, densely populated city, while another has small and scattered settlements. A student wants to understand why this difference exists and how these places have changed over time.

Region 1: Large, Densely Populated City



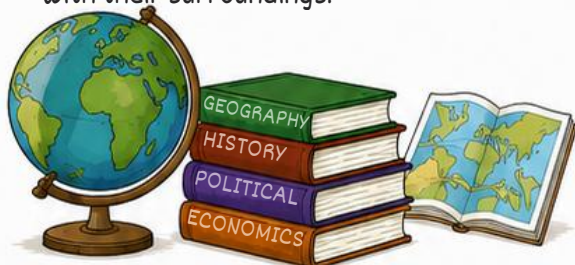
Region 2: Small and Scattered Settlements



Answer the following:

- (a) Which Social Science discipline would be most directly concerned with this investigation?

→ The relevant discipline is Geography because Geography studies the location and distribution of people and places and their relationships with their surroundings.



- (b) What two perspectives of Geography should the student use?

The student should use:

1. Spatial Perspective
→ to study where the settlements are located and why their location is significant.



2. Temporal Perspective

to study how the settlements have changed over time.



- (c) What questions should the student ask to investigate the situation?

Important questions would include:

- Where are the settlements located?
- Why are they located there?
- How have they changed over time?
- How are these places connected to their surroundings?



Change Over Time

Earlier



Present



Key Learning

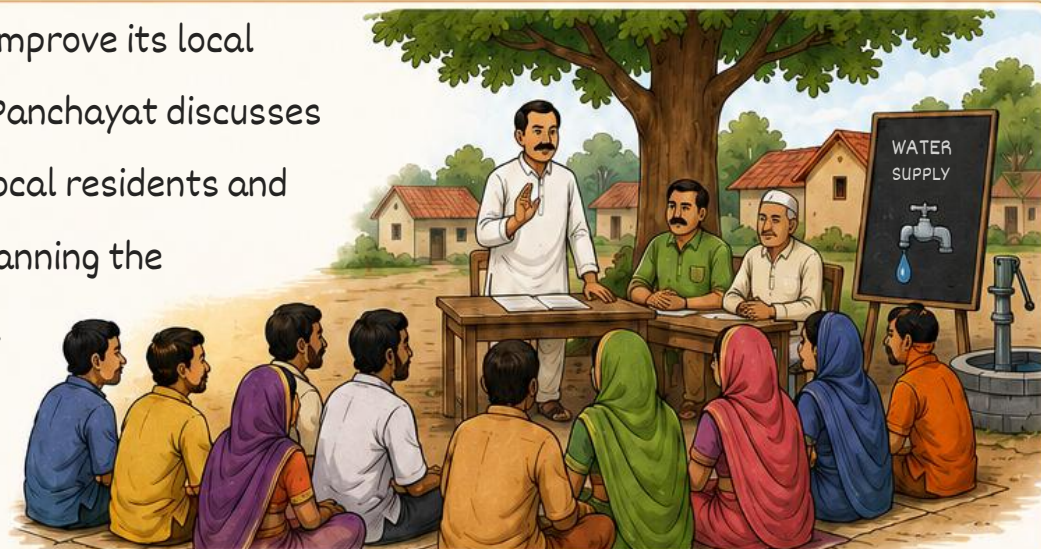
Geography = Location Significance + Change over time + Interconnections



Q4. Mixed Competency Question - Political Science



A village needs to improve its local water supply. The Panchayat discusses the problem with local residents and involves them in planning the development work.



Answer the following:

(a)

Which concept of Political Science is illustrated by this situation?



The situation illustrates Panchayati Raj and local self-governance.



(b)

Why is Panchayati Raj described as grassroots democracy?



Panchayati Raj is described as an example of grassroots democracy because it gives citizens a voice in local development planning and promotes public participation at the village level.

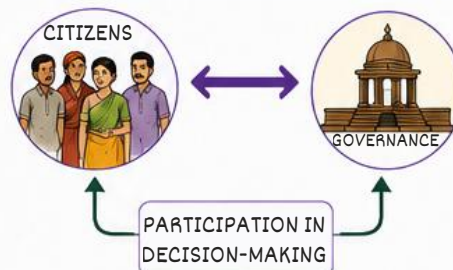


(c)

What does this example show about the relationship between citizens and governance?



It shows that governance is not limited to decisions made by higher authorities. Citizens can participate in local decision-making and development.



Thus:



LOCAL
GOVERNANCE



PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION



GRASSROOTS
DEMOCRACY





Q5. Assertion-Reason + Conceptual Understanding



Assertion (A): The study of a drought may require more than one Social Science discipline.

Reason (R): A drought can affect crops, farmers' incomes, government relief measures, migration and traditional ways of coping with scarcity.



Choose the correct option:

- A. Both A and R are true, and R correctly explains A.
- B. Both A and R are true, but R does not correctly explain A.
- C. A is true, but R is false.
- D. A is false, but R is true.

Answer: A



Detailed Solution

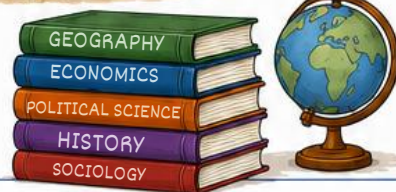
Both statements are correct.

A drought is not merely an environmental problem. It can have:

- Environmental effects → crops
- Economic effects → farmers' incomes
- Political effects → Government relief
- Social effects → migration
- Cultural effects → traditional coping practices



Therefore, different Social Science disciplines can examine different dimensions of the same problem.



Key Learning

One social problem can have multiple interconnected dimensions.



Q6. Higher-Order Mixed Question - Connecting the Chapter



Read the following statements:

- 1 A coin of Samudragupta can provide historical information.
- 2 A drought can be studied from economic, political and social perspectives.
- 3 A village Panchayat allows people to participate in local development.
- 4 Sustainable growth considers both present and future needs.

1



Coin of Samudragupta

2



Economic Political Social

3



People participating in local development

4



PRESENT NEEDS
+
FUTURE NEEDS

Answer the following:

a	Which statement is related to Numismatic sources? → Statement 1	Samudragupta's coin is a numismatic source. The chapter specifically identifies a coin issued by Samudragupta as a historical example.	
b	Which statement demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of Social Science? → Statement 2	The drought example demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of Social Science, because different disciplines examine its different effects.	
c	Which statement demonstrates grassroots democracy? → Statement 3	Panchayati Raj represents grassroots democracy because it gives citizens a voice in local development planning.	
d	Which statement represents the idea of sustainable growth? → Statement 4	Sustainable growth means meeting present needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs.	
e	What common idea connects all four statements? → Common Idea	Social Science helps us understand how people, institutions, resources, environments and decisions are interconnected.	





BONUS - Complete Chapter Revision

**Q.**

How does Social Science help us understand society? In your answer, briefly explain the role of its four core disciplines and give one important concept/example associated with each.

Detailed Solution

Social Science is the systematic study of human society.

It helps us understand society from different but interconnected perspectives.

1 Geography



studies places, environment and human-environment relationships.

**Key concept:**

Spatial and temporal perspectives.



2 History



studies the human past and changes over time

**Key concept:**

Historical sources such as literary, archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources.



3 Political Science



studies governance, power and decision-making.

**Key example:**

Panchayati Raj as grassroots democracy.



4 Economics



studies how limited resources are used to meet human needs.

**Key concept:**

Sustainable growth.

**Thus,**

the four disciplines together help us understand people, places, the past, governance, resources and their interconnections,

Understand
the past



enabling us to
Analyse the present



Make wiser choice
for the future.

