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Research Paper

Perception of Stakeholders on Studying Social Science at Senior Secondary Level

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study to examine the perception of stakeholders towards social science as subject at senior secondary level and to find out the factors affecting the perceptions of stakeholders towards social science at senior secondary level. The survey was conducted on 10 Head of Departments, 30 teachers and 150 students from different senior secondary institutes in Cuttack, Odisha, India. Self-developed questionnaire based on different dimensions of studying social science was used as tool. The study found that (i) 57.36% of stakeholders are aware about the career opportunity in studying Social Science at Senior Secondary level, (ii) the major factors which affect the study of social sciences at senior secondary level are- the importance of social science in shaping the future life of the individuals, social science classrooms, socio-economic and political issues affecting human lives. The study has implications for all the stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, educational administrators and also for Government.

Introduction

Education is a lifelong and continuous process. Taking the need, importance, facilities, education is divided into formal, informal and non-formal. However, formal education in India follows a uniform structure of school education which is known as the 10+2 system. The levels/stages of Indian education include pre-primary stage, primary stage, secondary stage, senior secondary stage, higher education stage. Senior secondary level of education as an important stage is of two years. In almost all the states and union territories, class IX to XI constituted the composite secondary as well as higher secondary stage and in some states it was attached with the general colleges.

Social science is considered to be an essential part of curriculum as it affords knowledge of facts, laws and helps in achieving the main goals of education. Social science has been given a core place in the school curriculum. It has many branches, each of which is considered as 'Social Science'. The social sciences include Economics, Political Science, Geography, Demography, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Archaeology, Jurisprudence, History and Linguistic. So social sciences constitute a field of knowledge which studies human relationships with his socio-cultural environment.

In education, the term stakeholder typically refers to anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board members, city councillors, and state representatives. Stakeholders may also be collective entities, such as local businesses, organizations, advocacy groups, committees, media outlets, and cultural institutions, in addition to organizations that represent specific groups, such as teachers unions, parent-teacher organizations, and associations representing superintendents, principals, school boards, or teachers in specific academic disciplines. In a word, stakeholders have a "stake" in the school and its students, meaning that they have personal, professional, civic, or financial interest or concern. Perception allows us to take the sensory information in and make it into something meaningful. Perception as one of the psychological factors affects education in general and the study of social science in particular. It is one of the influential factors in the career of students which determines the selection of subject of study at senior secondary level.

The present study had been selected to study the perception of stakeholders on studying social science at senior secondary level and the factors which have remarkable effect on the perception of stakeholders on studying social science at senior secondary level.

Need of the Study

Incorporating Social Studies in the school curriculum ensures well-rounded education of the students. Studying social science can provide us with so many important answers & observations that may help to improve the understanding of our lives, social issues and challenges. Various committees, commissions, councils & research studies have been undertaken to visualize the implications of social sciences & changing trends and attitude of various persons concerned towards social science. Both positive & negative views are given on the study of social science. The researchers such as Evans Martey(2017), Wardah D.G., Jalil,U. A. and Banissa (2016), Sabahattin,C (2013) strongly pointed out that student have

good perception about social science whereas Ahmed & Maryam(2016), Omlara & Abedukola(2015), Ramchandran & Pandian(2014) etc. stated about the unfavourable & negative attitude of students & teachers towards social science. However, Sarkar, De, maity(2015), Rishabh(2014), Sumesh & Gafoor(2013), Sabahat(2012) highlighted the various elements like student's habitat, his understanding of society, types of school (government or private), study environment, teacher's behaviour, proper methodology, motivation, socio-economic status of learners etc. influence the social science learner's perception. Again Ayaaba(2013), Khaled(2013), Nkiruka, Ikwumelu & Jonas(2012), Mawi, C. and Premlata,M.(2014) found that lack of libraries, learning resources, funding, parental awareness, teacher's interest & efficiency, classroom processes etc. are the main cause for creating negative perception towards social science. Cener,E., Acun,I.& Demirhan,G.(2015) emphasized on the impact of ICT in studying social science.

The above research studies reveal that attempts have been made by researchers to examine the perception of teachers & students towards social science and various factors affecting their perception on the study of social science at Higher/senior Secondary level. It also reveals that some researchers have the contradictory views which paved way to conduct the research work on perception of stakeholders on studying social sciences at senior secondary level. With considering the above research findings it is also observed by the present researcher that although various studies have been undertaken in this field still further study is needed in this respect to examine what type of perceptions the stakeholders have on studying social sciences at senior secondary level in the present time and to find out the gaps among various research studies regarding the perception of stakeholders on the study of social science at senior secondary level.

Statement of the Problem

The present study would be stated as "**Perception of Stakeholders on Studying Social Science at Senior Secondary Level**".

Operational Definition

Perception: The ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. In other words, it is the way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted. For the present study, perception means the awareness of studying social science at senior secondary level.

Stakeholders: A person who can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives & policies. In my study stakeholders imply students, teachers & HODs.

Social Science: A subject within the field of social science such as economics or civics. In this study, social sciences include discipline of Arts & humanity.

Senior Secondary Education: Here the higher secondary / senior secondary education is the stage of education, comprising of classes XI & XII (10+2 pattern).

Objectives of the Study

The intended objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the perception of stakeholders towards social science as subject at senior secondary level.
2. To find out the factors affecting the perceptions of stakeholders towards social science at senior secondary level.

Research Questions

1. What kind of perceptions the stakeholders have towards social science at senior secondary level?
2. What are the main factors contributing for different type of perceptions towards the study of social science at senior secondary level?

Method and Procedure

Method: The present study is a survey type of research. It is so designed to examine the perception of stakeholders on studying social science at senior secondary level and to find out the factors affecting their perception.

Sample: The sample for this study were the stakeholders viz, students, teachers & HODs of senior secondary institutes from Cuttack, Odisha. The sample was selected purposefully through purposive sampling method. However, the sample of the study comprised of 10 Head of Departments, 30 teachers and 150 students from different senior secondary institutes in Cuttack, Odisha.

Tool: Self developed questionnaires were used as tools for data collection.

Procedure of Data Collection: Expected data about the perception and factors affecting the perception of stakeholders on studying social science at senior secondary level were collected by using the tools (questionnaires). The collected data were analysed both

quantitatively and qualitatively by using frequency percentage and graphical representation.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study is confined to the perception of stakeholders on studying social science at senior secondary level. It is delimited to the stakeholders at senior secondary level of Cuttack district, Odisha only.

Major Findings

First objective of this study was to examine the perception of stakeholders towards social science as subject at senior secondary level. So, the major findings of this study regarding the first objective are-

1. Most of the stakeholders (90% of teachers and HODs and 96% of students) accepted that social science helps to shape the future life of the students. Although 70% of teachers & HODs and 64% of students agreed that social science deals with real life issues still, 54.7% of students and 40% of teacher & HODs accepted that there is less practicability of social science in day to day life.
2. Most of the stakeholders (92.5% of teachers & HODs and 96% of students) agreed that Social science is useful for the career of the students. 35% of teachers and HODs accepted that there is lack of opportunity in higher education for social science whereas more students (60%) stated that there is lack of opportunity in higher education for social science. More students 59.3% than 50% teachers & HODs accepted that there is lack of career exhibition, career talk, and career conference & career awareness program in social science.
3. 22.5% of teachers & HODs discarded that social science classroom is boring but 51.7% of students contradicted to these 22.5% of teachers & HODs. 64% of students viewed that there is a little scope for the use of ICT in social science classroom. On the other hand, 35% of teachers & HODs accepted that there is a little scope for the use of ICT in social science classroom.
4. 47.5% of teachers & HODs and 50% of students accepted that social science emphasizes on memorization than understanding. 55.3% of students agreed that social science lesson lacks project work whereas 62.5% of teachers & HODs discarded it. When only 25% of teacher & HODs opined that the syllabus of social science is not appropriate for the students, 52.7% students supported them.

5. 25% of teachers & HODs and 45.3% of students respectively accepted that social science teachers lack in enthusiasm. 60% of students agreed that there is lack of motivation from social science teacher while 52.5% of teachers & HODs rejected it. 80% of teachers & HODs disagreed that social science teachers are inefficient but, 34% of students agreed with it.
6. 45% of teachers & HODs and 57.3% of students agreed that social science teachers use traditional method of teaching. 42% of students agreed that social science teacher's teaching style is not appropriate While 60% of teachers & HODs opposed it. 20% of teachers & HODs and 12.7% of students were unaware about the appropriateness of social science teacher's teaching style.
7. Although 77.5% of teachers & HODs and 60.7% of students agreed that social sciences teach to remove gender discrimination still 57.5% of teachers & HODs and 63.3% of students accepted that girls prefer social science. Half of the students (50%) and 3/4th of the teachers & HODs (75%) accepted that Family background has impact on studying social science.
8. More than 60% of stakeholders (teachers, HODs and students) accepted that social sciences arouse civic consciousness, help in critical reflection and reconstruction of beliefs, values & ideas however, 20% of students were unaware about the governmental initiatives for the students for studying Social science.
9. While most of the stakeholders (teachers & HODs-97.5% and students-93.3%) agreed that Social science helps in developing character of student still, 19.3% of students were unaware about the development of vocational skill in social science.

The second objective was to find out the factors affecting the perceptions of stakeholders towards social science at senior secondary level. So, it was found that:

1. Stakeholders perceived social sciences as useful for shaping future life of individuals, although more number of stakeholders (24.21%) viewed that social science provides understanding about society and social life, still the other contributing factors are ability of social sciences in shaping of character, developing personality, preserving, conserving and transforming basic values, broadening the horizon of knowledge, providing practical skill and vocation, developing all aspect of life and usefulness in real life.

2. Most of the stakeholders (38.42%) stated that teacher's quality affect the quality of social science classroom however, the other major contributing factors for an interesting social science classroom are-Child's own ability and interest, method of teaching, integration of technology, learning resources and contextualization of learning, relation with peer and teacher.
3. Family as a social factor largely affect the study of social science at senior secondary level (as stated by 37.36% of stakeholders). At the same time, the other social factors which have ardent impact on the study of social science are-community, school environment, Government, culture & tradition, demography.
4. Social sciences as useful because social sciences largely deal with various issues of the society and provide solutions to it however, the major issues dealt by social sciences are related to socio-political issues, religious & Cultural issues, geographic issues, economic issues, moral & intellectual issues, national and international issues. It is quite notable that 41.57% of stakeholders opined that social sciences deal with socio-political issues.

Educational Implications

The result of this study will:

- be useful for teachers & students as well as the persons concerned with the study of social science education.
- be helpful in understanding the importance of social science and the perceptions of various persons towards social science, who affect & are directly or indirectly affected.
- focus on the factors affecting the study of social science.
- put light on the issues & challenges in social science education at higher secondary level.
- provide suggestions to the Government for formulating policy planning & new initiatives for the development of social science education.
- be helpful for the senior secondary institutes to create healthy perception about the study of social science.

Suggestion for Further Research

Here the investigator studied only the perception of stakeholders (students, teachers and HODs) on studying social science at senior secondary level. However this study can be undertaken further in different ways.

1. Other stakeholders including parents, community members, educational administrators etc. can be taken as sample of the study to get more comprehensive result.
2. The present study was conducted on small scale covering only 190 stakeholders. But it can be conducted on larger scale further.
3. There can be a comparative study between or among social science teachers / students with teachers / students from other discipline/s.
4. Perception of stakeholders towards the study of social science can be studied gender-wise.
5. Perception of stakeholders towards the study of social science at senior secondary level can be undertaken on the basis of geographic area (urban/rural).

Conclusion

Perception as one of the factors in education largely affects the study of social science or any discipline at every stage of education. India is a developing country with vast diversity. It is the largest democratic country in the world having revolutionary youth population. Youth in India constitutes one-fifth of total population. So, there is a need for studying such subjects which will further provide vocational efficiency as well as a standard and develop life to our young mass. Social Science as a discipline has a broad and comprehensive scope of study. It is no way inferior to any other field of study. In simple sentence, social sciences have the potentialities to provide opportunities to the individuals to flourish. However, there is lack of awareness among the stakeholders about future in social sciences. Some people perceive that social sciences are for girls, for rural students and for those who secured less marks in examination. It is also thought that social sciences are to be memorised instead of understanding. It needs no logical and analytical ability. But, the matter is that from the very beginning these types of perceptions are feed in the minds of the individuals. And these perceptions play ardent role in the study of social sciences.

Despite of all the above negative perception, it is found that now-a-days the notions regarding the status of social sciences are changing. In fact, the ranges of social sciences are increasing day by day. The stakeholders are becoming more aware about career in social sciences. They are trying to prefer as per their aspirations and abilities irrespective of

gender, geographic area, academic performances etc. For realising the equal importance of social sciences like other natural sciences, a healthy mind set should be created in the stakeholders. In no way the role of social sciences should be undermined. Rather initiatives including financial supports, career counselling, guidance services, career talk, career exhibition etc. should be encouraged. Use of innovative teaching learning methods and learning resources by qualitative and competent teachers should be emphasized. In this 21st century use of ICT in social science classroom are more preferable to make social science classrooms and lessons more interesting. However, the stakeholders should have knowledge about various perspectives of social sciences and the issues dealt by social sciences as well.

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