

Nature of Social Studies

Introduction

According to Seefeldt (1977) all of education has a goal of transmitting culture, to the young, but social studies seem uniquely suited to helping young children gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required of them to perpetuate society.

According Seefeldt (1977) social studies is concerned with the study of people and their interactions with others and the total environment. Social studies transmit a way of life while, at the same time, building the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and the values needed to change and improve that way of life.

Children learn social studies as they live, grow, and experience. For example while building houses using sticks, and performing family activities.

Social studies curriculum is based on children's experiences and on their discovery of the world around them. Themes are planned beginning with the home and then, as children's experiences widen, the neighbourhood and the community.

Scope of Social Studies

Scopes refers to the field or area covered. Scope also means sphere of study the breadth or extent.

According to Seefeldt (1977) Social studies embrace all disciplines from social science field. Everything concerning the nature of people and the world, the heritage of the past, and all of contemporary social living is considered to be social studies. In order for a society to perpetuate itself, children in that society must understand the values and attitudes of that society and possess the knowledge and skills required to live in that society. For children to be useful in their society, they need to be knowledgeable, and skilled to help them to solve problems, to analyse their attitudes, and be able to live with other people.

The scope of social studies is very wide because:

- (i) It is concerned with people and their interactions and the total environment. In social studies children learn how to relate with others, how to work with others, and how to live with others. Social studies equip children with knowledge, skills, values, and positive attitudes which will help them to be useful members of their families, community and society.
- (ii) Social studies includes the following social disciplines:
 - Sociology – It is the study of group living, cooperation and their responsibilities.
 - History – It is the study of what has happened in the life of people, nation or society.
 - Geography – It is the study of the earth surface, resources and concepts of direction, location and distance.