

## **Developing Historical Understanding: Teaching Controversial topics in History**

### **Quadrant 1: Notes**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>: Bachelor of Education/B.A.B.Ed</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>: Education</b>
<b>Course Code</b>	<b>: EDU07/08 ,BSBAEDUM 07/08</b>
<b>Course Title</b>	<b>: Methodology cum content of History</b>
<b>Unit No 1</b>	<b>: Developing Historical Understanding</b>
<b>Module Name</b>	<b>: Teaching Controversial Topics in History</b>
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The word Controversy is defined as a prolonged public disagreement or a heated discussion .It is coined from the Latin word controversia. Our knowledge of the past is limited and hence controversies are bound to arise in the subject of history. Besides several source materials that a historian refers in order to interpret history, are not adequate.

The element of neutrality is absent in history. History thus helps mold the attitudes and habits of individuals. On account of this it is even more important to seriously consider the how and what of history which should be taught in the class. Hence there is a genuine need to teach history rationally and scientifically

to the students and this indeed is a big task for the history teacher. As history is full of controversies regarding facts and events we need to modified, challenge and improve the facts with the help of new findings and Research.

### **But why do controversies arise in history?**

The subjective element present in history plays an important role in the development of controversies .Unlike natural sciences, the historian cannot experiment on the historical events, as the same has already taken place in the past and that the source material which is available cannot help separate the truth from fiction.

### **Type of controversies:**

There are basically two types of controversies that arise in history:

**A) Controversy due to interpretations:** This type of controversy arises as all historians may not use the same approach and so it may not be possible to reach at the same interpretation on account of the historian's biased and subjective point of view.

**B) The second type of controversy is that which arises due to the relevancy and significance of facts:** Such type of controversies arises due to insufficient data and doubts. An example of such a type of controversy would be regarding the Aryans: were they the original Indians or had they migrated to India from a foreign land?

### **So how can the teacher select topics to be distributed to the students in the history class pertaining to controversies**

- Interesting and important topics should be selected
- While selecting a controversial topic the teacher should take into consideration the ability and the competence of the student.
- Sufficient time should be given to the students to prepare and discuss on the particular topic
- The controversial topics should be free from heated discussion.

The history teacher thus has a very important role and responsibility when she handles a controversial topic in the class. And so the teacher should have sufficient knowledge about the current controversial happenings. The teacher should relate the teachings from the text book to the happenings taking place at the national and international level. The teacher should help the students to exercise their fundamental rights. The teacher should help the students to make use of the media to form opinions. The teacher should train the students to accept another's point of view. Several controversial topics can also be addressed and discussed during assemblies, concerts, placed on Bulletin boards etc.

In conclusion it could be said that the teacher should have a thorough knowledge about the controversies taking place all around. The teachers should also be in touch with the latest developments and bear a scientific outlook.