

**Social Science**  
**Social and Political Life – II**  
**Textbook for Class VII**

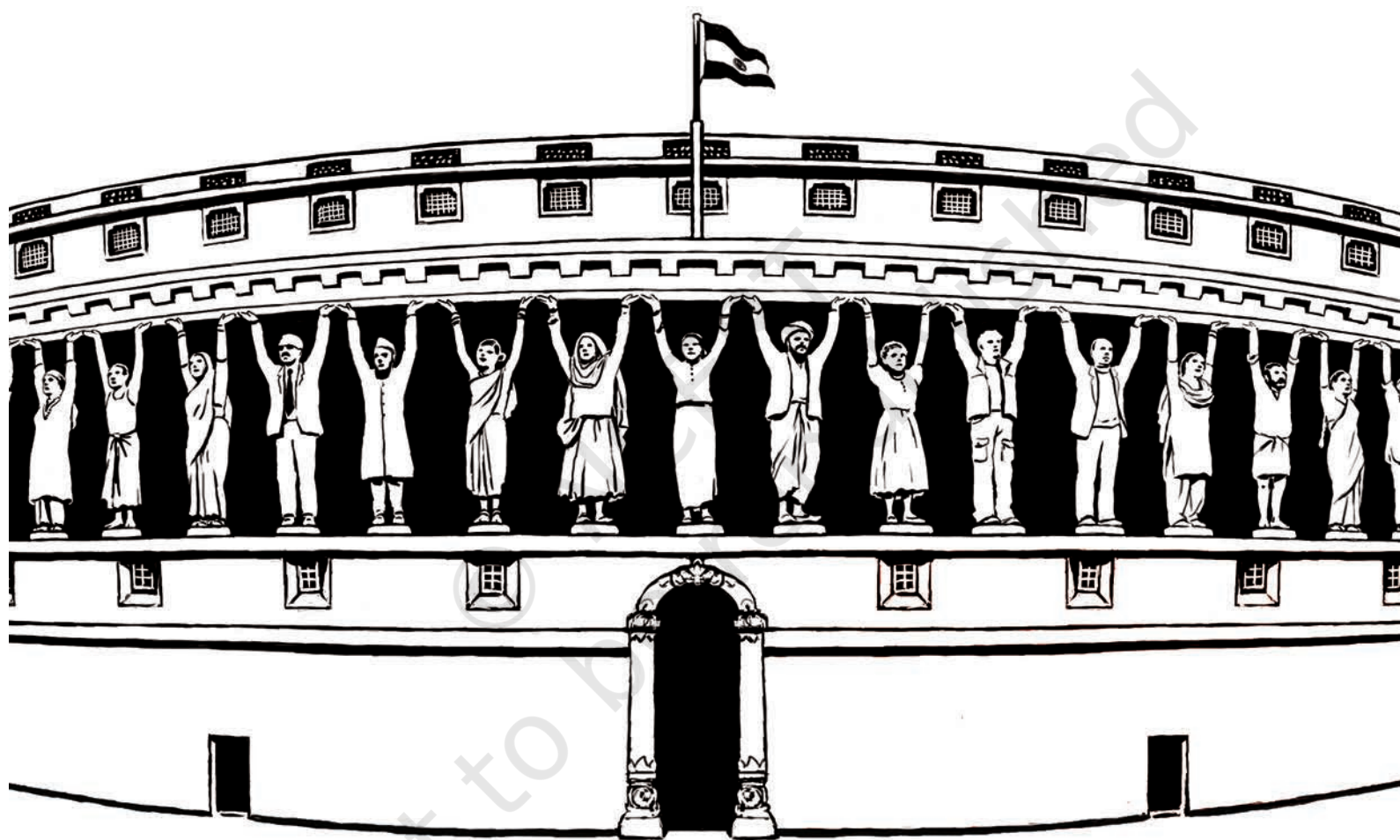
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Social Science

# Social and Political Life – II

Textbook for Class VII



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्  
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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 timetable is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days is 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.

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, the Chief Advisor, Sarada Balagopalan and the Advisor, Arvind Sardana 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 Resources 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.

New Delhi  
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The photographs that this book uses were procured from various sources and we are deeply grateful to all these institutions and individuals. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) was more than generous with their photographs and Amit Shankar and Anil with their time. *Outlook Magazine* also shared with us, at very short notice, photos from their archives. Sheeba Chacchi provided us with her photos for the photo-essay on the women's movement. Salil Chaturvedi and Shahid Datawala helped provide appropriate images from their collection. Mahesh Basadia provided us with photos of the Tawa Matsya Sangh (TMS) and the Mahila Balvikas Department at Dewas gave us the image of the *Anganwadi*. Harsh Man Rai and Baji Rao Pawar also contributed their photos as well as helped click new photos that we needed. M.V. Srinivasan helped with coordinating the photos from Erode. Devajyoti Dutta created the advertisements used in the advertising chapter. We thank Navdanya for some of the images used for the collage on health. Sarada Balagopalan also helped click some of the images used in this book.

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# Introductory note for teachers

There is a substantial difference between Civics and Social and Political Life, not only in terms of the topics covered but also in the pedagogic approaches required in each subject area. Keeping these in mind, this Introduction attempts to clarify certain aspects of Social and Political Life.

## What is Social and Political Life?

Social and Political Life (SPL) is a new subject area in middle school social science that has replaced the earlier subject of Civics. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 strongly argues that Civics should be discontinued and its focus on government institutions and functioning should be tempered in the new subject that replaces it. SPL, as its name suggests, focuses on topics related to social, political and economic life in contemporary India.

## What pedagogical approach does SPL use?

SPL's use of 'real-life' situations is a marked departure from Civics. SPL uses these real situations to teach concepts because it recognises that children learn best through concrete experiences. It uses material that draws upon the experiential understanding of familial and social issues that middle school children bring to the classroom. SPL further develops the learner's abilities to critically understand and analyse these issues in keeping with the tenets of the Indian Constitution.

This pedagogical approach tends to avoid the use of definitions to sum up a concept. Instead, it uses case studies and narratives to explain concepts. The concepts embedded within the narratives are made clear through the in-text and end-text questions. The aim is to have the learner understand the concept through their own experiences and write about it in their own words.

This often means that there is seldom one 'correct' answer to the questions posed. However



**Case studies and narratives used in SPL are a mix of rural and urban examples.**

there is a wrong answer. Teachers should try to gauge whether an answer to a question adequately reflects the learner's understanding of the concept being discussed.

**Given that children learn best through understanding and applying concepts to local realities, can a 'national' textbook adequately reflect the many 'locals' that make up the nation?**

SPL functions by the pedagogic principle that children learn best through an experiential understanding of concepts. This poses a contradiction when the effort is to write a 'national' textbook, because a national text can neither sufficiently represent all the various aspects of the various locals, nor fix the sociocultural background of the child for whom the book is intended. Therefore, the case studies and narratives used in SPL are a mix of rural and urban examples in which the assumed learner is not easily discernible.



**The SPL text specifically names communities, for example, Dalit, Muslim, poor, etc. SPL counts on the teacher to transact the material with a firm commitment to respecting the dignity of all students.**

**In addition to the important job of transacting the text, what crucial role does SPL expect teachers to play in the classroom?**

SPL counts on the teacher to play a very significant role in the classroom for the following reasons. First, the SPL text specifically names communities (for example: Dalit, Muslim, poor etc.) in its discussion of various issues and this may lead to some discomfort in a classroom that has a student population from different sociocultural and (perhaps) economic backgrounds. We expect the teacher to play a crucial role in transacting this material with a sensitivity and firm commitment to respecting the dignity of all students in the classroom and the school. Second, given the limited ability of this 'national' text to engage the local we also envision the teacher playing a major role in adding local examples to the discussion of concepts, provided these remain true to the logic and understanding of each concept as intended by the book's authors.

**How does the SPL help the learner assimilate the values enshrined in the Constitution?**

At first glance it might appear to some that unlike Civics, SPL's focus on 'real' examples contradicts the tenets of the Constitution. Such a focus, however, is a technique utilised in SPL in response to a critique of Civics textbooks that

always only discussed the ideal and seldom deliberated upon the reality that was very different. Since the learner is already aware of such realities, to avoid discussing them would make the learning of social and political concepts didactic and disconnected. Instead, SPL uses this embedded awareness to make the learner understand and accept not only the legitimacy but also the urgency of the values enshrined in the Constitution. Additionally, this approach allows the learner to understand the role of people's struggles in the realisation of these values.

**What are the issues included in the Class VII textbook?**

The theme for the Class VII grade book is the crucial role that equality plays in Indian democracy. This theme also serves as one of the Units in addition to which the book has four more Units. These include Health and State Government; Gender; Media and Advertising; and Markets. Each Unit consists of two consecutive chapters, except in the case of the first Unit in which they make up the first and the concluding chapters of the text.

**What elements does the Class VII book utilise to explain selected issues?**

◆ **Storyboards:** One component of the feedback regarding Class VI book (Social and Political Life-I) was that teachers needed more assistance in understanding where fictional narratives began and ended and in identifying the central concepts



within these. With this in mind, this year's book introduces storyboards to clearly indicate which segments have been fictionalised, and to draw the learner into the narrative through the use of visuals that are often more expressive than lines of text. Specific concepts raised through the storyboards are analysed in the accompanying text.

◆ **Unit Pages:** Each Unit begins with a Unit Page for teachers to help highlight the main points raised in the two chapters.

◆ **Note on Evaluation:** As with the Class VI text, this book does not contain definitions or a synthesis of concepts. While we recognise that this makes it difficult for teachers to evaluate what the child has learnt, our attempt is also to try and shift some of the understanding amongst teachers on what children are expected to learn and how such learning should be evaluated. This book contains a short note on evaluation procedures that we hope will assist teachers in their efforts to move students away from rote learning.

◆ **Glossary:** The inclusion of a Glossary with each chapter is intended to offer the learner greater clarity on the language used in the text. The words of the Glossary are NOT limited to concepts, and it should not be viewed as something to be memorised with the expectation that such rote learning will contribute to conceptual understanding.

◆ **In-text and End-text Questions:** As with the Class VI text, this year's book includes in-text and end-text questions, making use of visual material and experiential analysis. In-text questions found within the text can be used to assess the extent to which content has been assimilated. End-text questions usually cover the main concepts raised by the chapter and ask learners to explain these in their own words.



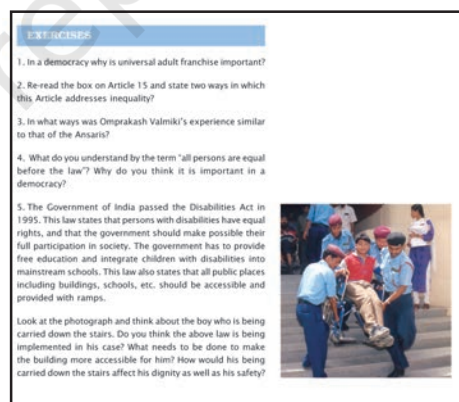
### Glossary

**Weekly Market:** These markets are not daily markets but are to be found at a particular place on one or maybe two days of the week. These markets most often sell everything that a household needs ranging from vegetables to clothes to utensils.

**Mall:** This is an enclosed shopping space. This is usually a large building with many floors that has shops, restaurants and, at times, even a cinema theatre. These shops most often sell branded products.

**Wholesale:** This refers to buying and selling in large quantities. Most products, including vegetables, fruits and flowers have special wholesale markets.

**Chain of markets:** A series of markets that are connected like links in a chain because products pass from one market to another.





# Teacher's note on evaluation

Rethinking the ways in which we evaluate learning is a difficult task but one that this new subject area requires. Over the years our evaluation system has for the most part rewarded students who learnt by rote. This involuntarily encouraged many teachers to mark or underline the answers in the text and in this way a vicious cycle in which each reinforced the other, was produced. It is this system that needs to be changed to relieve both the teacher and the student. Teachers will play a significant role in changing evaluation and this note is an effort in this direction.

## On questions

Teachers need to begin by insisting that evaluation be based on 'new' questions. These will be similar to the ones used in the text, but not the same. Students will be expected to answer these questions in their own words. The confidence to do this needs to be built in the students and language corrections should, therefore, be tactful and gentle.

Teachers will also need to design a variety of questions that cover a range of skills. Questions that demand recalling information by rote should be minimal. Instead, there needs to be different kinds of questions based on the main conceptual ideas of each chapter. Some may be designed to draw upon the learner's ability to reason; to compare and contrast experiences; and to infer and extrapolate from situations provided.

The following are some examples taken from this text to explain the above:

### Ability to reason

These questions aim to gauge the extent to which the learner has understood the concepts included in the chapter and is able to articulate its main ideas in their own words as well as apply these to different contexts. Examples of this include:

What do you understand by the term, "all persons are equal before the law"? Why do you think it is important in a democracy?

Why should the decisions taken by the Chief Minister and other ministers be debated in the Legislative Assembly?

Can you list two ways in which you feel that advertising affects issues of equality in a democracy?

How do you think your neighbourhood shop gets its goods? Find out and explain with some examples.

### Compare and contrast experiences

These questions require the learner to draw upon the main ideas in the text by comparing and contrasting concrete situations. These questions often involve the child's own experiences. Examples of this include:

What is the difference between the work that MLAs do in the Assembly and the work done by government departments?

In what ways do the experiences of Samoan children and teenagers differ from your own experiences of growing up? Is there anything described in this experience that you wish were part of your growing up?

Compare the earnings per shirt of the worker in the garment factory, the garment exporter and the shop-owner in the US. What do you find?

What differences do you find between private and public health services in your area? Use the following table to write about these.

Facility	Cost of services	Availability of service
Private		
Public		

### Infer and extrapolate from situations

This type of question is important to SPL because of the extensive use of narratives to explain concepts as well as the constant reference to the learner's own experiences. It is these questions that link the narrative to the underlying concept. The learner's ability to understand the narrative as well as its explication of the concept can be gauged through these questions.

Why do you think Omprakash Valmiki was treated unequally by his teacher? Imagine yourself as Omprakash Valmiki and write four lines about how you would feel if you were in the above situation?

Were Harmeet and Shonali correct in saying that Harmeet's mother did not work?

In India it is often said that we are unable to provide health services for all because the government does not have enough money and facilities. After reading the left hand column above do you think that this is true? Discuss.

What does this ad want me to feel when I use this brand?

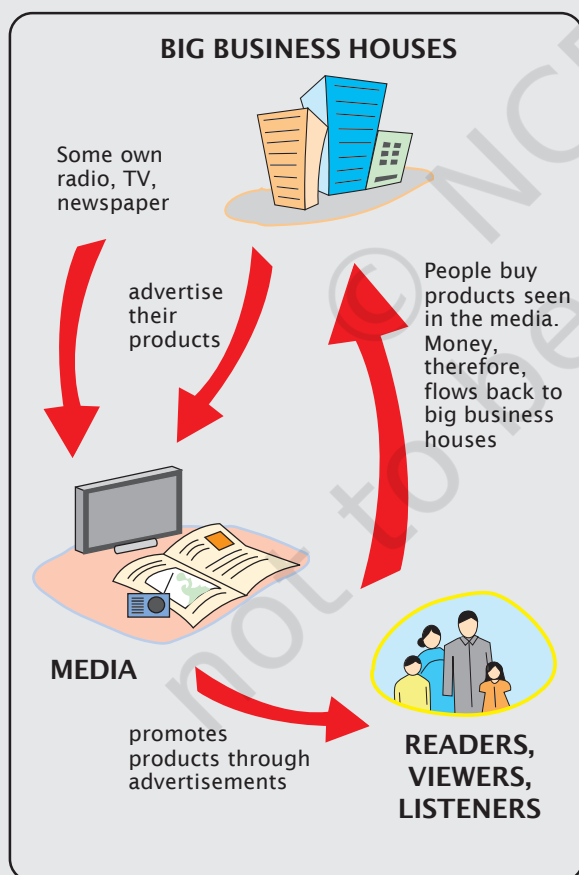
## Interpreting visual material

Similarly students should have an opportunity to read and interpret visual material. Hence there should be questions based on pictures, tables, flowcharts, etc.

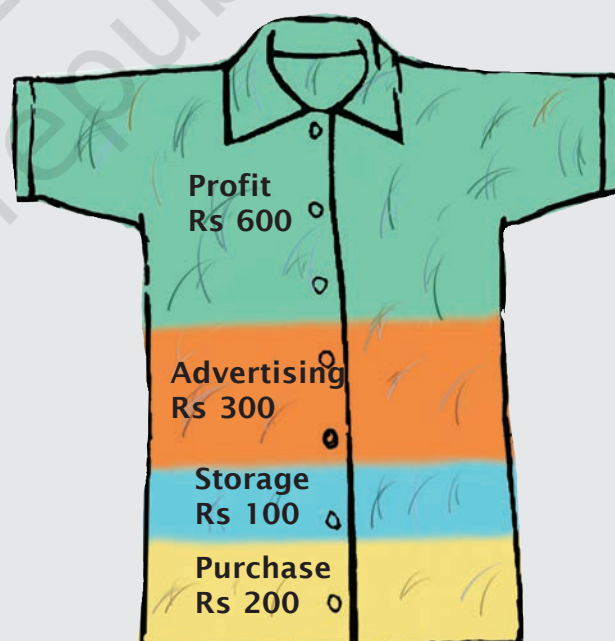
- ① Look at the photograph and think about the boy who is being carried down the stairs. Do you think the above law is being implemented in his case? What needs to be done to make the building more accessible for him? How would his being carried down the stairs affect his dignity as well as his safety?



- ② Can you give this diagram a title? What do you understand about the link between media and big business from this diagram?



- ③ The shirt below shows the profit made by the businessperson, and the various costs that he had to pay. Find out from the diagram below, what the cost price includes.



## On answers

Since the learner is being asked to write in their own words teachers will need to stop expecting 'exact' responses. Instead, the learner should be encouraged to state in their own words their understanding of the material and concepts they've read. Their comprehension, ability to soundly reason and communicate their ideas is what needs to be evaluated.

It would also be fair to expect a range of correct answers when the learner is asked to think through a particular narrative situation and apply the underlying concept. It is crucial that teachers discuss a common evaluation scheme that helps them distinguish between the range of correct answers as well as more crucially identify wrong answers.

An example of what we mean by a range of responses to a question, as well as a wrong answer is provided below:

**If you were one of the Ansaris  
how would you have responded  
to the property dealer's  
suggestion that you change  
your name?**

### Range of right answers

"If I were one of the Ansaris I would have decided not to change my name because this would deeply affect my dignity and self-respect."

This is a short, clear answer that indicates good comprehension and ability to communicate ideas.

"I would not change my name if I were one of the Ansaris because this is the name that my family has had for generations and it would make me feel bad to say that I was someone else."

Here, the learner does not use the word 'dignity', but has understood the concept and is attempting to communicate this in her own words.

"I will take up the property dealer's suggestion and change my name. I will do this because I am tired of looking for a flat. I would not like to do so but I need a place to stay."

On the face of it, this might appear to be the wrong answer since the learner agrees with the property dealer's suggestion. If a question has asked for an opinion it could be either way. As long as the learner puts forward a logical argument to support their opinion, the answer is right. This answer shows that they have understood the idea of the Ansaris' dignity being affected.

### Wrong answer

"If I were one of the Ansaris I will agree to change my name because this will increase my dignity."

This question is asked as part of the section on 'Recognising Dignity' in the text. The learner has not been able to make the connection between the discrimination and disrespect faced by the Ansaris, and their loss of dignity.

## Other forms of evaluation

We need to demystify the stress on examinations as the best tool for evaluating the learner. Rather than wait for alternate evaluation structures to trickle down from the higher grades, we need to use the learner's years in middle school to experiment with other ways of evaluation. For this purpose we need to use different methods, some of which are briefly discussed below –

◆ **Open-book exercises:** As the name implies 'open-book' is a process in which the learner is allowed to refer to the textbook while answering a question. Open book exercises offer children an opportunity to pick out answers without feeling the burden of "remembering the details". The learner would be asked to read portions of the text again with the question in mind. New questions are essential for this exercise. Questions based on the learner's ability to infer, extrapolate and apply concepts are ideal for open-book exercises. Answering the question in the learner's own words should be emphasised.

◆ **Oral reasoning and comprehension:** Children express so much through speaking and sharing in a classroom. Yet, most often, our current educational system tends to regard this as 'useless talk'. Learning from peers and expressing themselves through the spoken word is something that needs to be encouraged. Oral evaluation exercises provide an avenue through which to value this. A number of in-text questions in this book can be answered orally and the teacher should begin this process in the classroom.

◆ **Collective project work:** Collective project work is another way to evaluate students. Preparing a wall-paper is one such example used in the text. The expectations from these projects should be reasonable and limited to what learners can do on their own. Project work should be done in the classroom and not as homework. Many end-text questions in this book can be converted into small projects.

These forms of evaluation help emphasise that learning is continuous and happens in multiple ways. Evaluation should be designed to enable and encourage this learning and not be reduced to a filtering mechanism.