

**REGULATORY MECHANISMS FOR  
TEXTBOOKS AND PARALLEL TEXTBOOKS  
TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE  
GOVERNMENT SYSTEM**

**A REPORT**

**Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education  
Ministry of Human Resource Development  
Government of India  
2005**

**CABE COMMITTEE ON REGULATORY MECHANISMS FOR  
TEXTBOOKS AND PARALLEL TEXTBOOKS TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS  
OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM**

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## **CABE Committee on Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks taught in Schools outside the Government System**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Committee set up under the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) by the Ministry of Human Resources Development was asked to study and report on both textbooks used in government schools not following the CBSE syllabus, as well books used in non-government schools, including those run by religious and social organizations. Based on this survey, the Committee was asked to assess the need to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring textbook content, and to propose measures where appropriate.

This analysis is the first of its kind in terms of scale and range of reference. It provides both in-depth analysis of government and private publications used in different states and a detailed map of the institutional procedures followed by each state. Many experts from states all over India were brought into the process of survey, analysis and discussion on suitable recommendations. The Committee received suggestions and responses from governmental and non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and concerned citizens which has helped us to do justice to this extremely important task

The early chapters locate a context for the study, the first discussing its guiding principles, the second spelling out the linkages between policy, curriculum and textbooks and the third outlining the institutional procedures for textbook approval followed at the state level. The fourth presents reports of content analysis of textbooks from different states to identify key areas of concern in textbook content. The report concludes with the Committee's recommendations.

### **1. Introduction and Terms of Reference**

The reconstitution of the CABE was one of the first interventions in Education by the UPA government. This Committee of the CABE was entrusted with the task of suggesting measures for the regulation of curricula and textbooks produced by State Governments and non-governmental sources (including private publishers). The review of the NCFSE-2000 being undertaken by the NCERT at the request of the government will not cover textual materials used in schools *outside* the CBSE. It is therefore this Committee that is primarily responsible for looking at books used in these schools, and the regulatory mechanisms for their preparation and approval.

The revision of textbooks had generated unprecedented public debate, at whose centre was the distortion of historical fact by communal ideology. Similar tendencies had been identified earlier in some state textbooks and the publications of religious organizations, but the NCFSE-2000 gave the first clear sanction to these trends. It was also argued that the rewritten books naturalized inequalities of caste, class and gender. It was declared such trends compromised the enterprise of Education.

An education seeking to develop critical faculties through the exercise of reason would have to be secular by virtue of its commitment to an open mind. And in a democratic society, one of the most worthwhile endeavors in the direction of equity is providing all citizens access to an education laying the foundations for critical thinking. Again, though our policy makers throughout have spoken of achieving equality through education, we have remained unequal to translating this vision in a curriculum truly representative of the diverse experience of citizens. The CAGE's review of textbook content identifies the areas that demand our attention.

The present review was conducted within parameters spelled out in the National Policy on Education (hereafter NPE) of 1986 and the Constitution. Particular reference was made to the core curricular areas listed in Section 3.4 of the NPE and Sections 8.1 to 8.6 on Cultural Perspective and Value Education. These concerns include the freedom movement, India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy, protection of the environment and the inculcation of scientific temper. These values are expected to promote the integration of our people and to counter fanaticism, violence and superstition.

Experts from states were asked to examine if these core concerns were taken into account by State bodies during the preparation and approval of textual materials. They examined Social Science and Language books, where the treatment of these issues would be most critical, and were invited to share their views as to whether the values had been appropriately interpreted. They were also to assess whether the mechanisms adopted by states to regulate textbook content were clearly formulated and effective, and to state if their jurisdiction extended to materials used in schools run by private organizations.

## **2. Policies, Curriculum Frameworks, Syllabi and Textbooks**

As textbooks dominate the educational process in Indian schools, they become areas of substantial ideological and commercial investment. This is demonstrated by a quick review of the debates on policy and publishing procedures, and by an indication of the range of government and private publications. Together these underscore the need for regulatory mechanisms.

Educational policies are prepared by Committees set up by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, presented before the CAGE and tabled in both houses of Parliament. Milestones in policy include "Education and National Development" (1964-66) and the "National Policy on Education" (NPE-1986, reviewed in 1990). On the basis of these policies, the NCERT designs the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which according to NPE-1986 should possess "a common core along with other components that are flexible". Syllabi, which prescribe topics for examination, are more familiar to the public than policy documents or the NCFs. The NCERT has produced three sets of syllabi (1975, 1988 and 2002), each following the NCF then current.

NCFs have been framed in 1968, 1986 and 2000, and only the last lacks a prior policy statement. There being no State level curricular statements, states are presumed to refer to

the current NCF, but prior to the present report there has been no serious assessment of how far their syllabi adhere to its core elements.

### 3. Institutional Mechanisms for Textbook Production

State governments started to assume charge of the production of textbooks after the Education Commission (1964-66) drew attention to the factors contributing to the neglect of this area – lack of interest by scholars, unscrupulous publishers and unaffordable prices, irregularities in the selection and prescription of books and the lack of supporting materials like teachers' guides.

This Committee asked experts to investigate the relative proportions of government and private publications in use, government procedures for bringing out its own publications and for approving books produced by other organizations, and the existing regulations on the use of books in government and private schools (both aided and unaided).

Most states have created bodies through legislation for the preparation of syllabi and textbooks. All the states have established mechanisms for the preparation and approval of textual materials. These mechanisms and processes vary from state to state. *The Sub-Committee's investigations suggested, however, that procedures for textbook production tend to be followed mechanically without really addressing the core curricular concerns defined in the NPE.* What is of real concern is that there is no way of assessing whether the textbooks actually adhere to the aims of education policy. Also there appears to be very little application of mind with regard to the selection of material. This is partly because of the overwhelming emphasis on form with very little attention being devoted to content of textbooks and supplementary materials.

A sketch of procedures in different states illustrates how varied is the picture as regards *dependence on the centre, delegation of responsibilities and the systems devised for the preparation and approval* of books:

In Punjab and Tamil Nadu, textbooks for all classes are prepared and published by *one State-controlled body*. In Sikkim and Haryana, the State Institution of Education/the SCERT prepares books only for primary classes, adopting the NCERT books for higher classes (or private publishers for middle school). Andhra Pradesh uses textbooks from the centrally funded and controlled DPEP/SSA till Class Eight, and its SCERT's books for Classes Nine and Ten.

In Mizoram, the Board conducting examinations prepares all the books it prescribes. In Orissa, the autonomous Board of Secondary Education prepares books for Classes Eight to Ten, after which the State Bureau of Textbook Preparation and Publication takes over. In both Karnataka and Gujarat, SCERTs are strongly *state-controlled*, but in the latter the School Textbook Development Board monopolizes publication and distribution, while in Karnataka 40 percent of the textbooks are given to private publishers to print.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Parishads for Basic and Madhyamik Shiksha approve a panel of authors, and schools are *free to choose* books by any one, books being published privately. The Madhya Pradesh Textbook Act (1973, 1974) states that even private schools affiliated to the State Board should follow SCERT publications (the government seeks also to monitor library books), but in practice, only those taking public examinations follow this.

The public examination comprises the sole but significant link between private unaided schools and state government authorities. Only Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland and West Bengal accept the use of books not produced by the state government by candidates from private unaided schools, and the state's syllabus committee in consultation with experts should have approved such books.

Many states, like Delhi, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal get schoolteachers, subject experts, members from DIETs and voluntary organizations to collaborate on textbook preparation. Some states have elaborate procedures for approval – West Bengal and Gujarat undertake a phased trial of textbooks in schools before finalizing manuscripts. In Karnataka, manuscripts are submitted to a second group of experts and introduced in certain blocks of the state before final revisions. In Rajasthan, manuscripts are presented to the Education Secretary and Education Minister. In Madhya Pradesh, the government notifies the books for government primary and upper primary schools after their approval by the (government convened) textbook standing committee. While mechanisms for regulation are in place in Bihar, there is insufficient co-ordination between the agencies responsible for preparing textbooks, and the government's failure to produce books on time has left the field clear for private publishers.

Across states, there thrives on the prescribed material a private industry circulating shadows of government books, teachers' handbooks, "question banks" and guides. The last are sometimes twice the price of government books (the majority of children buy both, starting as early as Class Four). Guides comprise the main private publications mentioned in the report from Karnataka, where even private schools adhere mainly to government books. Jammu and Kashmir has no major private publishers within the state and the private publications favored in Kerala's English medium schools are those with a pan-Indian market. Except in Uttar Pradesh, where government-approved authors are published privately, there are *no mechanisms to approve private publications*, which many schools use to supplement or to substitute for government books, or to teach subjects for which there may not be government books available for all classes, like Moral Science.

Textbooks and curricula in schools run by religious and social organizations and schools not aided by the state are not regulated in any form by state agencies. Some of them use this route to promote ideologies that often contradict the basic principles and vision of the Constitution and educational policies. One disturbing fact is that the free space permitted in the system is often abused for partisan purposes by sectarian organizations and schools affiliated to them. Such organizations exploit the fact of the palpable lack of critical

scrutiny of the substance to introduce textual materials that dangerously undermine the aims of education and even vitiate the constitutional framework. Communal bias is imprinted on school textbooks by weaving in absurd and unsubstantiated narratives and facts in a way that undermines not only the scientific quality and academic standard of the education meted out in schools but could have seriously damaging consequences for the quality and integrity of educational standards in the country.

*It would be advisable to issue a set of national guidelines to ensure that curricular materials adhere to constitutional values and the aims of national policy. State governments would be responsible for ensuring that private bodies do not flout these.*

We take stock below of how bodies representing different communities and religious denominations make use of their freedom from government regulations:

The Council of Anglo-Indian schools prescribe only the curriculum, leaving the choice of textbooks to schoolteachers.

The Christian schools covered by the survey have a *limited intervention* in curriculum. Of two schools visited in Chattisgarh, one uses government textbooks for all subjects except Moral Science, while Catholics have a special religious class. The other, a primary school, brings out its own textbooks, which differ only in terms of format and contain no religious message. The public exams instituted as early as Class Five encourage schools to confine themselves to government textbooks.

Muslim organizations may prescribe their own publications (Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband and Nadvat-ul-Ulema) or publish books only on religious education and refer to the State Board for other subjects (Deeni Taleemi Council). In states like West Bengal *madarsas* serve to fulfill a demand for education not met by the State. Yet the curriculum and textbooks of *madarsas* pose certain issues. Those following state government syllabi for all subjects except religious education may, as in Delhi, be working with poor translations of government publications, while those teaching *manqulat* (religious education) only qualify students for a religious profession. A recent study of Uttar Pradesh revealed that 96 percent of the *madarsas* wished to modernize their curriculum by the introduction of Science, Hindi and English, but were constrained by finances.

Over the last decade, in a move towards regulating quality, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal have established Boards that provide funding to the *madarsas* under their jurisdiction and administer their curriculum, e.g. in West Bengal there are plans to modernize teaching methods for Arabic and English in the 500 *madarsas* under the Board. In Bihar the Board has yet to address the problem of textbooks not being printed regularly. There is as yet no board functioning at the all-India level. State policy is as significant as private initiatives, Muslim education levels being high in states like whose investment is more substantial (Kerala, where schools are well distributed), or whose vision more inclusive (Urdu being the second language in Andhra Pradesh). By contrast, Gujarat's aid to Muslim educational institutions is minimal. Its

recognition of few Urdu medium schools at the secondary level forces dropouts, given the difficulty of shifting languages.

Hindu establishments are often run by an *umbrella* organization producing textbooks for schools across India (DAV College Management Committee, Vidya Bharati Sanskriti Shiksha Sansthan and Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Mumbai). Unlike state *madarsa* boards, their curriculum would not reflect regional demands or traditions, nor are they accountable in the way required of state *madarsa* boards. Schools run by the Vidya Bharati in Uttar Pradesh were reluctant to divulge details of syllabi and textbooks, claiming to use only government publications, which is not true for primary classes. Two different names feature as publishers, with the same address.

Vidya Bharati schools are affiliated to either the CBSE or the local State Board, and their intervention occurs by adding to the prescribed curriculum new areas – *Naitik Shiksha*, *Sharirik Shiksha* (martial arts), Yoga, Sangeet, Sanskrit (from kindergarten) and Vedic Mathematics – and supplementary textbooks, like *Itihas Ga Raha Hai* and *Bodh Mala*. The last is required reading for the “Sanskriti Gyan Pariksha” conducted at an all-India level. Students come away with the qualification provided by a government exam, having been put through the paces of a parallel exam routine. Similarly, the “supplementary” subjects and textbooks add up to a more thoroughgoing intervention than possible through an official scripture lesson weekly.

A further case of parasitism upon the official system occurs in Karnataka. Even government schools permit the Infosys library programme to distribute biographies of “great Indians” (mainly published by the Rashthrothana Publication linked to RSS), where mythical figures outnumber social reformers and RSS leaders replace Gandhi and Nehru. Vidya Bharati schools may not seek autonomy from the State Board, but they do seek to extend their power over the family. Their Akhil Bharati Shiksha Sansthan publishes manuals for teachers, some of which are also intended for parents.

#### 4. Content Analysis of Textbooks

The Committee asked experts in the states to examine a selected sample of textbooks in the social sciences and Hindi, regional languages and English in the States of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Experts had been asked to examine whether the books used in their states contained matter contrary to (1) NPE-1986, (2) curriculum framework approved by CIBE, (3) the notion of a composite culture as evolved during the freedom struggle, (4) the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual basis of Indian nationhood, (5) the Fundamental Rights and Duties specified in our Constitution.

1. Textbooks now proliferate in which *communal* ideology shapes the contours of the understanding of Indian history, society and culture. These are essentially erosive of intellectual faculties. They teach a ‘history’ swamped by myths, false scriptural attribution and concocted claims for India’s greatness. Narrow polemics

leave unexplored whole areas of composite culture, syncretism and ideas. Most disturbing is the *propaganda against minority religions*. Such passages violate historical fact, deny India's composite culture, endorse caste hierarchies eschewed by our Constitution and mobilize a culture of violence that disregards the law. This is the area demanding the most sustained intervention, with implications also for value education and the representation of Indian realities.

2. Value education should expand its vision to be more inclusive of India's diverse cultures and traditions and to offer a practical understanding of human impact on the environment. It should be communicated through discussion instead of prescription, which risks reinforcing traditional power hierarchies. It should enable students both to recognize how *inequalities of caste and class* persist in our society, and to challenge these.
3. The absence of reference to the child's *immediate environment* makes curricular material appear alien. Even state textbooks contain little regional history. Projects for welfare, development and environmental protection are presented without showing the child how she participates and contributes.
4. All reports point out how textbooks *reinforce inequalities* by adopting the perspective of classes/groups possessing power and privilege. Rural realities and the experience of women and Dalits are seldom visible in illustrations or in the selections in language anthologies.

These issues of content also bear upon *pedagogy*. The concern with local environment is based on the recognition that a child's intellectual development expands from what is familiar to abstractions. Educationists should also formulate creative ways of discussing a complex subject like cultural heritage. Government textbooks should appreciate that their role goes beyond listing State projects, and equip students to offer informed criticism of government policy.

The survey of textbooks followed in *madarsas* in Uttar Pradesh reveals certain limitations of sectarian education, without turning up overtly objectionable material (books were sampled from religious education, moral instruction, History, Hindi and Urdu). Some of these books *glorify everything Islamic uncritically*, to the extent of endorsing coercion on Muslims to follow Islamic rituals, and condemning heterodox movements like *Akbar's Deen-e-Ilahi*. This deprives the student of alternative viewpoints at an impressionable age and refuses them any non-theological interpretation of reality (historical events are ascribed to the will of God).

Yet at no point do the books endorse coercion on *non-Muslims* to follow Islam. Books might purvey images based on value judgments (the Aryans are "great and gentle", the Buddhist principle of ahimsa is thought extreme), yet *never speak against another religion*. The occasional instances of Hindu rulers being criticized in comparison to Muslim kings are minimal.

Hindi language textbooks used in these schools focus on patriotism, and some of the other values emphasized are communal harmony, objectivity, mercy for animals, equality. There is a tendency for moral science books to confine examples of ideal persons to Muslims, yet Urdu and Hindi books contain many positive portrayals of non-Muslims.

Before turning to the publications of the other religious and social organizations, *it is worth noting how even government publications are insensitive in their interpretation of our many-stranded history. The report from West Bengal notices a covert tendency to represent the history of India and the history of Hinduism as parallel developments.* The report from Maharashtra observes that describing Islam's contribution to Indian art would have enriched a token reference to India's diversity. A Maharashtra history textbook contains the misleading statement that the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate made "no difference in the traditional lifestyle of the people". Though it bears repeating that there was no discrimination against non-Muslims on an everyday basis, there were other dimensions of change in the lives of people, like the development of towns and the encounter with new languages and new forms of popular religion. Government textbooks in Maharashtra place young minds in a *mono-cultural* world. In primary level books, stereotyped markers in illustrations identify different religions, but the books contain no non-Hindu names (something that recurs in Class Nine Hindi).

From here the easy *slippage* towards *exclusivist thinking* is demonstrated by the private publication, *Kannada Parimala*, where all festivals and gods mentioned are Hindu. The only place Hindus are significant by their absence is the statement, "Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists... *who too are Indians*, celebrate Republic Day" (italics added, to show how the normative Indian is implicitly Hindu). Such publications are at present outside the jurisdiction of the State, but it is worth recording that even government schools in Karnataka have been seen to display Hindu images or Islamic symbols.

COMMUNALISM: These trends become more insidious in schools run by Hindu religious organizations, which establish a closed environment through the selective use of imagery and allusions. Details like using the names of Hindu epic heroes to teach the English alphabet (Vidya Bharati) eventually add up to a deliberate effort to exclude non-Hindus from Indian culture as it is imagined in time and space. Place descriptions in Vidya Bharati publications focus on the local "*teerth*", but there is no mention of Sanchi among Madhya Pradesh's tourist sites. High Hinduism takes over the multi-cultural landscape of India, and goes on to appropriate the traditions that dissented from it. While in the Maharashtra government textbook, Buddhism is not clearly distinguished from Hinduism, *Sanskar Saurabh* (Vidya Bharati) declares that the Puranas taught us to understand Buddhism. *Dharmashiksha* Class Three (DAV College Prabandhakartri Samiti) gets away with the claim that Allah and God are linguistically derivative from OM! (in a book claiming the religion it represents is ideally not confined to one community).

Unable to identify non-Hindu dimensions of our cultural heritage, denied the intellectual tools to grasp the separate identity of other religions or the actual import of values that transcend community identity, and misled even as to the content of her own scriptures, the student would easily surrender to the *exclusivist idea of India* put forward by Vidya Bharati books, “Whose is this country?... Whose motherland, fatherland and holyland is it?” Yet if the wish to visit Mecca takes away from one’s Indian identity, is one less of a Gujarati after making a pilgrimage to Kashi?

*The hate mobilized against other communities is the one clear directive in books characterized by intellectual confusion.* Examples of the latter range from the blurred boundaries between history and mythology (Krishna and Gandhi are treated on the same plane as exemplary figures in the book on *Dharmashiksha*) to the way in which religious activity takes over areas of experience outside religion (kings and artists are invoked in the prayers in *Vandana*, Vidya Bharati).

Such lack of rigour enables conservative politics to *obscure dissenting traditions* within their version of Hinduism. But students who cannot afford publications other than textbooks must carry the burden of ideas *never established by evidence* – Christ roamed the Himalayas and drew his ideas from Hinduism (Vidya Bharati), chanting the Gayatri Mantra leads to intellectual growth, yagyas summon rain and the Vedas originated over one trillion years ago (DAV College Prabandhakartri Samiti).

Even supposedly neutral bodies foster hostility at an age when children lack the understanding of political formations to demand evidence or challenge misinformation. Maharashtra government books mention oppression and cheating by Muslim rulers (Class Four, History), Karnataka guides (Class Five, Social Studies) claim Hindus were kept under conditions of *slavery*. This clears the ground for the cultivation of hate, as when the DAV textbook (*Dharmashiksha*, Class Ten) presents Muslims as looters while Hindus are pious and heroic patriots.

Hostility is mobilized into outright *violence* in the texts of religious organizations. This occurs through judgment (Ashoka is called a *coward* for adopting non-violence, Vidya Bharati), description (Muhammad bin Qasim died the death of a dog, Vidya Bharati), the interpretation of historical motive (Guru Gobind Singh used a pen and a sword, Vidya Bharati) and direct appeal (“We must make our enemies weep”, DAV). Students taking Vidya Bharati’s Sanskriti Gyan Pariksha are made to memorize that 350,000 “Rambhakts” sacrificed their lives to “liberate the temple”.

*Intellectual confusion* also prevails in the treatment of Hindu *institutions or practices disavowed by the modern state*. It abounds after introducing revisions in the Karnataka history books. The growth of superstition is ascribed to contact with the Muslims without providing relevant examples Islamic superstition. The notion of *Sati* is related to the fear of Muslims. *Jauhar* was understood as the protection of honor against invaders, but how does one locate the fear of Muslims among the different explanations of *Sati* (a test of wifely devotion or the wish to appropriate the widow’s property)?

The treatment of *caste* is quite different. Though the Arya Samaj is supposed to have opposed the caste system, a DAV textbook speaks of learned Brahmins and valorous Kshatriyas while Shudras are invisible. Although they habitually invoke Hindu identity as homogenous, DAV books advocate endogamy among Arya Samajis. Caste endogamy is endorsed in the textbooks of the Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan as maintaining blood purity and removing the danger of marriage with Muslims. Shivaji's greatness is established by his protection of cows and of Brahmins (Vidya Bharati). Ritual sacrifices are also justified in the Vidya Bharati books.

Obversely, in the Vidya Bharati books, the *nation* is the *modern* notion that shackles the understanding of history. Bharat (including Sri Lanka and Burma) existed from ancient India, the "freedom struggle" was alive in the medieval period and the saffron flag was raised over the rebuilt Somanatha (such texts dare not quote medieval poems about Somanatha that describe the idol surviving by escape, not the drama of violence). The nationalism of revisionist history (Karnataka government books) has its own blind spots – the story of the "glorious rule" of the Rashtrakutas leaves out mention of peasant life.

While Vidya Bharati publications may openly celebrate the RSS flag, in ideologically motivated revisions (Karnataka government) the treatment of *secularism* leads to internal contradiction. Remnants of liberal rhetoric adhere to the "religious tolerance" of the Rashtrakutas being called progressive, in a historically unsound contrast to the Arab oppression of *citizens* (sic). In Civics the reference to secularism is *in spite of* a Hindu majority, and the fact that our neighbors are theocracies – suggesting it cannot be sustained.

Both specialists and the general public are concerned with how competing theories of secularism imply different possibilities for India. A foreword to *Dharmashiksha* destroys all potential engagement with these by dishonest translation ("Dharmanirpekshata' means 'anti-religion'"). It treats as given highly contested arguments (minority rights preclude equality of citizenship) and interpretations (secularism separates private and social lives).

In the absence of any monitoring mechanism, such textbooks take it upon themselves to usurp the interpretation of content of important disciplines like history and geography and freely inject myth and fiction into them. Most books mention that the Muslim League is a communal organization and rightly so but the communal orientation of the RSS as an organization openly committed to the launching of a Hindu Rashtra do not find mention in these books. In these narratives, Muslims are portrayed in a negative light thus providing space and legitimacy for the promotion of crude propaganda against Muslims and Christians. There is an exaggerated focus on a Hindu-Muslim division, drawing more from cultural imagination than on any actual historical record. Adding to this mythologisation of facts is the free categorisation of the significance of issues and factors, not at all in consonance with the prevailing realities requiring depiction. For instance, there is undue attention paid to the role of the Brahmin community, revealing an elite perspective rather than an accurate depiction of the prevailing social reality of different communities equally claiming public space.

VALUES: Most books focusing on value education draw overwhelmingly on Hindu traditions (Karnataka guides, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan), this is too often *just one dimension of Hinduism*, ignoring its rationalist, transcendental or activist traditions. Constitutional norms and the environment seldom feature, being seen as the department of Social Studies. In the languages and social sciences, the nature and the treatment of values differ from what is encountered in books devoted to value education (private publications). Reports from Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir observe that the *abstract* language of government social science textbooks do little to bring democratic and secular values to life, or challenge students to think about manifestations of inequity (judgments are flaccid, “in order to establish equality untouchability is also termed a crime”). Values need to be linked to *real life possibilities* – a region’s history of communal harmony, or stories about mutuality between different communities (introduced sensitively in Madhya Pradesh language books).

The interpretation of value education in private publications leaves much to be desired. *Passivity* is encouraged through pedagogy (values taught through commandments, not reasoning) and content (prayers rather than treatment heal disease). *Unequal power relations* are assumed by pedagogy (authors affix morals to stories) and content – there are two cases of private publications moralizing Ekalavya’s story as a celebration of devotion to one’s teacher. The wholesale importation of the myths of the *past* leaves unquestioned its social structures (the most heinous murder being that of a Brahmin) and unexplained its philosophically loaded vocabulary. Endeavors to address the child’s lived experience lapse into *unthinking ritual* (touching the feet of elders daily) or relative triviality (tidiness). Two reports comment on how men figure as the sole protectors of morality, and one notes the irony of the way the real world applying the most stringent norms to *women*. There is no attempt to convey the *dignity of labor*.

ENVIRONMENTAL protection is as yet not perceived holistically, leading to the inability to see how it bears upon the more central concern of current Geography books, industries. Geography tends to compartmentalize the two areas, owing to its virtual exclusion of *human needs and culture*. Even language books fail to suggest a sustained vision of reciprocal relations with the environment, confining references to nature to stories about animals or natural disasters and essays on sustainable development.

State boards do little to foster awareness of the environment and cultural *context of the region*. The different areas within Jammu and Kashmir are never mentioned in Social Studies. Urdu has been imposed on students though it is not the mother tongue of anyone in the state. Yet the introduction of local history could well bring to life abstract concepts like secularism and environmental protection. One could describe how communal harmony was sustained in Kashmir during a period when the rest of India saw it crumbling or discuss local environmental degradation and the measures taken to check this.

Only by responding to the *experience of the child* can the curriculum inspire her to respond to the invocation of environmental protection, help her see connections between

processed information and understanding accrued in other areas of life, between a problem as given and the possibilities of initiating change. Agricultural activity is described in primary level books as improved by the use of chemical fertilizers – an aspect unrelated to the village child’s participation in it and unlikely to enlarge the urban child’s conception of it (Maharashtra).

GENDER: The West Bengal report mentions the *neglect of the representation of women*. The Kerala report criticizes the use of “*Man*” to include women and the fact that men far outnumber women in visuals. The social issues underlying *women’s inequality* are not adequately explained. The Maharashtra report comments on how Geography books contain nothing on women’s labor. History does not go beyond mentioning the “pitiful state” of women to describing cases of patriarchy being challenged or personal fulfillment achieved in the face of oppression (women are left out of the account of the Bhakti movement).

The need to consciously engage students with *women’s struggles against patriarchy* becomes necessary after encountering the messages purveyed by private publications. A Moral Science guide in Karnataka states that a woman should put up with her husband’s *violence* in the hope of happiness during her son’s time. The sex-segregated curricula in *madarsas* teach women their *domestic roles*, while there is no mention of men’s domestic responsibilities. Separate syllabi in value education have resulted in boys not being made to read about good women and vice versa.

CASTE: Women are at least visible in textbooks, and there is some acknowledgement of gender injustice. *Lower castes and tribals hardly appear* in government books in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh or in books by private publishers with a pan-India market. The Kerala report comments that while geographical diversity is emphasized, what remain invisible are the realities of tribes and scheduled castes inhabiting these spaces. Statements like “tribal people *still* inhabit the Bastar region” undermine their claims in modern India. Again, comparison with the books of organizations linked to the RSS is salutary. There are no Dalits or contemporary women among the “great Indians” whose biographies are published by Rashtrathana Publications linked to the RSS.

Our inability to confront caste relates to historical processes which have assumed a new character in the present, which means the challenge cannot be thought a small matter of making good omissions. Caste mobilization should be presented more imaginatively than as *narrow identity politics*, and should not be subsumed within the nationalist narrative. Students should be made aware of how power structures operate, not just learn to term caste a social problem. Language anthologies should acquaint students with the significance of Dalit and minority literatures.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY: The Maharashtra report notes that while caste, religion and language are rehearsed as “impediments to national unity”, *all disciplines have been less than equal to addressing socio-economic disparities*. Value education tends to come off worst (friendship should be between people of equal standing, according to the *Kannada Parimala*). Visuals are also primary agents of symbolic violence, particularly in primary school. Illustrations accompanying the description of a balanced diet show a child

identifiable as urban middle class by details of dress and cutlery, excluding a large segment of potential readers from what the text prescribes as a healthy meal (often consisting of items hard for poor families to procure). The Madhya Pradesh report argues for establishing a connection between dropout rates among students of low economic backgrounds and there being little in textbooks for them to relate to or understand.

The Maharashtra report remarks that the *oppressed* are hardly encountered in English texts. If the elite language tends to blank out from its field of vision those less likely to make use of the language, Hindi stories feel obliged to start from assumptions about “the-poor-as victim” because the implicit power relations have remained uncontested too long and too widely. *History textbooks address power relations of class and caste not in their long term processes but at the juncture when they are challenged (an ironic contrast to their describing women’s oppression, not resistance).*

RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE: We conclude by looking at representations of the rural India in relation to a concern underlying some observations in this report *willingness of textbooks to pose hard questions*. Language books have the potential to at least evoke areas of experience that school Social Studies is uncertain how to address, but in the government books of Maharashtra, village life is glimpsed in the language books only as natural beauty. In Civics books it is characterized by a lack of amenities that the State attempts to redress in the face of hindrance from the ignorance and superstition prevailing. There is no recognition of *initiatives taken by villages* or voluntary groups. The Kerala report comments on the way in which rural India is a convenient place to locate “National Issues” like dowry and caste, instead of examining how the dimensions of these change across class and location. The “small family norm” endorsed in the NPE is invoked in its *contrast* to what one encounters in villages, ignoring how large families are not seen only as increasing chances of a male heir, but as providing extra hands during cultivation and insurance against infant mortality.

## 5. Recommendations

Declaring education a fundamental right entails ensuring all citizens access to a meaningful quality education. The current diversity of available curricular material is potentially enriching, but risks compromising on the liberal, secular and democratic principles of Constitution. Educational materials must be produced within the framework of the Constitution according to processes transparent to the public. These premises form the basis of the Committee’s recommendations for regulating the approval of textbook manuscripts, investigating issues raised by the public, reviewing material in print and supporting research on developing curricular materials:

- Procedures for approving curricular materials should include a serious appraisal by academic experts of their adherence to the core principles of egalitarianism, democracy and secularism.
- It is proposed that there be instituted a National Textbook Council to monitor textbooks. This must be independent of any organization involved in textbook

preparation, and also be fully autonomous so as genuinely to represent civil society and academia. It would provide ordinary citizens a forum at which to register complaints regarding textbooks, which would be followed up by an investigation by the Council.

- To keep itself updated, the CAGE may set up a Standing Committee, which would be guided by the National Textbook Council. The Standing Committee should be empowered to prepare the guidelines and outline the parameters for periodic reviews of textbooks, to be completed within six months of the beginning of the academic session. Reviews would examine social content of books as well as assess their standards, relevance and suitability for the age group. These periodic reviews should be submitted to the government, and widely publicized through the media.
- Though their role as producers of textbooks precludes their reviewing textbook content, the NCERT and all SCERTs can be asked to set up units dedicated to research on textbook preparation and evaluation, which would be assured academic autonomy. These should be staffed adequately for the task of working in conjunction with the CAGE Standing Committee for curricular review. The MHRD, State Education Departments and State Directorates of Education should earmark funds for this purpose.
- Along with the establishment of formal bodies to investigate specific complaints, there should be support for other civil society initiatives in this area. Adequate funding must be made available to concerned agencies to carry out research on textbook content. All institutions of higher learning should support research in school textbooks.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CAFE Committee on “Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outside the Government System” was entrusted with the task of examining textbooks and parallel textbooks in government and non-government schools and to recommend regulatory mechanisms for textbooks used in these schools. We are grateful to a number of colleagues for sharing with us their perspective, knowledge and experience as concerned citizens and activists in the field of education, and for sustaining the work of this Committee.

A report such as this could not have been written without the help and support of numerous individuals and institutions that have readily provided academic inputs and research support to the Committee. In the writing of this report, we have benefited greatly from the detailed comments and suggestions provided by Rajeev Dhavan, R. Govinda, Geetha Nambeesan, Anil Sadgopal, Malini Parthasarathy, Prabhat Patnaik, Rajan Prasad, and Janaki Rajan. We are also grateful to Arjun Dev, Narayani Gupta, Mushirul Hasan, Indira Jaising, and A.G. Noorani for their valuable suggestions.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to experts in the States who responded to our invitation and prepared the State reports for the Committee. The content analysis represented in this report would not have been possible without the contributions of Ramakrishna Chatterjee, Simantini Dhuru, P.K. Dutta, Niharika Gupta, Rajiv Gupta, Azizuddin Husain, Akshay Kumar, Ravisankar Nair, Anjali Noronha, Tanveerul Sadiqain, Padma Sarangapani, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, Nandini Sundar, Rooprekha Verma. We would like to thank the Public Study Group on CAFE Committees for their inputs and support provided to the Committee.

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Professor Zoya Hasan  
Professor Gopal Guru  
Chairpersons

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on the critical issue of textbooks and the processes of selection and prescription of curriculum, textbooks, and supplementary textual materials in different types of schools. Two recent events had a significant impact on the issue and underlined the necessity of regulatory mechanisms for selection and prescription of textual materials. Also underscored was the need to improve the already existing mechanisms for the selection and prescription of textbooks in schools within and outside the government system. One was the controversy regarding the NCERT's National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for school education in 2000 and the extensive shift in educational policy and the process of formulating the national programme of education that it occasioned. Second, the NCF was adopted without consulting the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), in effect disregarding the highest body in place to advise the Central and State governments in the matter of education. The NCF was implemented without its approval. As a federal forum, CABE represents the sole interface between the Central and State governments on this Concurrent List subject. CABE also includes educational officers, scholars, and citizens' representatives from different walks of life. From its inception, it has played an important role in shaping education and evolving a national consensus on education policy.

Curricula and textbooks had already been an issue of controversy in several States before the NCF 2000, but the NDA government's attempt to introduce major curricular changes triggered fresh and intense public criticism of the perspective adopted in the NCF, especially the wholesale revamping of the curriculum and textbooks in the social sciences. Both academics and educationists have urged the restoration of the primacy of the progressive discourse in curricular policy. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government's response has focused on taking a series of corrective steps to rectify the problems in the curriculum. One of the first actions of the UPA in the field of education was the reconstitution of the CABE, which in turn constituted several sub-Committees, of which this Sub-Committee has been entrusted with the task of suggesting measures in regard to the regulation of curricula and textbooks. The NCERT has been asked to review the NCF 2000. But the NCERT's review will not address the larger issue of textbooks and supplementary material used in schools not affiliated to the CBSE, including the state government and non-government schools. The recommendation of regulatory mechanisms for these schools is the main task entrusted to this Committee.

Although the NCERT texts are used all over India, these are however limited to schools affiliated to the CBSE and the number of schools, which accept this scheme, remains small. Out of a total number of around 1,25, 000 recognized secondary and higher secondary schools in the country, about 6200 are at present under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Changing the NCERT books may be

necessary, but this clearly will not be enough, as the bulk of schools do not use the CBSE syllabus. Even those that use the CBSE syllabus do so largely for the higher classes for the purpose of Board exams. The textbooks prepared and approved through well-established official mechanisms in the States have also been found to be not free of prejudice and pre-conceived notions. In addition, there are a large number of schools run by social and religious organizations where, for quite some time now, studies and reports have shown that children are being socialised into a communal imagination orientation, not at all in consonance with the secular and democratic consensus.<sup>1</sup>

Education that inculcates a critical faculty and an emphasis on reasoning is by its very nature secular education. Whether state supported, autonomous or privately financed, education should be committed to free enquiry and the inculcation of an open mind. This requires that textbooks that are open-ended and encourage among children creative processes of inquiry, dissent and debate. Textbooks can help the children to develop and absorb the ideals and values of equal citizenship, an appreciation of diversity, and imbibe the grammar of national identity, culture, and scientific temper. Indian school textbooks for quite some time had attempted to inculcate these principles in order to portray and uphold the values and traditions of a plural, equitable and democratic society. The recent attempt to rewrite textbooks sharply and disturbingly unsettled and eroded these values.

The rewriting of curricula and textbooks in the past few years has caused widespread concern. Never before had curricula and textbooks been subjected to such close scrutiny and public debate. The recent attempts to use education for narrow politically partisan purposes to reflect the ideologies propounded by certain organizations and political parties have met with disapproval on the part of concerned parents and caused dismay and consternation among educationists and academics. The major concern is the introduction of a non-secular tone in the curriculum and textbooks that reflect narrow and partisan points of view. The NCERT books prepared under NCF 2000 had been criticised widely for what they represent, with all their implications for the disadvantaged - the minorities, tribals, dalits and for women- especially the inherent consequences of perpetuating and reinforcing inequalities. As earlier reports have pointed out, even before the NCF, this trend of introducing sectarian thinking was found in state level textbooks, but the NCF gave a new impetus to these trends and legitimacy to their efforts. Quite apart from the obvious communalisation of history, issues of serious concern are those of gender and the status of women, class, caste-based discriminations, community driven stereotypes, environment etc.

There is an urgent need to ensure that the education system reflect the secular-nationalistic discourse; it must remain free of communalism; it must reflect the cultural diversity of our nation and the multicultural nature of our society; and it must not exacerbate gender, caste and community inequalities. The very diversity and inequality of Indian society is a compelling reason to address with urgency the

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<sup>1</sup> NCERT, Report of the National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation, Volume 1, 1993, Volume 2, NCERT, New Delhi, 1994.

questions of social equality, multiple identities and national identity and their presentation in educational materials. One of the most important means of promoting equity in a democratic society is to make good critical education available to all. This requires curricular frameworks that reflect these objectives. These then need to be translated into textbooks.

The commitment towards achieving equality through education - a central concern of the national endeavour underlying Indian education – has been unequivocally voiced in all the major policy documents of independent India. The task of translating this vision of equality into a curricular framework and into textbooks is challenging enough and remains not fully realized. In other words, we have not always been able to concretise the conceptions and policy statements and embody these into a democratic curriculum, which is reflected in textbooks. The concerted sectarianism and communalist politics of the recent past has made this task doubly difficult.

The Government of India reconstituted the CAGE vide Resolution 6.7.2004. The first meeting was held on August 10-11, 2004. After extensive discussions on several critical issues connected with education in this meeting, the Minister of Human Resources Development has set up seven Committees to deal with important issues pertaining to different aspects of school, higher and technical education. It was decided to set up a Committee of the CAGE on “Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outside the Government System”.

The terms of reference of the Committee are:

- (a) To study and report on textbooks in government schools not using the CBSE syllabus.
- (b) To study the textbooks and curriculum of schools outside the Government system, including those run by the religious and social organizations.
- (c) To suggest an appropriate regulatory mechanism for institutionalizing the issue of preparation of textbooks and curricular material.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee decided to review textbooks used in schools affiliated to State Boards, private schools as well as those managed by religious and social organizations, which may or may not be affiliated to these Boards. This is largely to

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<sup>2</sup> One issue pertains to the TOR itself. The first meeting of the Committee noted the contradiction between the title of the Committee “Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outside the Government System” and the terms of reference which asked the Committee to study and examine textbooks in schools not affiliated to the CBSE, which would include state government and non-government schools. The Joint Secretary, Shri Sudeep Banerjee, dealing with CAGE in the MHRD, later clarified that TOR of the Committee includes an examination of both government and non-government textbooks. The second issue pertains to the second term of reference, i.e. religious and social organizations. Some members raised the issue as to which organizations fall under this category. While this issue is important, it falls outside the purview of the Committee. A view, nevertheless, was expressed that the government if it so wishes may apply its mind to the matter in the appropriate forum.

bring within the scope of review textbooks other than those published by the NCERT. The review of the NCERT curriculum and textbooks is being done separately. The Committee is aware that private schools affiliated to the CBSE are using textbooks published by private publishers in addition to NCERT books. However, given its terms of reference, the Committee has limited the scope of the review to textbooks used in schools not affiliated to CBSE, which will include textbooks produced by state governments and any textual material published by non-governmental sources, including private publishers.

The review of textbooks has to be undertaken on the basis of certain identifiable parameters which are clearly spelt out in the educational policies and the Constitution. These are identified as core curricular areas listed in Section 3.4 of the NPE 1986/92 and Cultural Perspective and Value Education in Section 8.1 to 8.6. These are identified as: freedom movement, national identity, promotion of values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy, secularism, equality of the sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers, observance of small family norm and inculcation of scientific temper. These values are expected to promote unity and integration of our people, and also help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism.

Do States take these into consideration as a criterion for the selection, preparation, prescription and approval of textual materials and how they are presented? What mechanisms do States use? Are they adequate? Do they apply to all types of schools including those run by social and religious organizations and textbooks in use? These are some of the major questions the Committee has endeavoured to address. As a first step we need to understand how textbooks and other materials are prescribed and approved for children in different States and Union Territories.

The Committee decided to examine a selected sample of textbooks in the social sciences and Hindi, regional languages, English and a few moral education books. This choice was also determined by the importance given to social sciences in the educational policies. Almost all aims of education are embodied and are to be realized through the teaching of social sciences, and to a lesser extent in the teaching of languages. The states identified for this exercise are: Bihar, Chattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal. In these states, textbooks used by state government run schools, as well as those produced by private publishers used by religious and social organizations have been taken up. A few cases of textbooks produced by private publishers have also been examined.

This report has been divided into five chapters starting with the introduction. The second chapter provides an overview of education policies and related issues of curriculum and textbooks. The third chapter documents the institutional arrangements for the preparation of textbooks through a mapping of the regulatory mechanisms established by state governments for approval and adoption of textbooks. The fourth chapter presents a review and analysis of the contents of textbooks produced by state

governments, private publishers and cultural and social organizations. The fifth and concluding chapter puts forward a series of recommendations for the consideration of CABE on regulatory mechanisms for textbooks and parallel textbooks.

We have tried to undertake this exercise with as wide a consultation as possible. We invited suggestions and responses from governmental and non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and concerned citizens to enable us to do justice to this extremely important task. We were fortunate in receiving inputs and support from various individuals, institutions and government bodies involved in the curricular issues, education and textbook preparation.

We are aware that justice may not have been done in representing and reflecting the great variety of textbooks and textual and supplementary materials and types and managements of schools in India and the range of governmental processes evolved through legislations and other means by different States for the approval of textual materials, and above all, to the variety of textual materials used in schools. Within the limited time available to the Committee we have tried to be as representative as possible of the range and diversity of structures and types of schools and of the textbooks and textual materials used in them.

#### Members of the Committee

Professor Zoya Hasan, Co-Chairperson  
Professor Gopal Guru, Co-Chairperson  
Professor G.P. Deshpande, Member  
Secretary School Education, Uttar Pradesh, Member  
Secretary School Education, Andhra Pradesh, Member  
Secretary School Education, West Bengal, Member  
Secretary School Education, Kerala, Member  
Secretary School Education, Rajasthan, Member  
Ms. Teesta Setalvad, Member  
Professor Krishna Kumar, Director, NCERT, Member Secretary

## CHAPTER II

### POLICIES, CURRICULA, SYLLABI AND TEXTBOOKS

#### EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Educational policies are prepared by Committees set up by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development. (MHRD) These are approved by the CABE and also tabled for approval in both houses of Parliament. Several major Committees have been set up since independence, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), Education and National Development (1964-66) and National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and Programme of Action (POA), 1992. The Review Committee of the NPE, 1986, known as the Acharya Ramamoorthy Committee (1990) reviewed the NPE, 1986, and the Yash Pal Committee's 'Learning Without Burden' (1994) suggests ways of reducing curricular load.

#### THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

Curriculum development, syllabus design and the preparation of instructional materials including textbooks and their evaluation began with the emergence of NCERT as a nodal agency at the national level in the area of school education. NCERT was involved directly in the process of curriculum development and preparation of textbooks. As the State Institutes of Education, State Textbook Boards, and the State Council of Educational Research and Training were established, these gradually followed the pattern of providing technical support to research and development activities underlying the formulation and the preparation of textbooks at the state/union territory levels.

1. At the central level, based on Education Policy, a National Curriculum Framework (NCF) is brought out by the NCERT. Since independence, three National Curricular Frameworks (NCFs) have been framed on the basis of the recommendations of the two major Committees, 1968 and 1986. The NCF framed in 2000 is the only NCF that was framed without a policy statement preceding it.

2. The NPE, 1986, defines the NCF as follows: "The national system of education will be based on a national curricular framework which contains a common core along with other components that are flexible." Common core has been defined by NPE as follows: History of India's freedom movement; constitutional obligations; promotion of values such as India's common cultural heritage; egalitarianism; democracy and secularism; equality of the sexes; protection of the environment; removal of social barriers; observance of the small family norm; inculcation of the scientific temper. Textbooks, which seek to fulfill curriculum objectives, must reflect the above-mentioned aspects of the 'core'.

3. The NCF 2000 makes fundamental departures from the earlier NCFs and policies in respect of the role of values, the place of religion, equality of educational

opportunity etc. These departures generated wide controversy both with regard to (a) the process of preparation and (b) content of the NCF.

4. The Executive Committee of the NCERT in its meeting of 19 July 2004 decided to initiate the review of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2000. It decided to form five structures to undertake the NCF review. These structures are: National Steering Committee; National Focus Group; Committee for Consultation with States; Research Unit; Coordination Committee. The National Steering Committee chaired by Professor Yashpal has members including scholars from different disciplines, principals and teachers, representatives of NGOs and members of the NCERT faculty. The Committee is deliberating on all aspects of the school curriculum, taking into account the existing framework. The final review document will be presented to the Executive Committee of the NCERT and the Council of the General Body for discussion and approval, and ultimately to the CABE.

Following the curriculum framework, syllabi for the primary, middle, secondary and senior secondary stages are also prepared. The syllabi assume great importance as it sets out both the content contours and topics on the basis of which the Examination Boards set questions for examinations. The syllabi are therefore more familiar documents among teachers, parents and students than the policy or the curriculum framework. There are many Boards in the country, but most States have their own Examination Boards, in addition to the CBSE and ICSE Boards. Each Board prescribes its own syllabi. It may or may not adhere to the NCERT syllabi.

Textbook is a major educational tool for the students. In India, textbooks occupy most of the educational space in schools. They are not just teaching manuals, they shape the minds of children in their formative years, and have a profound influence on how young minds interpret reality. For this reason the content of textbooks or instructional material is a deeply contentious issue in several countries around the world. Indeed, questions of curriculum and textbooks are so contested because they are at the heart of debates over national identity, and over who will define and control what is worth knowing. This is probably why in a country as diverse as ours the issue of textbooks is a site of much contestation and conflicting interpretations. In one sense, the content of our textbooks is a crucial disseminator of fundamental values of citizenship, values that we need to pass on to the next generation. Thus the content of textbooks is of vital importance and has a significant impact on the educational development of students.

## TYPES OF SCHOOLS

Schools and school systems in India are a bewildering array in structure and functioning. Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) are primarily meant for children of central government officers who are posted all over India. They are affiliated to the CBSE, which prescribes the Syllabus and the NCERT textbooks. They function from class I

to Class XII. Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs) are centrally managed and are meant for the talented children from the rural areas, and function from classes VI – XII. They are also affiliated to the CBSE and use NCERT textbooks.

Private un-aided schools are also affiliated to the CBSE, and form a very influential group in the system. They use NCERT textbooks from, class IX onwards and function from pre-school to class XII. Private aided schools receiving aid from state governments are affiliated to CBSE or State Boards.

Christian missionary schools are affiliated to ICSE, CBSE and State Boards. In the past few years the International Baccalaureate has made significant inroads among elite private schools.

The majority of children study in schools run by the State government. These are affiliated to their own State Boards and use textbooks prescribed and prepared by their own state bodies, usually the State Institutes of Education or SCERTs.

Alternate Schools under many names are also run under the SSA. They have textbooks, workbooks, worksheets and TLMs, prepared by SSA/DPEP.

There are lakhs of private, unrecognized, primary schools in all over the country, for pre-school to class V/VIII. The textbooks used in these schools are more often than not low priced, low quality *kunjis* or ‘guides’ Alternate schools under many names are also run under the SSA. They have textbooks, workbooks, worksheets and TLMs prepared by SSA/DPEP.

There are also small primary schools run by several social and religious organizations are not affiliated to any agency.

Then there are National Institute of Open Schools, has its own Board of Examinations, and prepares and prescribes its own books. State Open Schools are run along the same lines as the national open school lines.<sup>1</sup>

## CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK, SYLLABI AND TEXTBOOKS

With the adoption of the 10+2 pattern as recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66), the NCERT developed supporting syllabi and textbooks to be used as models by the states and union territories. Most states excepting the newly formed ones and the Union Territories have their own Examination Boards similar to the CBSE which are known as State Boards. The respective State Directorates along with the SCERTs prepare textbooks, which are then printed by the Textbook Bureaus in States at a highly subsidized price.

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<sup>1</sup> Information from Note submitted by Janaki Rajan, Director, SCERT, New Delhi to the CAGE Committee, Annexure 3.

The NCERT has brought out three sets of syllabi so far: in 1975, 1988, 2002. Although NCERT frames the syllabi, it is the CBSE that *prescribes syllabi*, which are valid for purposes of examination and certification for schools affiliated to CBSE. State Boards, prescribe the syllabi and textbooks for schools affiliated to them. However, private schools do not necessarily follow the Board prescribed syllabi and textbooks till Class VIII.

Non-NCERT, non-CBSE prescribed textbooks constitute the majority of textbooks in use in the country. A detailed account of institutional mechanisms in the States for textbook preparation is given in the next chapter.

There are large numbers of textbooks published by the private sector. Non-government schools are free to choose publications, including those published by the private sector. Some of the elite schools use books produced by private publishers such as Oxford University Press, Sagar Ratna, and Maktaba Jamia.<sup>2</sup> Selection of textbooks from private publishers is dependent on the school, which generally invites publishers to bring the books before a Committee of teachers to decide. Many incentives are offered by publishers to schools, which could range from price cuts, to a percentage of total cost of books supplied being made over to the school.<sup>3</sup> A measure of state patronage for them can be discerned from the fact that seminars and workshops for teachers, held by state bodies are ‘sponsored’ by these publishers.<sup>4</sup> However, the point is that these private publishers cannot be wished away legally. Every publisher has a right to publish, and if parents choose to select their textbooks for their children to read, there is not much that can be done.<sup>5</sup>

The most important issue is with regard to textbooks and related literature used in schools run by religious and social organizations, which have a large outreach and impact. Some schools i.e. Saraswati Shishu Mandirs,<sup>6</sup> Ekal Vidyalays, Pathshalas, Madarsas<sup>7</sup> etc run by respective religious and social organizations follow their own curricula and books. Some of them use this route to promote ideologies that often contradict the basic principles and vision of the Constitution and educational policies.<sup>8</sup> There is no mechanism to regulate the content of the textbooks used by

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<sup>2</sup> Founded by Jamia Millia Islamia, the Jamia Maktaba is a private limited company with the Jamia Millia Islamia having an 80 percent financial stake in the company.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Publishers also offer to underwrite Seminar and other expenses of the schools. This is apart from the usual calendars, diaries, posters, stationery offered free to schools. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> On legal issues with regard to textbooks, see Rajeev Dhavan’s note. Annexure 4

<sup>6</sup> An umbrella organization, Vidya Bharati was founded in 1977, and at that time, it ran 700 schools. In 2003, it had 14,000 schools, 73, 000 teachers and 1.7 million pupils. “In 1991, Vidya Bharati claimed it was running the second largest chain of schools in the country, next only to the government schools”. Information given in Christophe Jaffrelot, ed. *Sangh Parivar A Reader*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 6 and p.199 respectively.

<sup>7</sup> On the number of madarsas in different states see Table 6 in Chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup> On schools and textbooks used in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs, Ekal Vidyalays etc, see Tanika Sarkar, ‘Educating the Children of the Hindu Rashtra: Notes on RSS Schools’ in Christophe Jaffrelot, ed *Sangh Parivar A Reader*; Teesta Setalvad, ‘How Textbooks Teach Prejudice’, *Communalism Combat*, 15 June 2003; Teesta Setalvad, ‘Gujarat: Situating the Saffronisation of Education’ in *The Saffron*

these organizations or to prevent them from publishing and distributing them. They seek recognition neither by the state nor any Examining Board. The Policy of Non-Formal Education (1986) enables any organization to run non-formal centres. If they do not receive state funds, they are not governed by the state. They continue to run their 'centres' with books of their choice. When children are ready, they are registered with the Open School and obtain their certification.<sup>9</sup>

#### SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES

As there is no State level curriculum statement, it is presumed that the syllabi adhere to the core elements of the NCF (which is the expectation of the NCF). No serious scrutiny of the extent of adherence to the core curriculum of state syllabi has been conducted so far.

Textbooks and curricula in schools run by religious and social organizations and schools not aided by the state are not regulated in any form by state agencies. Their adherence to constitutional provisions and educational policies is an issue of major concern and this has been discussed in the Chapter 4 on social content of textbooks.

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*Agenda In Education*, Sahmat, New Delhi, 2001; Nalini Taneja, 'Communalization of Education: Taking Stock Again', *People's Democracy*, No 43, October 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Janaki Rajan's Note submitted to the CAFE Sub-Committee. Annexure 3.

## CHAPTER III

### INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR PREPARATION OF TEXTBOOKS IN THE STATES

Textbooks have always been an integral part of the Indian school education system. As the school education programme acquired a mass character in the post-independence period, the absence of good quality textbooks began to be acutely felt. Yet the period immediately after independence saw no major effort to mass-produce textbooks. As the system expanded, the textbook industry became one of the very profitable fields for investment which also led to a proliferation of low quality, sub-standard and badly produced textbooks. Thus the availability of textbooks at affordable prices for the poor also became an important issue. The Education Commission (1964-66) points out that textbook writing and production did not receive the attention they deserved. The Commission also identified several factors contributing to the problem such as the lack of interest shown by top-ranking scholars, malpractices in the selection and prescription of textbooks, unscrupulous tactics adopted by several publishers, lack of research in the preparation and production of textbooks and the almost total disregard of the need for bringing out ancillary books, such as teachers' guides and supplementary material. It is in this context that many state governments took over the production of textbooks.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the Central Bureau of Textbook Research in 1954 and its subsequent merger in NCERT in 1961 gave a new direction to textbook development and production. The NCERT launched a comprehensive programme of textbook production from the late 1960s. The National Board of School Textbooks in its first meeting in 1969 suggested that the NCERT should work out a general framework in the form of principles and criteria for preparing textbooks for different school subjects, by actively involving State authorities, subject specialists, teachers and other educators.

#### EMERGENCE OF STATE AGENCIES: NCERT, SCERTS AND TEXTBOOK BUREAUS

Efforts to institutionalise textbook preparation and production began with state production of textbooks in the post-independence period. Uttar Pradesh, for instance, was one of the first States to do so. The State Institutes of Education and State Institutes of Science Education in the mid-sixties took up this task. Both structures were integrally part of the State Directorates of Education. NCERT had also begun preparing textbooks at the national level. Particularly with respect to Social Sciences, the writing of history became tied to the elaboration of the nationalist project to build a democratic, liberal, socialist, humanistic vision. Moved by the optimism of the age and the urge to provide the children of new India with a history of India's past, many of the reputed academics were invited to write textbooks when the NCERT was set up in the mid-1960s.

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<sup>1</sup> This section on institutional arrangements and regulatory mechanisms has gained much from a Note prepared by R. Govinda and Mona Sedwal, 'Preparation, Production and Prescription of Textbook for School Education in India', NIEPA. See Annexure 2.

During this time, State governments, faced with the task of providing textbooks in schools, which then were predominantly government run, established Textbook Bureaus and State Boards of Examinations. While the Textbook Bureaus focused on the printing and distribution of textbooks, and the Boards had the task of prescribing syllabi, conducting examinations, the States used several methods for the actual preparation of textual materials.

A few State governments established Textbook Corporations for the production of textbooks. In most States the function of textbook preparation, particularly for primary and upper primary classes, was taken over by SCERTs, which subsumed the SIEs organisationally, as well as functionally. For instance, the Maharashtra Government combined the task of textbook production and related research by the creation of Maharashtra State Board of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research. Based on the recommendations of the NPE 1986 to decentralise curricula and textbook writing, States began to establish SCERTs, either closing down the older SIEs, or amalgamating them with SCERTs. However, there existed a tension with regard to their functioning. While States were prepared to allow the SCERTs to prescribe the function of textbook preparation for primary and upper primary classes, they were reluctant to hand over a similar role to the SCERTs in respect of secondary education.

Textbook preparation at secondary level was assigned either to the wholly State controlled Board of Education, or the State's Directorate of Education. However, neither structure had the professional wherewithal to undertake the academic task of textbook writing, the former being an examining body, and the latter an administrative one. They relied upon 'established' academics chosen by a Committee constituted to choose writers. In effect, the textbook preparation was left to the discretion of handpicked academics. This is not to give the impression that in contrast to the situation as regards secondary education, all was well with regard to primary and middle schools. This does not imply that the tasks, even for primary and middle sections were fully streamlined and that all the SCERTs carried them out systematically. For one, some of the SCERTs, as in case of Northeastern states, came into existence much later and the responsibility for textbook preparation and production in some of them is still quite fluid.

The textbooks for the secondary and higher secondary stages are generally adopted from the NCERT in most of the States. Textbooks at Secondary Stage are not prepared in Delhi as all schools are affiliated to CBSE. CBSE prescribed textbooks are used at Higher Secondary/PUC Stage in Delhi. The Himachal Pradesh Board does not prepare textbooks for classes XI and XII, instead books of NCERT are recommended in the schools. In Haryana also textbooks published by NCERT have been introduced in the state at secondary and Higher Secondary/PUC stage. In Orissa at the secondary stage: (For classes VIII, IX and X) Board of Secondary Education, Orissa – which is an Autonomous Organisation, prepares textbooks. At Higher Secondary Education (for classes XI and XII) State Bureau of Textbook Preparation and Publication, Bhubaneswar is responsible for preparing textbooks. But as already mentioned, very few States directly intervene in private unaided schools with regard to the nature of teaching-learning

material and books being used. Once recognition is given to such private self-financing schools, public examinations are the only link between the schools and the State government authorities.<sup>2</sup>

The role of NCERT as a textbook producer at the central level has expanded enormously with the publication of NCFs and the collaborative arrangement between CBSE and NCERT.

With the huge expansion of the private unaided sector at both elementary and secondary levels, divergence in the use of textbooks by government and private schools has acquired considerable importance as described in the ensuing sections. Given this diversity of textbooks in all types of schools, what goes *into* the textbooks is a matter of national importance and merits the highest attention.

#### TEXTBOOK PREPARATION MECHANISMS FOR SCHOOLS IN THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN THE STATES

What processes do the SCERTs / other agencies adopt in preparing textbooks? If private publishers are involved, how are the books approved and prescribed by the State government bodies? Are private schools free to use any textbook? The CAGE Sub-Committee explored these questions with State agencies through quick questionnaire-based surveys. Eighteen states responded. In addition, the Sub-Committee studied the responses to questionnaires sent out by NIEPA.<sup>3</sup> The Committee has also looked into the state studies series undertaken by NIEPA between 1994-2004. All this information is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Based on these studies plus information available from State reports commissioned by the Committee, State mechanisms can be broadly categorised as:

1. States which relied on the NCERT textbooks, and de facto accepted the presumed institutional mechanisms of the central agency to approve textbooks. Examples are Arunachal Pradesh and Union Territories.
2. States which permit textbook preparation up to class VIII by the centrally funded and controlled DPEP/SSA, and, for the secondary stage, use their own State Boards. In Himachal Pradesh textbooks are prepared by DPEP/SSA and printed by Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education. In Orissa, the responsibility for preparing the textbooks for different streams of education rests with the different organization/institution of the state. At elementary stage, Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT and Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA) Bhubaneswar, prepare textbooks. In Orissa legislative measures have recently been taken for adoption of Language Textbook (Oriya) in English medium schools affiliated to ICSE and CBSE.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

3. States which took on the responsibility of preparing their own textbooks, but entrusted this task to their own, wholly controlled State agencies. States like Karnataka and Gujarat have the Directorate of Textbooks, which is a wing of SCERT. SCERT itself is very strongly State controlled. In Mizoram and West Bengal, the Board of School Education prepares the textbooks for the elementary stage. In Mizoram, the Mizoram Board of School Education Act, 1975 empowers the Board to prescribe, prepare, publish and select textbooks for the various examinations conducted by the Board. Under the Board, the Statutory Committee of Mizoram Board of School Education selects textbook writers and editors for Textbook and Syllabus preparation. In Gujarat, the Gujarat School Textbook Board is the regulatory authority. The GCERT only provides technical support to the Textbook Development Board, which is fully responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of textbooks. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, the SCERT prepares the textbooks, their printing, publication and distribution is done entirely by the Madhya Pradesh State Textbook Corporation.

4. Among the States which permit SCERTs to prepare textbooks up to class VIII, which rely on CBSE/NCERT for the secondary stage are Delhi, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana and of course the Union Territories. In Haryana, the Board of School Education assigns the work of material development to SCERT, which in turn accomplishes the work by organizing workshops with school teachers and subject experts and subject specialists working in SCERT. While SCERT produces/develops textbooks for primary classes for (I-V), classes VI to VIII, textbooks published by NCERT have been adopted by the state. In Delhi, team comprising senior university teachers, professionals from NGO sector, college teachers, SCERT and DIET teacher educators and school teachers prepare the textbooks in a collaborative mode for classes I-VIII. In Rajasthan, textbooks for Class I to VIII are prepared by SCERT approved by State Government and published by the Textbook Board. Before publication, computerized manuscripts of all textbooks in the form of hard copy are presented to the Secretary (Education) and to the Education Minister for approval. Similarly, in the schools run by the State Government or recognized and aided by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh it is compulsory to use only those textbooks, which are approved by the Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Parishad and Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad. But the two Boards (Parishads) of the State Government sometimes only approve a panel of authors and not the precise books, and the schools are free to choose books written by any of the empanelled authors. From class IX to XII this practice is quite often followed.

Institutional structures and mechanisms including legislative measures exist in several States. (Table 3) In Orissa Legislative measures have recently been taken for adoption of Language Textbook (Oriya) in English medium schools affiliated to ICSE and CBSE. In Madhya Pradesh the state government has formed an act Madhya Pradesh Praathamik tatha Madhyamik Shiksha (Pathya Pustako Sambandhi Vyavastha) Adhiniyam 1973 and 1974 which approve the textbooks of the state. These approved books are to be adopted essentially by Government Primary and upper primary schools.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

While in most cases textbooks are printed in State Government establishments, some States use private facilities also for the purpose. In Karnataka, Directorate of Textbooks as a wing of DSERT prepares all the textbooks for standards I to X. After preparation, 60 percent of the textbooks are given for printing to the government press and 40 percent are printed by private printers/publishers. Textbooks from I to X standards are prepared by the Directorate of Textbooks, Karnataka. Management of printing and publication is an important issue as it involves large amounts of investment, and substantial profit making wherever private publishers are involved.

Gujarat follows a Three Tier try out system in three phases before introducing the textbooks. Try out: Phase I involves tryout in 400 randomly selected primary schools; Try out: Phase II involves try out in selected schools of low literacy rate districts; and Phase-III involves implementation of the modified Textbooks all over the state. In West Bengal also a Periodic Try out Process is adopted before finalisation of the manuscripts. In Mizoram, the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) as a first step examines the curriculum and syllabi of other boards and NCERT and formulates a suitable curriculum and syllabi for the Mizoram State. Editors are also appointed to edit the textbooks written by the local experts. Mizoram Board of School Education regulates textbooks publication through private publishers. State Board prints all the textbooks as the Board is empowered by MBSE Act, 1975 which is passed by the Mizoram Legislative Assembly.

In Karnataka, textbook committees are formed for every subject/class consisting of subject experts and classroom teachers. The manuscripts prepared are scrutinised by another group of experts and introduced for one year in selected blocks of the state. The textbooks are again revised based on the feedback and introduced in the entire state.

The Madhya Pradesh State Board affiliated schools, both government and private, are all supposed to use only the books produced by the State Government Education Department i.e. developed by the Madhya Pradesh SCERT and printed by the Madhya Pradesh State Textbook Corporation. The Madhya Pradesh Textbook Act mandates this. Even the books or magazines provided to the libraries are supposed to be approved by the State Government. The mechanism of textbook writing is done in a workshop mode. Resource persons for these workshops are identified from various fields of education – school teachers, subject experts, persons from RIE, DIETs, CTEs and IASE and retired persons. A textbook standing committee approves the textbooks and the state government notifies the approved textbooks.

In Bihar the institutional mechanisms for regulating school education are fully in place but there is a total lack of coordination between agencies entrusted with the preparation and publication of textbooks in Bihar. This is largely because of the failure of the SCERT to carry out its responsibility with regard to the production of textbooks owing to an absence of coordination between the different organizations involved in the supervision and preparation of books. They are neither well organized nor adequately prepared to carry out this work. The inefficiency of government departments has led directly to the emergence of parallel textbook centres in the state weakening the existing institutions, to

a point where there is hardly any publication of textbooks by government institutions, and the textbooks, which are published, do not reach to the student. As a result, the responsibility for production of books has gone out of the hands of the government. For all practical purposes the production and distribution of textbooks is happening outside the state structures. Even though they are supposed to use textbooks produced by the government, the private schools are not doing so because government agencies have been not been able to cater to the huge requirement of textbooks for schools in Bihar. Shortages and delays in production have thus legitimised the production of the textbooks by private organizations. There is very little attempt to remedy the complete mismanagement in the preparation and production of textbooks in the political as well as administrative spheres.<sup>5</sup>

Very few States approve textbooks written and produced by other individuals or organizations. Even in the States where such a provision exists, it is done only after the books are examined first by a group of experts in a workshop and the opinion is taken to the State Level Textbook and Syllabus Committee for final perusal and approval. It is only in the States of Delhi, Haryana, West Bengal, Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh that private unaided schools are free to adopt textbooks of their choice though there is no particular procedure for regulating adoption of books. In all other States the schools have to adopt the State approved textbooks. But, to some extent, this prescription is only notional as it is linked to the syllabus prescribed for the final board examination. Beyond the use of the State prescribed textbooks, private unaided schools are free to adopt additional or supplementary books.

#### MECHANISMS FOR TEXTBOOKS USED BY SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM ?

The non-government schools are of wide variety. Some are run by private managements, which have a chain of schools. These chains are sometimes city-wide or state-wide and sometimes country-wide. Besides, there are schools run by various religious and social organizations. Some schools are run by Christian missionary groups of different denominations. Then there are madarsas run by different Muslim councils or groups and there are Saraswati Shishu Mandirs run by Vidya Bharati, the education wing of RSS. This variety is made even more complex by those chains of schools, which focus on a particular language or subject, like Sanskrit Pathshalas. The method of selecting textbooks in these schools is as varied as their management. Those schools, which fall under any council or board or trust, choose the books as per the directions of the latter. But these councils/boards/trusts do not have a uniform method. Some of them prescribe specific books for various subjects whereas some others just adopt the government-approved books and yet some others choose a combination of the two, that is, they adopt government approved books for some subjects but for other subjects they prescribe specific books of their choice. Some boards/council do not prescribe to schools any specific books but give them a syllabus or curriculum framework in the form of guidelines and the school principals, in consultation with teachers, decide upon the prescription of textbooks for their respective schools. There are several chains of schools

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<sup>5</sup> Bihar Report, Annexure 1.

run by private trusts, which adopt government approved books. Vidya Bharati/ Saraswati Shishu Mandirs, Darul Ulum Deoband, Nadvatul Ulema, etc. not only prescribe specific books for their schools, they also publish them. Deeni Taleemi Council prescribes and publishes some specific books, mainly for religious education, but for the other subjects it prescribes the books approved by Uttar Pradesh Basic Shiksha Parishad and Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad. The Council of Anglo-Indian Schools provides a curriculum and leaves the choice of textbooks to the schools supported by it.

There is hardly any regulation or regulatory mechanism for the textbooks and textual materials used in schools outside the government system.<sup>6</sup>

In all the states, except Gujarat, non-government schools have private publishers providing teaching and learning aids for teachers and students. (Table 4) There is a flourishing private industry that thrives on the prescribed textbooks of the Centre and state. Textbooks prepared by private publishers range all the way from being shadow books of the NCERT/States books, to *kunjis*, workbooks, and guidebooks. Private publishers visit the schools with their books, teachers judge the books and on the basis of consensus books are selected. Private publishers informally visit the faculty members and inform them about the books, place specimen copies before them and request them to suggest books to the students. Students generally for examination purposes purchase these books.<sup>7</sup>

In actual practice, many private schools use books published by private agencies, either as supplementary materials or even as substitutes. These books have not gone through any process of government approval. Many schools use private books along with the state government textbooks, others use them as substitutes, while still others use private publishers books only where government textbooks are not available for that particular subject at that level – for example environment studies for classes I and II or Moral Science, General Knowledge, drawing etc.

Supplementary workbooks and *kunjis* are freely available as are dictionaries, question banks, answer banks, guess papers, printed by a host of publishers from Nai Sadak, which has emerged as a parallel textbook centre. (Table 5) These *kunjis*/supplementary workbooks are available on sale for each of these books, which may or may not be prescribed by the school, but publishers market these through the tuition routes.<sup>8</sup> Teachers are also known to unofficially nudge children to a particular set of *kunjis*. Some of these books are at least twice as expensive as the government textbooks. There is a flourishing market for *kunjis* in the States as well. These are generally of poor quality, unregulated and expensive. In Maharashtra, for instance, while the prescribed Social Sciences textbooks in History, Geography, and Civics separately, are priced between Rs. 10-12 each, the *kunjis* cost Rs. 30-40 each. The majority of children buy both. This publishing begins from class VI, but of late, there are *kunjis* from class IV.

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<sup>6</sup> Some of this information is based on responses of SCERTs, SIEs, SIETs to the Questionnaire sent by the CABA Sub-Committee to elicit information on regulatory mechanisms in the States, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Information from Janaki Rajan's Note Submitted to the CABA Committee, Annexure 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Some schools run by religious and social organizations such as Vidya Bharati schools are affiliated to the CBSE or their local State Boards. For instance, in Rajasthan, the school's authorities say that they recommend NCERT or SCERT books to the students. Value education books are either written by some of the authors who have been identified by the parental organizations of the schools like DAV College management Committee, Delhi, Bharatiya Vidya Samiti, Rajasthan, Vidya Bharti Sanskriti Shiksha Sansthan, and Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Mumbai. School's authorities also argue that books of private publishers, which they suggest or recommend to the students, are based upon decisions taken by faculty members.

There are a large numbers of madarasas all over India. (Table 6) At present there are official Boards of Madarsa Education in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. A large number of madarasas come within their jurisdiction and subsist on government funds. But in the rest of the country they are being run on private charity. The NCERT has no provision for a Board administering the curriculum of madarasas in India. State governments like Uttar Pradesh do appoint such boards, but Delhi, for instance, does not.<sup>9</sup>

Delhi contains around 40 madarasas, of which a handful, like Rabiya Madarsa, is open to girls.<sup>10</sup> There are two types of madarasas, those that follow the NCERT syllabus (Urdu medium) and those teaching only *manqulat* (religious education).

Madarasas following the NCERT syllabus have to teach with translations of English textbooks.<sup>11</sup> Those teaching religious education follow a curriculum dating back to the eighteenth century. It includes the Quran, *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *Sarf* and *Naheu* (Arabic Literature and Grammar) and *Tarikh* (history from the Prophet to *Khilafat-I-Rashida*, 610-661 CE). As the qualifications provided by these madarasas are not recognized elsewhere, they prepare students only to become teachers themselves in these schools or to become Imams, Moazzins, Khatibs, Qazis and Muftis.<sup>12</sup>

### SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES

It is important to recognise that the States have come a long way in improving the practices related to printing and production of textbooks. But there is no proper direction in the policies and practices related to preparation and use of textbooks in schools. All the states have established mechanisms for the selection, publication and approval of textual materials. But the mechanisms and processes vary from state to state. It's a mixed picture with regard to which body will approve the textbooks. Almost every state has through legislation created state agencies/bodies for syllabus preparation and textbooks.

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<sup>9</sup> Report on Delhi Madarasas. Annexure 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.

What is important to note is that these processes and mechanisms are all rather mechanically followed by the State agencies without much regard for the substance and content of textbooks. What is of real concern is that there is no way of assessing whether the textbooks actually adhere to the aims of education policy. Also there appears to be very little application of mind with regard to the selection of material. The State Boards or SCERTs appoint expert committees to prepare the curriculum. The processes are all in place but the content is not of good quality or even always agreeable. This is partly because of the overwhelming emphasis on form with very little attention being devoted to content of textbooks and supplementary materials.

Another disturbing fact is that the free space permitted in the system is often abused for partisan purposes by sectarian organisations and schools affiliated to them. Such organisations exploit the fact of the palpable lack of critical scrutiny of the substance to smuggle in textual materials that dangerously undermine the aims of education and even vitiate the constitutional framework.

It appears necessary to issue a set of national guidelines to ensure that the core reading and learning material made available to children and teachers in schools scrupulously conform to constitutional values and educational policies and ideals. However it must continue to be the responsibility of State governments to ensure that they are not flouted by cultural and social organizations which have established their schools and use privately published books within the State or by private educational establishments.

## APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire sent by the CAGE Committee on Textbook Preparation to SCERTs / SIEs/SIETs

## DETAILS OF TEXTBOOK PREPARATION – GOVERNMENT

STAGE	Agency that prepares the books	Body which approves	Examination Board
Primary			
Middle			
Secondary			
Sr. Secondary			

## PRIVATE-UNAIDED SCHOOLS

Stage	Whether government has approved list of publishers in use by pvt. schools
Primary	Yes/No
Middle	Yes/No
Secondary	Yes/No
Sr. Secondary	Yes/No

If yes, give details of publishers whose books are in use  
Government Regulatory Mechanisms if any, to approve private publishers' textbooks in private schools

Whether 'kunjis', 'guides', 'question banks' for teachers and students are prepared by state government or its agencies? If yes, please list them:

- i. Primary level
- ii. Middle level
- iii. Secondary level

Whether '*kunjis*', 'guides', 'question banks' for teachers and students available from private publishers?

List five most popular publications:

## APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire for on Textbook Preparation and Regulation sent by NIEPA, 2005

Textbooks at Elementary Stage

1. What is the mechanism for preparing the textbooks in your State at the following levels:
2. Does State Bodies like SCERT/Text Board/Corporation produce all the textbooks required for the schools or do they approve Textbooks written and produced by other individual or organization? If yes, what is the proportion of the books published by Government and Private publishers in such schools (approximately)?
3. If the State approves Textbooks written and produced by other individual or organization what is the procedure adopted for its approval?
4. How are the Government prescribed Textbooks written? Describe the process adopted for it?
5. Are private unaided schools free to adopt Textbooks of their choice? Is there any procedure to regulate adoption of such Textbooks?
6. What are the existing regulatory structures and mechanisms including legislative measures in your State/Union Territory regarding use of textbooks in Government, private aided and private unaided schools?

Textbooks at Secondary Stage

1. What is the mechanism for preparing the textbooks in your State at the following levels:
2. Does State Bodies like SCERT/Text Board/Corporation produce all the textbooks required for the schools or do they approve Textbooks written and produced by other individual or organization? If yes, what is the proportion of the books published by Government and Private publishers in such schools (approximately)?
3. If the State approves Textbooks written and produced by other individual or organization what is the procedure adopted for its approval?
4. How are the Government prescribed Textbooks written? Describe the process adopted for it?

5. Are private unaided schools free to adopt Textbooks of their choice? Is there any procedure to regulate adoption of such Textbooks?
6. What are the existing regulatory structures and mechanisms including legislative measures in your State/Union Territory regarding use of textbooks in Government, private aided and private unaided schools?

#### Textbooks at Higher Secondary/PUC Stage

1. What is the mechanism for preparing the textbooks in your State at the following levels:
2. Does State Bodies like SCERT/Text Board/Corporation produce all the textbooks required for the schools or do they approve Textbooks written and produced by other individual or organization? If yes, what is the proportion of the books published by Government and Private publishers in such schools (approximately)?
3. If the State approves Textbooks written and produced by other individual or organization what is the procedure adopted for its approval?
4. How are the Government prescribed Textbooks written? Describe the process adopted for it?
5. Are private unaided schools free to adopt Textbooks of their choice? Is there any procedure to regulate adoption of such Textbooks?
6. What are the existing regulatory structures and mechanisms including legislative measures in your State/Union Territory regarding use of textbooks in Government, private aided and private unaided schools?

## APPENDIX 3

## List of State Responding to the NIEPA Questionnaire

	Elementary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
Andhra Pradesh	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arunachal Pradesh	Yes		
Chandigarh	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chattisgarh	Yes		
Delhi	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gujarat	Yes	Yes	
Haryana	Yes	Yes	Yes
Himachal Pradesh	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karnataka	Yes	Yes	
Madhya Pradesh	Yes		
Maharashtra	Yes		
Mizoram	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nagaland	Yes		
Orissa	Yes		
Rajasthan	Yes		
Uttar Pradesh	Yes	Yes	
West Bengal	Yes		

Source: Responses to Questionnaire sent by NIEPA, 2005

TABLE 1

## Textbook Preparation by Government Agencies

S. No.	STATE	DEPARTMENT	MECHANISM	STAGES			
				Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT. DPEP	SCERT. DPEP	SCERT	NA
			Body which approves the books	CDSE	CDSE	CDSE	NA
			Examination Board	School Level	DCEB	DGE	NA
2	ASSAM	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT	SCERT	BSEA	AHSEC
			Body which approves the books	SEC.EDU	SEC.ED U	BSEA	AHSEC
			Examination Board	SCERT	SCERT	BSEA	AHSEC
3	ASSAM (J)	SIE		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT	SCERT	SEBA	AHSEC
			Body which approves the books	Dept of Edu.	Govt of Assam	NA	NA
			Examination Board	Eva.Board Dist.Level	Eva Board Dist Level	SEBA	AHSEC
4	CHENNAI	TER&T		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	DEE&DSE &DTERT	DEE&D SE&DT ERT	DSE & DMS	DSE & DMS
			Body which approves the books	DSE and Government	DSE and Government	DSE and Government	NA
			Examination Board	State Board	State Board	State Board	State Board
5	CHHATTISGARH	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT	SCERT	Board of Sec. Edu.	Board of Sec. Edu.
			Body which approves the books	Government	Government	NA	NA
			Examination Board	District Primary Board	Divisional Middle Board	Board of Sec. Edu.	Board of Sec. Edu.

6	DELHI	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT	SCERT	NCERT	NCERT
			Body which approves the books	DEPT.OF EDU	DEPT.O F EDU	CBSE	CBSE
			Examination Board	NA	NA	CBSE	CBSE
7	GUJARAT	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	GCERT & GSTB	GCERT	GSTB	GSTB
			Body which approves the books	GCERT & GSTB	GCERT	Sec.Edu. Board	Sec.Edu. Board
			Examination Board	DPEO	DPEO	SSC Board	HSC Board
8	HIMACHAL PRADESH	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT/SS A-DPEP	SCERT	SCERT	NCERT/SCE RT
			Body which approves the books	GOVT. OF HP	GOVT. OF HP	GOVT.OF HP	GOVT.OF HP
			Examination Board	HP BOARD	HP BOARD	HP BOARD	HP BOARD
9	KARANATAKA	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	DSERT	DSERT	DSERT	DIR.PRE.UNI V.EDU
			Body which approves the books	DSERT	DSERT	DSERT	DIR.PRE.UNI V.EDU
			Examination Board	SCHOOL LEVEL	SCHOO L LEVEL	SSLC BOARD	DIR.PRE.UNI V.EDU
10	KERALA	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SCERT	DNA	NA	SCERT&NC ERT Textbooks
			Body which approves the books	State Curriculum Committee	NA	NA	NA
			Examination Board	Kerala Board	NA	NA	NA
11	MAHARASHTRA	SCERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	MSBTBP& CR AND TBB	MSBTB P&CR AND TBB	MSBS &HSE	MSBS &HSE
			Body which approves the books	MSBTBP& CR AND TBB	MSBTB P&CR AND TBB	MSBS &HSE	MSBS &HSE
			Examination Board	MSBTBP& CR AND TBB	MSBTB P&CR AND	MSBS &HSE	MSBS &HSE

					TBB		
12	RAJASTHAN	SIERT		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	SIERT	SIERT	BSER	BSER
			Body which approves the books	Govt of Rajasthan	Govt of Rajasthan	BSER	BSER
			Examination Board	NA	NA	BSER	BSER
13	WEST BENGAL	NA		Primary	Middle	Secondary	Sr.Secondary
			Agency that prepares the books	W.B.B.P.E	NA	NA	NA
			Body which approves the books	W.B.B.P.E	NA	NA	NA
			Examination Board	CCE	NA	NA	NA

Source: Responses to Questionnaire sent by the CABE Committee, 2005

TABLE 2

Preparation, Publication and Printing of Textbooks  
for School Education in India

	State	Textbooks Preparation	Textbooks Publishing Agency	Details	Year of Information
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Curriculum and Syllabus prescribed by Board of Secondary Education	Andhra Pradesh Textbook Press	Classes I-X Distribution also done by Textbook Press	1998
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	CBSE syllabus is followed. Textbooks published by NCERT and CBSE for classes I-XII and recommended by CBSE are followed.	NCERT has prepared textbooks for classes I-III.	Textbooks are procured by Directorate of Public Instruction.	1994
3.	Assam	Textbook Corporation	Different Private Publishers	Primary and Secondary Distribution is done by Central Store and Zonal Sale depots	1999
4.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Textbooks for classes I-XII in English Hindi are procured from NCERT CBSE and in Telgu, Tamil and Bengali from Boards of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.	So far Textbook Cell is responsible for procurement and distribution of textbooks. Textbook Bureau is responsible has been set up for procurement and distribution. Some primary textbooks are locally developed by SIE.		1995
5.	Bihar	State Textbook Committee with the help of SCERT.	The Bihar State Textbook Publishing Corporation established in 1966.	For classes I-XII 1. Adopts nationalized textbooks from NCERT 2. Receives manuscript from individual writers Also	1999
6.	Chandigarh	Not Available			
7.	Delhi	Delhi Bureau of Textbooks	Some books of elementary and secondary		2000
8.	Dadar Nagar	Department of			1995

	State	Textbooks Preparation	Textbooks Publishing Agency	Details	Year of Information
	Haveli	Education procures books for all classes from Gujarat			
9.	Daman & Diu	Textbooks for all classes are procured from Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board.			2000
10.	Goa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Till 1990s the state adopted syllabus and textbooks from Maharashtra Board of Secondary and Hr. Secondary Education.</li> <li>2. Textbooks are developed by State Institute of Education for classes I-VI</li> <li>3. Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary for classes VII-XII.</li> </ol>	<p>Printing and distribution of textbooks by Maharashtra Textbook Bureau on behalf of SIE,Goa.</p> <p>Printing and distribution for Secondary Education by Board itself</p>		1994
11.	Gujarat	The School Textbook Board	The School Textbook Board	For primary and secondary education Material is prepared by subject experts. Distribution through authorized dealers.	2001
12.	Haryana	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department of Education (I-VIII)</li> <li>2. Board of School Education (IX-XII)</li> <li>3. SCERT is also involved.</li> </ol>	Textbook Printing Press under Controller of Printing and Stationery.	Writers are also identified and asked to prepare textbooks on payment basis. Board also prescribes books published by CBSE and NCERT.	1994
13.	Himachal Pradesh	State adopted CBSE syllabus and NCERT Textbooks for Classes I-XII	Outright purchase form SCERT		1997
14.	Jammu & Kashmir	Information not Available			
15.	Karnataka	Textbook Wing of DSERT decides syllabi for classes-X.	Publication and printing of textbooks is done	The Karnataka Cooperative Consumer Federation	1994

	State	Textbooks Preparation	Textbooks Publishing Agency	Details	Year of Information
		Textbooks are prepared by Textbook Committees	by the Government Textbook Press, Mysore. These are supplied to the district textbook depots at the district level that are under Deputy. Director of Education at the district level.	is responsible for distribution. Taluk Agricultural Producer and Marketing Societies receive textbooks from store and distribute to schools.	
16.	Kerala	State Institute of Education	Textbook wing of General Education Department	Textbooks are prepared by selected experts form Department of Education, universities, affiliated colleges and schools.	1994
17	Lakshadweep	Textbooks for classes I-IV are prepared and printed at the territory level. Textbooks for other higher classes are purchased from kerala.			1995
18.	Madhya Pradesh	State Institute of Education through Textbook Standing Committee	Textbook Corporation	For School Education classes I-XII	1994
19.	Maharashtra	Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research established in 1967.	Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research	Preparation, editing, printing and publication of books from primary to Secondary. Distributed thorough cooperative stores.	2002
20.	Meghalaya	Textbooks are written and prepared by private publishers and approved by Meghalaya Board of Secondary Education.	Private publishers are responsible for printing and distribution of textbooks. NCERT textbooks are also prescribed. Private publishers obtain the copywrite for publishing NCERT books.	For classes I-XII	2000
21.	Manipur	SCERT prepare and publish textbooks for primary education and arranges			2000

	State	Textbooks Preparation	Textbooks Publishing Agency	Details	Year of Information
		textbooks for upper primary classes with the help of Directorate of Education			
22.	Mizoram	Mizoram Board of School Education prepares and publishes the textbooks.	Textbooks are printed in the local printing press and distributed to the booksellers.		1994
23.	Nagaland	Textbooks upto class VIII is prepared by SCERT	Printing and production by private publishers with the approval of Directorate of Education.		1994
24.	Orissa	Directorate of Teacher Education and SCERT for books at elementary level and Board of Secondary Education, Orissa	Printing by Textbook Production and Marketing Press of the Department of School and Mass Education.		2000
25.	Pondicherry	Textbooks for all classes are procured from neighbouring states particularly from Tamil Nadu.			2000
26.	Punjab	Textbooks for classes I-XII are the sole responsibility of the Branch for Academic Planning and Evaluation of the Punjab School Education Board.	Unit of Printing and Distribution of the Board.	Books produced by private publishers and approved by a Committee of Subject Experts.	1994
27.	Rajasthan	Planning and preparation of textbooks by State Institute of Educational Research and Training for classes I-VIII. For sec. classes, Board of Sec. Education Rajasthan take the responsibility of preparation and distribution of textbooks.	Management of production, printing and distribution of textbooks by Rajasthan State Textbook Board for classes I-VIII.		1996
28.	Sikkim	Textbooks for	Textbook unit is		1995

	State	Textbooks Preparation	Textbooks Publishing Agency	Details	Year of Information
		primary education by State Institute of Education. For classes VI, VII and VIII are prescribed from the wide range of publications available from different publishers. For classes IX to XII the books are suggested by CBSE.	responsible for selecting, procuring and distributing textbooks.		
29.	Tamil Nadu	Tamil Nadu Textbook Society is responsible for planning and preparation of textbooks for classes I-XII.	Supply of textbooks for classes I-VIII is done by Textbook Society.		2001
30.	Tripura	State Institute of Education prepares and publishes the books for primary classes. For classes VI-VIII preparation and publication of books are managed by State Advisory Board.			1996
31.	Uttar Pradesh	Office of the Pathya Pustak Adhikari for books at elementary level and at secondary level by the Textbook Nationalization Unit of the Board of High School and Intermediate Education.	Board of writers, educationists, subject specialist and teachers are involved in the process of preparation of manuscript. Final manuscript is given to a printer of repute for model copy and model copy is given to other printers and publishers for publication		1999
32.	West Bengal	West Bengal Board of Primary Education with the help of State Council of Educational Research			2001

	State	Textbooks Preparation	Textbooks Publishing Agency	Details	Year of Information
		and Training for primary classes. For secondary and higher secondary Board of Secondary Education and Council of Higher Secondary Education.			

Note: Information compiled by Dr. R.S. Tyagi, NIEPA based on Survey of Educational Administration for various States published by NIEPA, New Delhi. These surveys were undertaken by NIEPA between 1994 to 2004.

TABLE 3

## Legal Bases for the School Education in the States

Sr.No.	STATES	LEGAL BASES
1	ASSAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assam Secondary Education Act, 1961</li> <li>• Assam Elementary Education Provincial Act 1974</li> <li>• Assam Secondary Education. Provincial Act 1977</li> <li>• Assam Higher Secondary Education Act, 1984</li> <li>• Middle English and High School Rules,79</li> </ul>
2	ARUNANCHAL PRADESH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIA Rules and Notifications only</li> </ul>
3	BIHAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bihar Education Code, 1961</li> <li>• Bihar Non-Governmental Elementary Schools Taking Over Act, 1976</li> <li>• Conversion of Primary Schools to Government schools-GO, 1976</li> </ul>
4	CHANDIGARH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punjab Education Code, 1955</li> <li>• Punjab Pvt Registered Aided School Act, 1969</li> </ul>
5	GOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant in Aid Code</li> </ul>
6	GUJARAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bombay Primary Education Act, 1949</li> <li>• Conversion of Primary Schools to Government Grant in Aid Code, 1964</li> <li>• Gujarat Secondary Education Act 1972</li> </ul>
7	HARYANA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punjab Primary Education Act, 1960</li> <li>• Board of School Education Act, 1969</li> <li>• Haryana Aided Schools Act, 1971, 1974</li> <li>• Haryana Education Code,1978</li> </ul>
8	HIMACHAL PRADESH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HP Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1953</li> <li>• HP Board of School Education Act,1968</li> <li>• HP Education Code, 1985</li> </ul>
9	KERALA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerala Education Act, 1958,1987</li> <li>• Rules for Anglo Indian Schools,1974</li> <li>• Kerala Education Rules for Aided Schools, 1959</li> </ul>
10	LAKSHDEEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Code, 1979</li> </ul>
11	MAHARASHTRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maharashtra ZP and Panchayat Samithis Act, 1961</li> <li>• Maharashtra Secondary Education Code 1960</li> <li>• Maharashtra Secondary Education Board Act, 1965</li> </ul>
12	MEGHALAYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meghalaya Board of school Education Act, 1973</li> <li>• Meghalaya School Education, Act 1981</li> <li>• Meghalaya Board of Primary Education Act, 1988</li> </ul>

13	ORISSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orissa Education Code</li> <li>• Orissa Education Act, 1969</li> <li>• Orissa Municipal Act, 1950</li> <li>• Orissa Rules for Pvt. Education, 1988</li> <li>• Orissa Secondary Education Act, 1979</li> <li>• Orissa Higher Secondary Education Act, 1982</li> </ul>
14	PUNJAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punjab Education Code, 1955</li> <li>• Punjab Primary Education Act, 1960</li> <li>• Punjab School Education Board Act, 1969</li> </ul>
15	RAJASTHAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Code of Rajasthan, 1957</li> <li>• Rajasthan Secondary Education Act, 1957</li> <li>• Rajasthan non-government institutions Act, 1994</li> <li>• Rajasthan GIA Rules</li> </ul>
16	SIKKIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sikkim Education Bill</li> </ul>
17	TAMIL NADU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TN Elementary Education Act 1920</li> <li>• Municipal &amp; Panchayat Act, GIA Code, 1956</li> <li>• TN Recognize Private Schools Act, 74,75</li> <li>• TN Pvt. Education Institutional Act, regulation, 1966</li> <li>• TN Compulsory Elementary Education Act, 1994</li> </ul>
18	TRIPURA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tripura Education Institution Act, 1973</li> <li>• Tripura Board of Secondary Education Act, 1973</li> <li>• Tripura Board of Secondary Education Rules, 1982</li> </ul>
19	UTTAR PRADESH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UP Intermediate Education Act, 1923</li> <li>• UP Basic Education Act, 1972</li> <li>• UP Course Books Act, 1979</li> <li>• Education Code of UP</li> </ul>
20	WEST BENGAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WB Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963</li> <li>• WB Council of Higher Secondary Education Act, 1975</li> <li>• WB Madrasa Education Act, 1994</li> </ul>

SOURCE: *Educational Administration in States*, NIEPA, New Delhi, 1994-2004.

TABLE 4

## Supplementary Materials Provided by Government to Students and Teachers

S.NO	STATE	STAGES	BOOK PUB. (Govt. approved)	AIDS (GOVT.)	DETAILS OF AIDS (GOVT.)	AIDS (NGO)	DETAILS OF AIDS (NGO)
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	Primary	NA	NA		YES	
		Middle	NA	DCEB	Kunjis, guides (VII to X Std.) by District Common Examination Board	YES	
		Secondary	NA	DCEB	Kunjis, guides (VII to X Std.) by District Common Examination Board	YES	
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA			
2	ASSAM	Primary	NA	SCERT	TEACHERS HANDBOOK, MODEL QUE.	YES	NA
		Middle	NA	SCERT	EVALUATION TOOLS	YES	NA
		Secondary	NA	BSEA	HANDBOOK/Q.BANK	YES	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA			YES	NA
3	ASSAM (Jorhat) (SIE)	Primary	NA	SCERT	TEACHERS' HB & LIST (SCERT)	NA	
		Middle	NA	NA		NA	
		Secondary	NA	NA		YES	Q.B&Gudi es. SEC.& SR. SEC.
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA		YES	
4	CHENNAI	Primary	NA	NA		YES	
		Middle	NA	NA		YES	
		Secondary	NA	NA	MQ & QB (10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> , Under PTA)	YES	
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA			
5	CHHATISGARH	Primary	NA	NA		YES	
		Middle	NA	NA		YES	
		Secondary	BSE	BSE		YES	
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA		YES	
6	DELHI	Primary	MBD, GOLDEN SERIES	ABD MDH PUB.		YES	ABD,MDH PUB.
		Middle	JPH, CP DIGEST,	ABD MDH PUB.		YES	ABD,MDH PUB.
		Secondary	DIAMOND, NEELAM PUB.	ABD MDH PUB.	CBSE AND DoE.	YES	ABD,MDH PUB.
		Sr. secondary	KUNJIS, NANDLAL PUB.				
7	GUJARAT	Primary	NA	NA		NA	

		Middle	NA	NA		NA	
		Secondary	NA	NA		NA	
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA		NA	
8	HIMACHAL PRADESH	Primary	MBD, DELUXE, NEELAM	NA		YES	
		Middle	MBD, DELUXE, NEELAM	NA		YES	
		Secondary	MBD, DELUXE, NEELAM	NA		YES	
		Sr. secondary		NA		YES	
9	KARNATAKA	Primary	NA	NA		YES	GUIDES
		Middle	NA	NA		YES	
		Secondary	NA	SSLC BOARD	Q.B. BY SSLC BOARD	YES	
		Sr. secondary	NA			YES	
10	KERALA	Primary			Teacher Handbooks are developed		
		Middle					
		Secondary			Teacher Handbooks are developed and source books are also prepared. QB is prepared for students of Standard X		
		Sr. secondary					
11	MAHARASHTRA	Primary	NA	TBB	Only HB (primary & middle level) by Text Book Bureau	YES	
		Middle	NA	TBB	Only HB (primary & middle level) by Text Book Bureau	YES	
		Secondary	NA	BOARD	Q.B. (Sec. Level) by Board	YES	
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA			
12	RAJASTHAN	Primary	NA	NA		YES	
		Middle	NA	NA		YES	
		Secondary	NA	NA		YES	
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA		YES	
13	WEST BENGAL	Primary	NA	State Board		NO	NA
		Middle	NA	NA		NO	NA
		Secondary	NA	NA		NO	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA	NA		NO	NA

Source: Responses to CABE Committee Questionnaire, 2005

TABLE 5

## Preparation of Textbooks: Private Unaided Schools

S.No.	STATE	STAGES	MECHANISM
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
2	ASSAM	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
3	ASSAM (Jorhat)	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
4	CHENNAI	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
5	CHHATISGARH	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
6	DELHI	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
7	GUJARAT	Primary	NA

		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
8	HIMACHAL PRADESH	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
9	KARNATAKA	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
10	KERALA	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
11	MAHARASHTRA	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	YES
12	RAJASTHAN	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA
13	WEST BENGAL	Primary	NA
		Middle	NA
		Secondary	NA
		Sr. secondary	NA

Source: Responses to Cabe Committee Questionnaire, 2005

TABLE 6

## Madarsas in India

S.No.	State	Number of recognized Madarsa / Maktab	Number of Madarsa / Maktab supported under SSA	Number of Madarsa / Maktab (which may not be registered / recognised) supported under SSA as EGS / AIE interventions.
1	Andaman & Nicobar Island	0	0	0
2	Andhra Pradesh	103	0	0
3	Assam	384	395	588
4	Bihar	3577	882	0
5	Delhi	0	0	40
6	Gujarat	1050	0	0
7	Haryana	0	0	30
8	Jharkhand	173		
9	Karnataka	323	0	0
10	Kerala	42	0	0
11	Madhya Pradesh	4472	3280	0
12	Maharashtra	0	0	0
13	Pondicherry	0	0	0
14	Rajasthan	1570	747+256	261
15	Tamilnadu	2	0	0
16	Uttar Pradesh	997	291	706
17	Uttaranchal	92	0	23
18	West Bengal	508	508	
19	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0
20	Himachal Pradesh	8	8	67
21	Orissa	887	500	123
22	Punjab	0	0	14
23	Sikkim	0	0	1
24	Tripura	41	0	0
	Grand Total	14229	6867	2588

Source: Information provided by MHRD, 2005

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS AND PARALLEL TEXTBOOKS

It is axiomatic that all school curriculum frameworks and thereby textbooks must draw solely from a framework of which the pillars are the Indian Constitution and the national policy on education. Schools, institutions and individuals involved in the preparation of textual material must have as a strong reference point this postulate -installing an awareness of Constitutional rights and values. Ensuring an emphasis on the egalitarian content of citizenship and inculcating a consciousness of the cultural diversity underpinning national identity is therefore a useful template on which to assess textbooks. For example, if textbooks which should have as their primary aim the building of harmony and unity between people are found instead to have the impact of insidiously polarising young people, creating antagonism and friction among them, based on unsubstantiated and politically motivated arguments, designed to perpetuate social, economic and gender oppression, or to enhance the hegemony of a particular identity whether relating to region, caste, religion or language, these must be unhesitatingly weeded out of the reckoning. Such books, which are not based on rigorous research and are in effect part of an ideologically-motivated political or cultural project must be rejected as being violative of the basic tenets of the Constitution and educational policies. There is a need to identify the sources of these distortions.

Though not always easy to locate the sources in some cases, deviations occur because of the ideological predilections of the ruling establishment. More often distortions arise from the failure to ensure a rigorous and scientific scrutiny of the process of the gathering and assembling of facts that are set down in curricula and textbooks. Given that this textual material is intended for use in schools that are obliged to function in the secular and culturally pluralist environment mandated by the Indian Constitution, there is a need to make sure that all the textual material is as factually verifiable as possible and that it reflects the range of cultural and social identities that underlie citizenship of this republic. In this context, it is important and necessary that the template, which should be used to judge the utility of curricula and textbooks, is of how much the spirit of inclusiveness and the truth of Indian cultural heterogeneity permeate their content. There can be no escaping of the fact that Indian education would have to meticulously and visibly shake off any tendency to allow the dominance of any communal impulse. It should not allow the overwhelming presence of the majority cultures and their own group preferences to submerge and further marginalise the disadvantaged and marginal communities. This would result in a dangerous erosion of pluralism, diversity and syncretism -principles critical for egalitarian citizenship and common nationhood embedded in our Constitution. Few would quarrel with the notion that there are many ways of presenting the facts and that it is legitimate to contest them, and in fact necessary to do so in order to sharpen minds, but it must be recognised that at the school level, where the building of a civic consciousness and a sense of egalitarian patriotism are essential ingredients of education, the emphasis should be on transacting facts to these young minds in as broad-based,

forward-looking and progressive a manner as possible. Certainly emphasizing an exclusivist and communal point of view, or one that justifies the domination of one social group over others or of one gender over the other would only be counter-productive in the attempt to develop the intellectual faculties of the next generation of citizens of a democracy that has high hopes of taking its place as a front-ranking country in the world.

Constitutional tenets are realized *inter alia* through educational policies, NCFs, and syllabi. Therefore, the content analyses will also be with respect to: whether the textual materials adhere to the aims/purposes/objectives of education as stated in the policy (in this case the NPE-1986). This survey and content analysis is prepared to identify texts that are not in consonance with the principles enshrined in the Constitution and which promote values and socio-cultural and historical perceptions contrary to (a) national policy, (b) curricular framework approved by CABE, (c) the notion of composite culture as evolved during the freedom struggle, (d) the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual basis of Indian nationhood; and (e) the Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties specified in the Constitution.

#### FRAMEWORK FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Reading of textbooks requires the pedagogic as well as the subject/discipline frames. The pedagogic frame is devised with the help of the theory of knowledge about children's intellectual development. It is also intended to provide innovative kinds of presentation and representation of information, facts, analysis and arguments meant to help in the cultivation of an open mind and rational thinking. The other frame derives from the survey of the subject area: the development of the disciplines, the major findings, and frame of analyses, arguments and interpretation not only in history but also in other social sciences. Both are equally important and the choice of selection of textual materials and their treatment needs to be looked at from both frames of reference. While acknowledging that process and content are interconnected, this report is however, located in the frame of content analysis and places greater emphasis on the latter in view of the Committee's TOR.

Within this broad framework the survey and analysis of textbooks in schools within and outside the government system has been done with respect to its adherence to the basic tenets of the Constitution and the aims and purposes of education outlined in the NPE-1986. The reports summarised below address an enduring concern - the extent to which it is possible to foster egalitarian citizenship within a framework provided by the Constitution. The analysis is broad-based and includes discussion of class and caste in India, issues of communalism in historical knowledge, the role of women in society and the impact of environmental factors.

#### WHY MAINLY SOCIAL SCIENCE BOOKS?

Of all the textbooks used in schools, notwithstanding the policy directive that these principles should cut across all subjects, it is only the content of social science textbooks

that clearly address the core curricular issues of paramount social significance, such as the inculcation of secular values, and the equality of sexes. An effective programme of teaching social sciences in schools should help the pupils to take a keen interest in the ways people live and function through various socio-economic and political institutions. It should also help children to develop insights into human relationships, social values and attitudes. These are essential to enable the growing citizen of tomorrow to participate effectively in the affairs of the community, the state, the country and the world at large. This is reiterated by NCF 1988 which says that the teaching of social sciences should enable children to appreciate India's rich cultural heritage as also recognize and get rid of what is undesirable and antiquated, especially in the context of social change. The schools should see that narrow parochial, chauvinistic and obscurantist tendencies are not allowed to grow in our pupils. Thus instruction in social sciences should promote the values and ideals of humanism, secularism, socialism, and democracy. Further, in our culturally plural society, education should foster values oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism. To promote equality, it will be necessary to provide for equal opportunity to all not only in terms of access to opportunities, but also in the conditions of success. The purpose is to remove prejudices and complexes transmitted through the social environment and the accident of birth.

#### AVAILABLE STUDIES OF CONTENT ANALYSES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOKS

The earliest analyses of social science textbooks were located within the government organizations. In the 1980s, the Steering Committee on Textbooks studied textbooks published by a few states and religious organisations. The National Steering Committee once again evaluated textbooks in 1992. Several social organizations, academic institutions, and many individual historians and concerned citizens have been very active in analysing textbooks especially of those prepared by state governments and religious organizations as well as the new NCERT textbooks. These analyses heralded a new era of critical thinking and public scrutiny of school textbooks.<sup>1</sup> These analyses have stemmed from several frameworks and have been studied along several lines. These studies have examined school textbooks from different angles including communalism, secularism, gender, caste, and regional chauvinism. Their impact has been enormous in terms of raising awareness and turning the spotlight on to a hitherto neglected issue—the purpose of education. They have also looked at the role of textbooks, the rationale for content selection, the implications of the texts, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> A select list is giving below. Tanika Sarkar, 'Educating the Children of the Hindu Rashtra: Notes on RSS Schools' in Christophe Jaffrelot, ed *Sangh Parivar A Reader*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005; Teesta Setalvad, 'How Textbooks Teach Prejudice', *Communalism Combat*, 15 June 2003; Teesta Setalvad, 'Gujarat: Situating the Saffronisation of Education' in 'The Saffron Agenda In Education', Sahmat, New Delhi, 2001; Nalini Taneja, 'Communalization of Education: Taking Stock Again', *People's Democracy*, No 43, October 2003; 'Review of Social Studies Textbooks' Asha-research, *Gujarat Textbook Review*, <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php>

These studies have not only made a signal contribution to textbook analyses, but also performed the useful function of bringing into the public eye the crucial importance of the whole issue of textbook preparation in the country. Since these reports were written at different points in time by diverse groups of individuals and organisations following diverse frames of analyses, it is difficult to incorporate these in the framework of analysis arrived at by this Committee.

## REVIEW OF VARIOUS TYPES OF TEXTBOOKS IN USE IN THE STATES

The report and analysis presented in this chapter bases itself entirely upon the content analysis of textbooks of eleven States prepared by experts invited by our Committee to undertake this task. These experts submitted reports of a sample of textbooks examined by them and these reports have been extensively used in this chapter. The sample for content analysis by these experts was drawn mainly to cover three types of schools identified in the Committee's TOR:

- (1) Textbooks prescribed by State Boards and used in State government schools, which cover the majority of school going children in the State.
- (2) Textbooks prescribed by private schools from private publishers
- (3) Textbooks prescribed by schools run by religious and social organizations and textbooks prescribed by schools run by social organizations.

## SAMPLE FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

The textbooks available in the States are of three types: those prepared by State government agencies for government schools; textbooks produced by private publishers frequently used in private schools; textbooks prepared by cultural and social organizations. From the studies commissioned by this Committee accounts and analyses of all three types of textbooks are presented below. The reports contained accounts of textbooks prepared by State governments, private publishers, religious and social organizations. Taken together the states covered in the interim report are: Bihar, Chattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The difference between these the three types of schools – public, private, and schools run by social and religious organizations and many of the are affiliated to communal and fundamentalist ideologies is fairly wide and it is expected that it would be sufficient to represent the range of regional variations in textbook content and textbook production in the country.<sup>2</sup> The content analysis covers classes from primary to higher secondary levels, although many of the books deal with texts used from Class VI onwards

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<sup>2</sup> Vidya Bharati, Saraswati Shishu Mandir etc and madarasas have been covered in this analysis, but Ekal Vidyalays have not been adequately covered in this analysis. However, a recent report has brought out the communalization that is going on in these schools and of their curriculum and textual materials. See Avdhash Kaushal, *Final Report on the Field Visit and Observations for the Singhbhum District in Jharkhand, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh district in Assam*. This report was prepared by a Committee set up by MHRD headed by Avdhash Kaushal. It submitted its report to MHRD in 2005.

### TEXTBOOKS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS NOT USING THE CBSE SYLLABUS<sup>3</sup>

The importance of government textbooks cannot be overemphasized. This has to do not only with the extent of their reach (as emerges from the State reports, private schools avail of them as well, particularly for public examinations), but also with the parameters that they set for curriculum frameworks of other bodies. As pointed out in the Kerala report, this is the most important source that can have an impact on the approaches, content and quality of the textbooks of private publishers, which rely in fact, upon the textbooks of the NCERT and SCERTs.”<sup>4</sup> We, therefore, begin the content analysis with State government books.

The importance of government textbooks in setting the parameters of school education among institutions run by religious and social organizations is outlined below. CHATTISGARH is a case in point. The Loyola Boys School in Kunkuri follows government textbooks for all subjects except Moral Science and a religious class for Catholics. In the Gyanodaya School, Jagdalpur, which is an English Medium primary school, run by the Catholic diocese, for Classes I and II, they teach their own textbooks, but these do not appear to have any religious message, and are just chosen for their large format and illustration. In classes, III and V they have to follow government textbooks because Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have board exams in the Classes V, VIII, X, XII. In the Ramakrishna Sharada Sevashram, Jagdalpur (Bastar), the Swami pointed out that there is no question of using material supplementary to the government textbooks because students are unwilling to learn more than the bare minimum. Similarly, at the Mata Rukmini Devi Sansthan (run by Sarvodaya followers of Vinoba Bhave), in Dimrapal near Jagdalpur (Bastar), they follow only government textbooks in the classroom.

In JAMMU AND KASHMIR the textbooks brought out by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education are made mandatory for both government and private schools, a state of affairs endorsed by the report as “a step towards the common school system”.<sup>5</sup> Although the Board is autonomous, its material is a “replica” of NCERT books. The report observes that Jammu and Kashmir’s position as “a very sensitive state” has led to schools and publishers being cautious lest the content of the curriculum offend constitutional values through material “supporting communalism, regionalism ... terrorism, or any sentence against National Integration.”<sup>6</sup> It claims that a majority of the books were published in 2000, totally in accordance with NCERT books and that the texts have no unwanted or objectionable material. In 2002, protests against the revised NCERT textbooks were mobilised around the belief that these *did* introduce “objectionable material”, among other things because of the communal interpretation of history underlying the textbook on medieval India.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The full texts of the State Reports summarized and footnoted below are given in Annexure 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kerala Report, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Report, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> See the chapter, in *India and the World*, Class 8, 2002, pp. 244-250.

Also, although the line quoted above interprets “regionalism” as a divisive ideology, a recurring concern in this critique of Urdu and Social Science textbooks is that they convey nothing of the environment and history of the state, in which he includes its “contribution in national development”.<sup>8</sup> In duplicating material from the NCERT, the State Board has lost out on the density of local experience. While Urdu does discuss “state personalities” along with “national personalities”,<sup>9</sup> its very centrality in the State’s curriculum is questionable given that “it is not the mother tongue of any region of the state”. Urdu has superseded Kashmiri in the Valley just as Hindi has superseded Dogri in Jammu. The writer envisages representation of the state as including, but going beyond, familiarity with its Constitution. Neither Urdu nor Social Studies books are able to deal with diversity within the state, whose different regions are unequally represented in Urdu and not discussed at all in Social Studies.<sup>10</sup>

The report observes that Urdu lessons, though at no point opposing democratic and secular values, have done little to bring these to life. It provides insights into a more creative approach both to the social sciences and to fostering respect for diversity and the environment. It is consistently critical of the absence of *local* history and geography in the books produced by the State Board. In staying so close to the NCERT they contain no local maps. The report points out that such an approach loses out on the opportunity for productive classroom discussions, as for instance, on how Kashmir had been able to sustain communal harmony during a period when many parts of India were in the throes of communal conflict.<sup>11</sup>

Just as the child’s immediate environment is seldom registered in the Urdu textbooks, Social Science project work related to the local environment “is not taken seriously and not evaluated.”<sup>12</sup> Yet the Environment would no longer present a problem of impossible magnitude if, through the teaching of local geography, students have become aware both of local environmental degradation and the measures that have been undertaken to check this. The report recommends that the immediate environment should be the main focus at the elementary stage, with “a gradual and systematic movement from known to unknown”.<sup>13</sup>

To elaborate on this, only textbooks that are more responsive to the actual ground experience of the reader would encourage her to feel an immediate relevance in the global invocation of Environmental Protection. This would allow her to become more responsive to areas of experiences outside her own. A student from Leh cannot easily conceive of the impact of a mining industry opened in Maharashtra on the lives of tribals. She can only begin to do so if the teaching of local history and geography has already equipped her to work out the inter-connections between processed information and understanding accrued in other areas of life, and between a problem as given and the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 3 and p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 2 and p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. pp. 7-8.

possibilities of initiating change. In this way, Social Studies might encourage “self reliance”, the ability to confront new “demands and eventualities”<sup>14</sup> in a way it has not attempted so far.

The report recommends that textual content should throughout be related to activities, and that the scope of Social Studies should extend to Work, Art, Health and Physical Education. Bringing these areas under Social Studies would also lead to their being evaluated seriously.<sup>15</sup> Work Education has hitherto been marginal in the curriculum, and even the chapters in Urdu books seldom recognize the value of manual work.<sup>16</sup> Yet work education is crucial to the holistic development of the child’s potential, including her capacity for manual labour, and her understanding of the world of work.<sup>17</sup> The practical use of what is studied would also be increased if language teaching laid greater emphasis on expression, written or oral.<sup>18</sup> There is an unnecessary overlap between the topics addressed in Social Studies and the themes encountered in Urdu books. If these were left only to the language books, it would simultaneously lighten the load of Social Studies and expand the scope of language teaching.<sup>19</sup> With regard to the inclusion of a component on “value education”, the report recommends teaching core directives “common to all religions”, as critical to the child’s emotional development and sense of involvement in her society.<sup>20</sup>

The report concludes by suggesting that if some of the changes it proposes are incorporated in a revised curriculum, a program of teacher training should be conducted to share with schoolteachers the ideas behind the revisions of the curriculum and to work out new teaching methods.<sup>21</sup>

In KARNATAKA virtually all schools, both government and private, use only DSERT textbooks. Few opt for Delhi based private publishers. As part of their survey, the resource persons mention that the Government Urdu medium school “had Islamic symbols on display”, just as in one government school children were encouraged to worship everyday, and in several government schools, Hindu religious images are displayed in the principal’s rooms etc.

The report refers to the public furore over the ideological biases of the books revised in 2002 on the lines of NCF-2000. The DSERT refused to respond to public queries concerning the books. Only after the arrival of B. K Chandrashekar as Education Minister, were moves made to institute a Textbook Committee to rewrite the books,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 8 and p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> With regard to the question of regulatory mechanisms, this report declares that states framing their own curriculum should strictly follow the National Curriculum Framework, and that CIBE should appoint an agency “to monitor and evaluate the curriculum of respective states. Ibid. p. 10.

which were prepared by July 2004.<sup>22</sup> On examination, these were found to have improved markedly in terms of quality, language, pictures and the presentation of ideas, though the syllabus is almost unchanged. But fortunately there are no instances of the ideological bias evident earlier. As part of the Forum for Humanism in Education, Jane Sahi and Indira Vijaysimha presented a report on October 19, 2002 on the DSERT books, “Communal Biases in Karnataka’s School Textbooks”. In this they drew attention to “significant changes, which clearly indicate a reversal of the inclusive perspective of the earlier textbooks”.<sup>23</sup>

Their findings are outlined below, with a view to identifying the areas in the imagining of History beyond the emergence of faultlines, not just between the Right wing and others, but also between intelligent and opaque understandings of empire, secularism, and civilization.

In the original books, the Rashtrakutas figure during discussion of the tri-partite struggle for Kanauj, “These chieftains... *fought with one another* to show their power. The life of the *peasant* who worked on the lands of these chieftains was very difficult. They had to pay revenue and also do *free labour* for the chieftains” (italics added).<sup>24</sup>

This narrative of peasant exploitation by warring feudal chiefs is lost in the depiction of the grandeur of the Rashtrakuta Empire: “It was indeed a *glorious* rule. Rashtrakutas emerged as the *supreme* power in the whole of India. Some of the Rashtrakuta emperors were *great conquerors*” (italics added).<sup>25</sup> Omitted is a section that narrated the alliance between a (Hindu) ruler of the subcontinent and the Central Asian (Muslim) army which attacked the Delhi Sultanate, “Together with the Afghan nobles, the Rajput prince Rana Sangha of Mewar also agreed to help Babar against the sultan of Delhi.”<sup>26</sup>

The blame for the existence of retrograde and disavowed traditions, like Sati and child marriage, is laid at the door of Islam (!).<sup>27</sup> Its most likely explanation is sub-textual - a slippage from the tendency for some years now to argue a similar genesis for other acts of violence towards women — Jauhar as the defense of honour against invaders (usually imagined as Muslim), and purdah originating from a fear of Muslims.<sup>28</sup> Superstition is ascribed to the same fear – the same apology suffices for any aspect of the past that needs shrugging off. An aspect of modernity like secularism is given historical precedence, but with muddled approval. The “terrible atrocities” of the Arab invaders of the *eighth* century (sic) are claimed to include “oppressing the *citizens*” (italics added). “Keeping this in view, the religious tolerance of the Rashtrakutas seems quite amazing and worthy of emulation”.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. pp. 4-5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2001), p. 5. Cited on p. 7 of the report

<sup>25</sup> *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2003), p. 31. Cited *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2000), p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2001), p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> *High School Itihas Bhag*, 1, p. 284.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

The Civics section refers to India's being a secular state "despite having such a large Hindu majority and this fact is unnecessarily contrasted with the theocracies of surrounding countries."<sup>30</sup> In reference to this kind of argument, the report notes that until books equip students to think through the meanings of secularism with rigour, its parallel lives in textbooks will be characterised/caricatured by a Janus-face. In its historical manifestation, it appeared far *ahead* of other demonstrations of political power and religious identity. Its present manifestation marks us as superior to our neighbors, but its very exceptionality suggests that such forbearance on the part of the majority must some time be left *behind*.

Warps enter the narration of the power of religion and the fruition of 'civilization': "Islam united the several Arab tribes" becomes an occasion to describe how the Arab tribes before Islam had for centuries "remained disunited, uncivilized and culturally backward."<sup>31</sup> After describing the birth of the "great civilization" of the Arabs, the original book mentions that it was "enriched" by knowledge of various sciences from Greece, China and India. The revised book describes how the Arabs were greatly influenced by Greek and other cultures, and "freely borrowed from them. In course of time they evolved a civilization of their own".<sup>32</sup>

The report notes that the Hindi textbooks for Classes VI and VII (revised in the year 2000) contain "some interesting and sensitive pieces, which are a small step towards equity and representation". Two of those referring to religion are sketched here. "Lahore mein Tiranga Phairaya", a story for Class VI describes an *aam sabha* after namaaz, where Muslims and Hindus together vowed to free the country. The fact that the Maulvi endorses the vow but it is a Nawab who leads the British forces indicates that divisions are not based on religious lines. However, the martyrdom of a Hindu, Khushiram, contains lines that unnecessarily focus on religious identity "apne *hindu* sanskaron ko saakshi kar ke" and "us sankalp ko poora karunga jo ek *hindu* ne masjid mein baithkar liya tha" (italics added). Then there is Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's "Heengwala", a strong intervention that questions stereotypical assumptions about communities, and which shows a Muslim saving the lives of Hindu children during a riot.<sup>33</sup>

It is in relation to the way national identity is imagined, and in terms of the social groups represented, that the report finds things lacking or disquieting in the books. In the Class VII book the chapter "Missile" implicitly condones violent retaliation as a means of resolving border disputes. It also idealises a living person, Dr. Kalam (contrary to an earlier tacit policy not to refer to living persons). Figures held up for idealisation invariably belong to the ruling class, like Shivaji or Ashoka. A chapter like "Shishtachar" promotes middle class manners as ideal. Women and girls are represented but no Dalits, tribals or Christians appear. Overall, the selection is confined to "an upper caste and class Hindu male perspective", but contains nothing manifestly objectionable.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 101.

<sup>31</sup> *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2000) and *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2001), p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2000) and *Social Studies*, Class 6 (2001), p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp. 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

The report comments that the General English books show improvement in both the selection of texts and the exercises designed, but here too the texts remain limited to an urban, upper caste and class perspective. The chapter on conquering Everest would have been more valuable if Tenzing had been made prominent for a change, or Bachendri Pal's ascent had been described.<sup>35</sup> The Class VIII textbook for Special English presents excerpts from such western 'classics' as *The Tempest*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and the stories of H.G Wells. Even assuming that urban children study Special English, these contexts would be alien to them. Also, no social issues have been raised – not even the issue of race, which became an important concern of Gandhi in South Africa.<sup>36</sup>

The MADHYA PRADESH report points out that children from poor economic backgrounds, including Dalit or tribal groups, read State Government publications. "There is very little that these children can relate to or understand... This alienation causes many of them to drop out." Thus even if they do not contain discriminatory *representations*, the language textbooks, remain "quite strongly discriminatory in their omission of ... deprived social groups and major social issues. We know that the constitution guarantees equality... while social reality is highly inequitable. Education can be a way of bringing this reality into discussion and reflection and through it move towards the constitutional goals of a just and equitable society. Unfortunately, government education has shied away from this reality and in so doing perpetuated inequity."<sup>37</sup>

Finally, we summarise the Madhya Pradesh report's comments on the social science books and their representations of national history as well as divisions of religion and caste. While there does not appear to be anything objectionable in government social science books, they are as a rule cast in an abstract, generalised language, which would in itself alienate children. In the History books, Dalits or tribals are invisible, as, by and large, are women. There is nothing of Madhya Pradesh's history or on people from the region. The focus is on rulers and their policies and male upper caste freedom fighters, and the representation of girls rather stereotypical.

The report comments that there is "no clear stance on equity and democracy", or a vision of secularism. Though the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are referred to as communal parties, there is no mention of the RSS. Civics does make reference to the fact that India and Pakistan are culturally very similar and to the need for greater people-to-people contact. When discussing caste and communalism as social evils in Class VIII, they acknowledge histories of riots, and that the "weaker sections are still made victims of cruel and inhuman treatment". But in other areas "the fundamental right to equality is

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Madhya Pradesh Report, p. 3.

very weakly dealt with. ‘Samaj mein samaanta rakhne ke liye chhuachhoot ko bhi apraadh *bataya gaya hai*’ (italics added).<sup>38</sup>

MAHARASHTRA: In the Marathi language textbooks for Classes I to V, and also of the Class IV History textbook,<sup>39</sup> in each year there is a concern to foster nationalist sentiment through references to the National Anthem etc. However, in the first two years this is significantly outnumbered by examples of bias towards urban experience and also of gender bias. In the Marathi language textbook for Class Three (also the class in which history teaching is introduced), there occur the first two instances of communal bias, and there are three cases of communal bias in the History textbook for Class Four.<sup>40</sup>

It is quite understandable that textbooks make the nation a reference point but significantly, more often communal politics appears to be a stronger reference point. We see this in the History textbooks of several States. Maharashtra’s protracted history of communal politics has left its mark on its textbooks. But urban and gender bias are just as dangerous, particularly if from an early age they influence ways of seeing the world. This is not just because these are more pervasive in the textbooks examined in this report, but also because they are harder to recognise. By taking the form of *absences* or roles assumed as given, they make habitual a perception of society in which certain groups are denied or disempowered. Below is sketched how this denial happens (based on the report’s discussion of the visuals) and the form this disempowerment takes (citing contradictions in the text).

Even when the content of primary school language textbooks is meant to be “applicable to all sections of society”, their visuals “display urban middle class living”, registered in terms of “appliances (lampshades, refrigerator, washbasins...) and clothes worn”.<sup>41</sup> References to the “harmful” effects of urbanization convey little when urban lifestyles appear glamorous by contrast to rural. Rural life enters Language books only through descriptions of natural beauty, but Civics textbooks project another version of rural life, suggesting that it is severely limited by its lack of amenities and by illiteracy. The State’s efforts with regard to rural development are stymied by the widespread presence of ignorance and superstition, and there is no recognition of initiatives taken within villages or by voluntary groups in the areas of science and technology. Were it acknowledged that state resources have concentrated on developing cities rather than villages, one might have addressed these contradictions between text and visual and between subject areas by comparing, for example, the lives of the underprivileged in cities (often migrants from villages) with those in villages.<sup>42</sup>

Hiving off Environmental Studies as a separate subject has also made for contradictions in the way in which different subjects treat the issue.<sup>43</sup> Language books represent a range

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 4 quoting Class 7 Civics, “In order establish equality in society even untouchability is *said to be a crime*”!

<sup>39</sup> See the analysis in the Maharashtra report on pp. 2-4.

<sup>40</sup> Class III Marathi, p. 42 and 76.

<sup>41</sup> Maharashtra Report, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

of aspects of “Nature” from stories about animals to precautions to be taken against natural disasters. Yet, despite the insertion of chapters on sustainable development, there is “no conscious attempt” to develop a sustained vision of reciprocal relations with one’s environment, through the selection of texts treating this theme.<sup>44</sup>

The first lesson of a language textbook for Class VIII “establishes linkages between patriotism and cleanliness, and afforestation.”<sup>45</sup> Ironically, had the relationship between lifestyle and state policy been elaborated, one would have had to confront how the amenities of middle class living are not only limited to the middle classes but often made possible through environmental exploitation by industries that the state supports. Elementary level science textbooks in fact perpetuate this tendency towards an instrumentalist approach to nature, which divides into two the section on trees, “About Trees” and their “benefits”.

Benefits being limited to their immediate resource value, the relationship between trees and rain is not recognized. This artificially erases the connection between different aspects of the environment,<sup>46</sup> just as subject compartmentalization prevents the child from testing information from Science against the values of Environmental Studies. Covers of geography textbooks display self-contained visuals - dams, industries, beaches, and deserts – that convey no impression of natural and human environments interpenetrating each another. Again, no links are made between the issues raised in the chapters on environment with the content of the chapter on industry, and there is no mention of non-conventional sources of energy.<sup>47</sup>

We return to the relationship between an understanding of local environment and skills of critical thinking (argued in the section above on Jammu and Kashmir). Science textbooks for Classes I and II limit themselves to inculcating habits of personal hygiene and register no awareness of illnesses actually faced by children (lice, worms etc.).<sup>48</sup> Agricultural activity is discussed in the Class IV book, which recommends chemical fertilizers and good quality grain — aspects unrelated to the village child’s participation in it and unlikely to enlarge the urban child’s conception of it.<sup>49</sup> Matters are complicated when in a higher class “the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers” is identified as a cause of pollution, with nothing enabling one to decide what becomes “indiscriminate.” This is typical of the way content in Science is factual rather than an expansion of enquiry, with inadequate critique of the implications of scientific development.<sup>50</sup> Industrialization is equated only with progress, so “[several] times... pollution is solely attributed to population explosion”. There is also no reference to technology benefiting some sections of society while many others are displaced or unemployed.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 11

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Science, Class 4, cited on p. 9 of the report.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. pp. 9-10.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

The report is critical of the fact that the curriculum never engages with the manifest economic disparities in society, though differences of caste, religion and language find mention as “impediments in national unity”.<sup>52</sup> Science textbooks, for instance, prescribe as healthy a diet that for a large section of their readers may be hard to procure or to afford. In Classes I and II the visuals relating to energy focus on “vehicles and industries”.<sup>53</sup>

The report observes that in Hindi lessons, characters from socio-economically deprived backgrounds appear seldom, and usually as helpless victims, rather than as central figures on whom the narrative plot hinges. Stories of perseverance and success could have been included, the report argues.<sup>54</sup> This calls for a qualification - ‘success stories’ imply that character is more crucial than socio-economic location. If one wishes to present *systemic* inequality as unacceptable, it is more enabling to use irony, within the text or in the discussion questions based on it.

Language books have the potential to hone sensitivity as much as skills of articulation. One can draw conclusions on the politics of language from the fact (noted in the report) that the oppressed are hardly encountered in English lessons, and there is no representation of cross-class friendships.<sup>55</sup> Compilers of anthologies should guard against a tendency for texts in the elite language to blank out from their field of vision those less likely to make use of the language. It is equally important that those writing in languages whose history in the subcontinent is longer and whose prevalence across different classes is wider, should not feel obliged to start from assumptions about “the-poor-as victim” merely because the implicit power relations have remained uncontested too long and too widely.

Chapters in History seldom touch upon economic conditions and class and regional disparities. Inequalities are registered in the text only at the pivotal point when these are challenged (Shivaji’s revenue reforms, Buddha’s rejection of caste divisions).<sup>56</sup> Yet one would have expected textbooks to provide a perspective on the actuality of economic relations, which extends beyond that articulated by individual reformers isolated in time. When History is introduced as a separate subject in Class VI, the first chapter, an apology for the study of history, claims that knowing the past helps us to understand the present. Yet in no lesson is it demonstrated how one may make these “linkages” with the world around one.<sup>57</sup> Information or statistics are not provided, for instance, on inequalities and income levels prior to and after our independence, so that the student can measure for himself independent India’s success in equitable distribution and employment opportunities. In this context, information could have been given that compare India’s national income with those of other nations. The new economic policy has no mention, symptomatic of a tendency to adhere to the vision of the fifties and sixties (Class VI

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<sup>52</sup> Civics, Class 9, “National Unity”, quoted on p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Textbooks for Classes Four and Five, discussed on p. 12.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

Civics refers to five-year plans, and backward areas are identified by their containing few factories/industries).<sup>58</sup> Government textbooks obviously evade difficult questions. Descriptions of the city make no mention of Dharavi as the biggest slum in Asia. No information is provided on how citizens may call government institutions to account.<sup>59</sup>

In Classes I and II, one can identify different religions through the stereotyped markers employed by visuals (turbans and caps) yet the text contains no character or name that is not Hindu, something that the report also notices in the Marathi textbook for Class VIII and the Hindi textbook for Class IX.<sup>60</sup> Civics textbooks contain “repeated references to religion”, but these do not seem to be in the nature of analytical enquiry – given that the majority of references cited advocate religious tolerance as necessary to national unity.<sup>61</sup> However, the report draws most of its material from history textbooks, and its findings are outlined below.

In Class V, India’s religions are mentioned as one manifestation of its diversity, but this fact could have been given a more tangible dimension by showing Islam’s contribution to Indian art. Buddhism is not clearly indicated as a separate religion, and similarly the Class VI book is cursory in its details of the birth of Jainism. No picture is provided of the religious dissent and dialogue in the period of the Mauryas. And appropriations are not addressed - when referring to the beginning of idol worship among Hindus, the book does not mention that Jain temples were taken over.<sup>62</sup> It is clear that social inequalities are not seen as essential to the structure of religion, when in Class IV a history lesson on saints who challenge religious hierarchies concludes with the line: “The respect for religion increased due to the work of the saints.”<sup>63</sup> The same book develops prejudices at an early age by referring to oppression and cheating by Mughal rulers. It also contains the illogical statement, “Shivaji had many Muslims working for him but they were all loyal to Swaraj”, which betrays an assumption that religious identities override political allegiances, and also that Shivaji’s Raj was synonymous with people’s independence.<sup>64</sup> One can note here the observation that these assumptions make for a particularly twisted logic in RSS books: “Numberless Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam on the point of the sword. This struggle for freedom became a religious war”.<sup>65</sup> To break this down, conflict already located around religion is elided into a “struggle for *freedom*” (italics added, as the indicators of non-freedom are not clarified), which *become* a religious war.

However egregious, these examples suggest that it is a challenge for a secular democracy that has consciously separated private and public spheres to understand how shifting feudal empires negotiated religious and cultural identity. To return to Maharashtra, the Class VI History book suggest (apparently in the context of the establishment of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 20. The pages cited are Class 8, p. 27 and p. 48, Class 9, p. 25 and pp. 30-31 and Class 10, p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p. 18 and p. 19.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>65</sup> From the section on medieval history in *Itihas Ga Raha Hai*, quoted on p. 14 of Nalini Taneja, “BJP’s Assault on Education and Educational Institutions”.

Sultanate) “there was no difference in the traditional lifestyle of the people.”<sup>66</sup> We ignore for now the fact that the culture of Central Asia would have influenced *some* sections in terms of cuisine and clothes. It is more important to know whether the remark that tradition and lifestyle did not change has proved the resilience of these traditions, or the generous non-interference of the new rulers. In any case, the statement surely loses some force when the subsequent lesson (summarised in the report) demonstrates Central Asian influence on architecture, music etc. The idea is again undermined, by what seems however a baseless claim regarding “the influence of superstition on Indian society during the Mughal period”.<sup>67</sup>

The report mentions how the Class VII textbook claims in Lesson 11 that the “aggressive communal feelings created by the Muslim League led to Partition”, a statement encountered in textbooks elsewhere.<sup>68</sup>

The report assesses the treatment of caste in different subjects. History textbooks provide accounts of the origins of caste, and Civics discusses the problems of scheduled castes and tribes and the concessions given to them. The history of caste as an institution fails to bring out the link between discrimination, unequal opportunities and economic disparities, so that it seems a neutral marker of occupation. The tendency in modern India to use a joint word, “caste-tribe” falsely subsumes adivasis under Hinduism. Textbooks miss out on opening up a productive discussion of the differences in perspective between Gandhi and Ambedkar on the issue of caste.<sup>69</sup>

Caste is not addressed in language textbooks, and even when some of the richness of Dalit literature is included, the introductions do not bring out the significance of the Dalit background of the authors.

The report raises a range of issues related to gender. One concern is the fair representation of women. Women authors contribute only 15 percent of the material in Marathi textbooks for Classes I to II, and hardly 7 percent for Hindi!<sup>70</sup> Visuals misleadingly show pre-teen boys as taller and sturdier than girls of the same age. No women saints of the medieval period are discussed in History.<sup>71</sup> Even the token inclusions of women in language books are unimaginative, there being repeated references to Kiran Bedi and Lata Mangeshkar.<sup>72</sup> And too often history books present the “pitiful state” of women rather than “their courage, accomplishments and social participation”.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., citing p. 66 of the Class VI History book.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p. 20. See also Teesta Setalvad, “How Textbooks teach Prejudice”, in *Communalism Combat*, June 15, 2003, accessed at <http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-setalvad150603.htm> on March 19, 2005.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 23

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

The report also directs attention to questions not addressed by different subjects, which would have sharpened our understanding of power relations under patriarchy, such as how the institution of the family changed with changing economic needs and the development of slavery.<sup>74</sup> Instead of limiting themselves to noting differences in attire between men and women of different regional cultures, Geography books could surely discuss differences in occupation?<sup>75</sup> When the Class X Science textbook discusses anemia, it would be worth going into the fact that 80 percent of Indian women experience this for reasons of which it is also important to be aware. Finally, one discerns no endeavor in the visuals, texts or exercises to introduce the possibility that in future it might be the norm for men and women to share responsibilities both inside and outside the home.

WEST BENGAL: The West Bengal survey has examined books of English, Bangla and History in 16 schools (four each of government, government aided, private and those run by religious or social organizations), all affiliated to the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE). The report notes that in the history textbooks, “there is a covert tendency to represent the history of India and the history of Hinduism as parallel developments. Chapters on caste are discussed without reference to the oppression of Dalits.” The Congress is shown as a Hindu organisation and the League as the sole representative of Muslims.<sup>76</sup> In both the languages and the social sciences, “representations of minority communities... and women are neglected.”<sup>77</sup>

#### TEXTBOOKS IN USE IN SCHOOLS RUN BY SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

BIHAR: Most of the Bihar books analysed in this study perpetuate prejudices and biases. They portray ancient India as synonymous with Hindus. Achieving worthy “sanskar” people began to be called Aryans – traveled east and south to spread Vedic culture. Vedic vision, Upanishads taught us to understand Buddhism etc. all form part of our great faith. No distinctions anywhere between the two religions.<sup>78</sup> Magadha ruler possessed Mahapadyam – if distributed, each person would possess 50 lakhs – he ruled over such a prosperous kingdom.<sup>79</sup>

The books emphasize the forced conversion of Hindus, and assert that many of the converted have never been able to find religious freedom.<sup>80</sup> It is hardly surprising that there is no mention of the reasons and motivations for such widespread conversion. Further, it is claimed that the rulers and their collaborators were prepared to sink to the lowest depths to convert people to Islam.<sup>81</sup> Destruction of Somanatha crushed the Hindu courage. But in just a few years a new temple erected at Somanatha – saffron flag again

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

<sup>80</sup> Bihar Report.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

unfurled<sup>82</sup> Somanatha as wealth and jewels – understood as his duty destroying the idols of *other* faiths – pride.<sup>83</sup>

The allusions to Muslims are invariably crude. Muslims destroyed libraries, books, raped our mothers and sisters – reduced to ashes their bodies of sandal, the blood of Rajputs in their bodies. Muhammad bin Qasim died the death of a dog. On one side an invading army, on the consolidated might (samuha) of devotees.<sup>84</sup> When sacred texts are being burned, women raped – what is the use of prayer? The task of the sadhu is to awaken the country.<sup>85</sup>

Guru Govind Singh used the pen and sword, bhakti and shakti.<sup>86</sup> The growing Hindu strength of Guru Tegh Bahadur crushed by a vast army.<sup>87</sup> Shivaji eulogized as a great man in time of crisis (declining Mughal empire, British encroaching).<sup>88</sup> Prithviraj was too trusting of Ghori.<sup>89</sup> Shivaji protected the cow, dharma, sanskriti, he is known as the protector of cow and Brahmins<sup>90</sup>

Defaced image of India, snatched from us the Sindhu – where Vedas composed, Nanak born, Selucus defeated – an injury that still rankles.<sup>91</sup> Sindhu waves still rehearse story of Selucus' defeat.<sup>92</sup> Outline of India like an arrow on the string.<sup>93</sup> Dhruva and Prahlad, Chanakya and Chandragupta, Ramayana and Gita.<sup>94</sup>

The violent pressure of the Muslim League forced our leaders to accept Partition.<sup>95</sup> But there is no attempt to explain the role of the Muslim League or the fact that it had only limited support among Muslims.

The Report observes that there is a deliberate non-recognition of human values, while narrow religious identities receive greater prominence and approbation. Thus all social reform in India is supposed to have been directed by a religious vision.<sup>96</sup>

CHATTISGARH: Most Vidya Bharati schools are affiliated to the CBSE or their local State Boards. By and large they follow State textbooks.<sup>97</sup> In addition, they emphasize five

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Bihar Report, pp. 2-3, p. 14, pp. 28-9.

<sup>97</sup> Nandini Sundar, "Teaching to hate: RSS's Pedagogical Program", *Economic and Political Weekly* 39 (16). The two major private networks in Chhattisgarh appear to be schools run by the RSS and those run by

subjects that are supposed to contribute to the development of *sanskara* or character formation. These are Moral Education (*naitik shiksha/sadachar*), which includes stories about great men, songs, instruction on honesty, personal hygiene etc.; Physical Education (*sharirik shiksha*) which includes learning to wield a stick and martial arts; *Yoga*; Singing (*sangeet*), and Sanskrit (from as early as kindergarten). “Vedic Mathematics” is introduced in Class III.

Ideology is reinforced through such aspects as the schools being predominantly Hindu, daily prayers (especially in schools with hostels attached) and the general atmosphere sustained by the presence or absence of pictures on the wall.

The writer fears that government regulation of textbooks might well be used against progressive textbooks created by institutions like Eklavya, and concludes “there seems to be no alternative to the hard process of improving the teaching and resources in government schools, since most children still come out of the government school system.”<sup>98</sup>

Earlier, contradictions with official texts would emerge when the R.S.S denigrated Gandhi as a “*Dushtatma*” (bad soul) for “appeasing” Muslims. Individual teachers may have perfected sophisticated pedagogical techniques for getting around this, but perhaps what enabled the two belief systems to co-exist is the emphasis on ... exams. While the report notes that the revised NCERT textbooks do “broadly reflect R.S.S. ideology”, she adds that “they are still inadequate in that they cannot openly talk about the Sangh.” Therefore the need for Vidya Bharati to bring out textbooks that “‘supplement’ and ‘correct’ the history that is taught in the official books, working as much by selective emphasis ... as by crude propaganda against Muslims and Christians”.

*Itihas ga Raha Hain* for Class V blames “internal disunity” for the invasions by the Turks, Mongols and Mughals, but notes that even in the medieval period the “freedom struggle” was kept alive.<sup>99</sup> While professional historians point to the presence of Hindu generals in Mughal armies and the fact that Shivaji, the archetypal Hindu king had a Muslim general, as evidence of the fact that medieval power struggles can not be understood in religious terms, the R.S.S. sees this as a betrayal of Hindus and reserves its greatest criticism for such “collaborators”.<sup>100</sup>

“One of the central planks of the RSS is the equation of “holyland” with “motherland”—and the claim that because Muslims and Christians have their Meccas elsewhere, they are not fully loyal to the country. The text exhorts children to remember who they are so as not to become slaves again and asks rhetorically, “Whose is this country? Whose motherland, fatherland and holyland is it? Whose customs and festivals are celebrated according to the agricultural rhythms and climate of this land? Which people is it who

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Catholic orders. In Bastar, the Mata Rukmini Devi Sansthan has been given some 32 hostels and schools to run. The Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram also runs hostels

<sup>98</sup> “Teaching to hate: RSS’s Pedagogical Program”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 39 (16), 2004, pp. 1605-1612.

<sup>99</sup> Rana Pratap Singh, *Itihas Ga Raha Hain*, Part II, Textbook for Class 5, Patna: Shishu Mandir Prakashan, 1997, p. 9.

<sup>100</sup> Sundar 2002: 117.

call Sivaji, Ranapratap, Chandragupta, Bhagwan Ram, Krishna, Dayanand their great leaders.” (The implication clearly is that festivals like Id and Christmas are not locally rooted.) It then goes on to a fervent description of the greatness of the RSS founders, Hegdewar and Golwalkar, and the need for an organization like the RSS to build Hindu unity<sup>101</sup> The book also refers constantly to “Mother India” from whose womb many brave sons were born, who worshipped her and died for her, with the Gita in their hands and *Vande Mataram* on their lips.<sup>102</sup>

A similar process of elision and abuse is evident in the Sanskriti Gyan Pariksha, a cultural general knowledge test that all students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade upwards take annually, and for which they get certificates. ... The primer is in question-answer format, ...and the version of Indian culture that is produced is thus an exclusively Hindu - upper caste (mostly northern) – culture. Homer’s *Illiad* was an adaptation of the Ramayana and that Christ roamed the Himalyas and drew his ideas from Hinduism.<sup>103</sup> One of the most egregious examples, however, is the list of questions on Ramjanmabhoomi, the birthplace of Ram.<sup>104</sup> To quote an extract:

Q: From 1582 till 1992, how many Rambhakts sacrificed their lives to liberate the temple?

A: 350,000.

Q: When did the program of collecting bricks for the Ram Mandir begin?

A: 30 September 1989.

While Gandhi and Nehru are perforce mentioned as leaders of the freedom movement, equal pride of place is given to the Hindu nationalist stream consisting of communal ideologies and religious men (*sadhus* and *sanyasis*).

DELHI: Dharmashiksha, Parts 3,4,5,10,11,12. These are DAV College Prabandhakartri Samiti publications, each part meant for a corresponding class. Since the DAV publishes them, no doubt they are used for teaching regular courses on religious instruction at DAV schools. According to the report it is not clear whether these texts are meant for compulsory courses or for Arya Samaj students alone. The courses, however, refer to Hindu values in general and the Arya Samajist component is not overly marked. So this well may be a compulsory additional course, as with the RSS schools which have compulsory courses on Bharatiya Sanskriti.

In these books, on the one hand, history and mythology are made to coexist on the same plane, and, on the other, religious instruction is expanded to encompass history and politics, as lives of Gandhi or Bhagat Singh are subsumed within religious teaching.”<sup>105</sup> At the same time, the Arya –Hindu complex claims to represent eternal and universal religious principles, thus negating truth claims of other religions. Caste injustice does

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid. pp. 77-81.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. pp. 27-28.

<sup>103</sup> See Sahmat 2001: 14-18.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p. 13-14

<sup>105</sup> Delhi Report, p. 1.

come in, exceptionally, in the essay on blind faith (Andha Viswasa), which mentions the sufferings of lower castes and Dalits --- as benefiting Christian and Muslim conversion efforts, and leading to “din-pratidin hinduo ki sankhya kam hoti gai”: the hoary theme of the “dying Hindu” as against the prolific Muslims and Christians.

But what is of deep concern is the extent of consensus and acceptance of flawed intellectual premises and highly questionable, politically loaded assumptions, that appears across schools of different denominations and categories, amounting to a shared endorsement of a narrative and a discourse that is sharply at odds with the social and economic realities in India today. This disquieting endorsement of a flawed and non-factual discourse is more than just a matter of putting forward blatantly communal texts. This becomes even more clear from our next example, a book of Hindi Grammar written by two teachers of Modern School, New Delhi, quite possibly in use in that prestigious institution and in many other places : *Sachitra Hindi Vyakarana Tatha Rachana* --- evidently very popular.<sup>106</sup> This is for Middle School, particularly Class VIII Sankritisation of Hindi has gone, with its earlier close affinity with Hindustani / Urdu is totally suppressed. Nizamuddin Aulia spells the first name as ‘Nijamuddin’, in obvious transliteration of the Hindi, as the old system of dot-indication seems to have disappeared.

What is really cause for alarm is that not only does a particular kind of religious teaching take upon itself the mantle of representing nationalism, it excludes, by doing so, the other variants of nationalism that even personalities and leading figures mentioned by such books stood for. A strong objection can be raised on the basis of these contradictory claims: what are political ideas about nationalism doing within a book on religious instruction? If the book claims to teach about universal religious principles, why are other religions excluded? If the idea is to offer teachings on nationalism, why are certain categories of nationalist ideas and figures excluded? In Part 3, Allah and God are made linguistically derivative from OM and are denied the status of being autonomous names of God (Paramatma Ke Naam ). While trying to show that the terms are secondary to OM, the essay does not anywhere clarify that Islam and Christianity may have different notions about Divinity.

For more senior students, the tone becomes very explicitly communal. In a politically loaded lesson on Mahashay Rajpal in Part 10, an occasion of communal rioting and the murder of an Arya Samajist publisher, Rajpal, in the 1920s because of his publication of a derogatory tract about the Prophet’s life (the Rangila Rasul case) is deliberately projected as exemplifying Muslim fanaticism. Gandhi’s criticism of the book is explained as appeasement of Muslims. What is conveniently omitted is the fact that the book portrayed him as a lascivious person. In another lesson Muslims loot, plunder while all Hindu characters are heroic patriots and pious people. There is no mention of Hindu-Muslim unity or of Muslim patriotism, or of Muslim devotional figures.

The Foreword to Part 10, ‘Dharmashiksha ki Abashyakata ‘ (Necessity of Religious Teaching), is nearly exclusively dedicated to a diatribe against secularism, revealing a

<sup>106</sup> Pitambar Publishing House, New Delhi , 1996, `97,`98 , revised ed. 1999, 2000, 2001.

deep hostility towards the idea as represented in the Constitution. It wrongly translates dharmanirapekshata as anti-religion. It says that secularism encourages groupism and prevents equality of citizenship by upholding minority rights. It also criticizes secularism for maintaining a distinction between individual and private lives on the one hand and social public lives on the other. The essay distorts the idea of secularism by saying that it raises a wall between religion and politics. It also tries to make it monolithic, whereas there are many varied definitions. To allow such unwarranted and disconnected political ideology generated by communal organizations to infiltrate school textbooks amounts to an assault on the Constitution and its principles, let alone the fact that it is a serious violation of education policy guidelines.

Religion teaches familiarity with the traditions and civilization of the country and since all the parts deal with Hindu traditions as interpreted by the Arya Samaj, this is highly tendentious. It also says that familiarity is not enough, we must be proud of the traditions – an aspiration that promotes an uncritical acceptance of tradition. But pride involves a commitment: “We must make our enemies weep.” To place such anti-social and criminal tendencies in young minds is a breach of national trust. Religion and nationalism are made synonymous, with both being based on the primary principle of vengeance. It has been made abundantly clear in these texts that the enemies are Christians and Western people and the Muslims. In a lesson in the book, Prithviraj is warned in the name of faith never to forgive his Muslim enemies, nor trust them. There are other examples of “jewels from the low castes” that fought against Muslim dynasties like Malik Kafur. It is evident that such lowbrow and divisive propaganda being allowed into what are meant to be education primers in an avowedly secular country will destroy the national effort to build harmony and unity among citizens having different social and religious identities.

Even though the Samaj is supposed to have opposed the caste system, the first lesson in this volume (called Vaidic Rashtriya Prarthana) talks of conventional caste-based occupations. The land of ours, it says, is filled with milch cows, chaste women, learned Brahmans who know the Vedas, valorous Kshatriya warriors, Vaishyas who produce wealth. There is no mention of Shudra producers, or of outcastes. In effect, what is being legitimised is a hegemonic version of a hierarchy that has no place in independent India. There is a lot of emphasis on the ritualistic parts of the Vedas.

In fact, hierarchies and lack of civil rights are naturalized through pictures of a policeman beating up an ordinary person with the caption saying “ Sipahi dande se pitte hai”, with absolutely no word on how this is a terribly illegitimate act. The books do not give the students with any notion of rights, liberties and equal citizenship capabilities of Indians, nor does it even try to highlight what are the threats to these values.

The verbal examples given in exercises have a recurrent tendency to refer only to activities being conducted in Shishu Mandir or related institutions. For example, a chapter on business arithmetic begins with the shopkeeper putting prints of Ganesh and Lakshmi on his account book. Drawing exclusively from imagery belonging to the Hindu cultural pantheon, remaining inexplicably silent on other cultural frames of reference, the impression conveyed to the impressionable young mind not even very subtly is that the

Hindu cultural universe is the only legitimate frame of reference worth relating to when growing up in India. There is also an inescapable suggestion that the Hindu cultural context is a self-sufficient and total world comprising everything worth mentioning or valuable.

In KARNATAKA, RSS-leaning organizations distribute books in slum literacy centers, but the source of these books is yet to be traced (they are not easily available, being distributed directly). For example, the Infosys library programme distributes supplementary material among government and non-government schools biographies of “great Indians”, mainly published by the Rashthrothana Publication, which is linked to the RSS. Exclusively upper caste Hindu, these icons include religious and mythical figures, rulers, and a handful of reformers, mostly from the Karnataka region. The RSS ideologues are prominent among nationalist leaders, and significantly Gandhi and Nehru are absent. It includes one Muslim, and no Dalits or contemporary women. The report refers to how the government does not appear to have in place official procedures for endorsing the private initiatives whom it has permitted access to its schools (the ‘Infosys’ Library Programme and the Ramakrishna Ashrama programme).<sup>107</sup>

MADHYA PRADESH missionary schools, particularly those affiliated to the CBSE, use material from private publishers like Macmillan, in common with secular private schools. There are over 3000 Saraswati Shishu Mandirs in the state, and their books, as in Uttar Pradesh, are not available in the open market. The ‘Akhil Bharati Sanskriti Gyan Pariksha’ run by the Vidya Bharati Sansthan, the coordinating institution of the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs, produces them.

In these books, descriptions of Hinduism concentrate on Brahminical ritual, while place descriptions concentrate on the “teerth” (pilgrimage site) in the area. A shrine like Sanchi is not mentioned among the tourist sites of Madhya Pradesh. The history of “Ram Janmabhoomi” is internalized through a species of catechism, as discussed in the report on Jharkhand — “Who made the Mandir? /Ram’s son Kush”, “Who was the Muslim lutera who first attacked it?” — up to the kar-sevaks raising the saffron flag on October 30, 1990. The report comments: “Obviously there is no mention of the Babri Masjid and therefore neither of its destruction”.<sup>108</sup> Even before narratives reach its physical destruction, locating the actions of the kar-sevaks in Ram Janmabhoomi, the legend, not the material referent that anchored the conception of it, erases the mosque. If on such a politically contentious issue such as the controversy over the Babri Masjid/Ramjanmabhoomi issue, the textbooks are to be allowed to blatantly promote Hindu sectarian arguments, how would it be possible not to alienate pupils of the minority communities and prevent the building of a shared national identity? It is very critical that school curricula scrupulously stay away from political controversies and ensure that no bias of any kind, political or cultural, be allowed to vitiate their education processes, in order for Indian schools to retain credibility as effective transmitters of a

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<sup>107</sup> The report notes that there is “a definite need for a regulatory board that can review and approve government textbooks. The board must include people known to have a fair and balanced ideological position, and with a good understanding of quality writing for children/learners”. Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. pp. 4-5.

wholesome national education. We need to reiterate categorically the urgency of putting in place a rigorous scheme of scrutiny and evaluation of textual material, giving primacy to verifiable and empirically proven facts alone.

The Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharati Shiksha Sansthan publishes manuals for teachers, some of which are also meant for parents. Titles include *Shiksha Bharatiya Drishti*, *Ekatma Parivar: Ekatma Rashtra*, *Hindu Jeevan Shaili*. *Manishi Kehte Hain* is a collection of quotations on education. Unexceptionable statements by Gijubhai and Ravindranath Thakur sit alongside Kaka Kalelkar speaking for “shiksha”, “main satta ki dasi nahin hoon...main arth shastra ki baandi nahin hoon – main to dharm ka punaragman hoon.”<sup>109</sup>

The RAJASTHAN report discussed the textbooks produced for D.A.V Schools and those used in a school governed and operated by the Bharatiya Vidya Samiti, Rajasthan. As in other Vidya Bharati schools, students up to Class 8 have to appear for a public examination, Akhil Bharatiya Sanskriti Gyan Pariksha, conducted by Vidya Bharati Sanskriti Shiksha Sansthana. Classes 10 and 12 also sit for the Sansthana’s examinations.

Value education is taught from textbooks titled *Sanskara Saurabh*. The report states that “both the *Sanskara Saurabh* and the *Bodh Mala* (required reading for an examination conducted at an all India level) contribute significantly to the internalisation ... of the norms and values of Hindutva.”<sup>110</sup> The deaths of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Moti Das, Bhai Dayal Das and Sati Das are narrated as sacrifices in the battle against religious conversion, through language vituperative against Aurangzeb in particular and Islam in general.<sup>111</sup>

The report discusses the material in the *Dharam Shiksha* textbooks published by D.A.V. College Management Committee, Delhi, and used in their schools across the country. The book’s preface questions secularism as a value, stating that religion alone can provide vision and direction to science. The books seek to persuade their readers of this principle through propaganda pretending to be fiction and fiction pretending to be history, examples of which are quoted in the report.

One lesson presents a debate on the existence of God through the exchange between two friends - one studying in a government school influenced by communist beliefs, and the other the product of a D.A.V. School - by the close of which the friend leaning towards communism concedes the defeat of atheism.<sup>112</sup>

Repeated chanting of the Gayatri Mantra is said to lead to intellectual growth.<sup>113</sup> Yet the education purveyed by these books functions not on any principle of great concepts gradually internalized through repetition. It relies on the evidentiary character of examples and figures, but assumes in the face of these that further questions are silenced.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Rajasthan Report, p. ?

<sup>111</sup> *Sanskara Saurabh*, Class 2, pp. 49-50.

<sup>112</sup> Chapter 7, Textbook for Class 4, p. 26.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-8.

Chapter IV of the Class IX textbook brings together stories about the power of *yagyas* to summon rain and cure disease.<sup>114</sup> *Dharma Shiksha* for Class X states that the Vedas originate one trillion, ninety-four billion, 29 million, 49 thousand and ninety-four years ago.<sup>115</sup>

The extended reaches of the genealogies of Hinduism contrasts, as always, to the density of detail for which the last two hundred years are mined in order to stockpile charges against false ‘secularists’ and proselytizing faiths. The accusation of Savarkar in Gandhi’s murder is seen as part of an endeavor to appease Muslims.<sup>116</sup>

Inwardness on the part of the Samaj as *sect* moves in step with hostility to those defined against *Hindus* as part of a performance on the national and global stage. Endogamy between Aryasamajis is advocated.<sup>117</sup> A discussion of religious conversion is in another lesson used to stimulate hate for Muslims and Christians.<sup>118</sup> “Militarization of the nation”, “Hindusation of politics” and “religious conversion as national change” are the counters with which the argument of another lesson moves.<sup>119</sup>

The chapter on Sanskrit betrays a sense of threatened identity (Sanskrit is necessary to our own survival.<sup>120</sup>, global ambition (it is the language of mankind) and an internal ‘Othering’ within Hindu self-perception (the use of Sanskrit by “Aryans” establishes it a Hindu language.<sup>121</sup> Would this disable the RSS project to claim Vanvasis within the Hindu fold? Though the school is English medium, Chapter 7, on the theme of Hindi, opposes the use of English as a betrayal of ‘Indianness’.

The UTTAR PRADESH report mentions that schools run by Vidya Bharati were very reluctant to divulge details of their syllabi, textbooks or even methods of selecting textbooks, and claimed to be using the books approved by the government (which is true only after Class VI. The elementary level textbooks (entirely different from government publications) mention two different publishers — Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan and Shiksha Mandir Prakashan — who have the same address, and the logos bear different names - Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Uttar Pradesh and Vidya Bharati.

The History textbook of Class IV (*Itihas Ga rah Hai*) published by Shishu Mandir, Patna, excessively focus on the Mughal invasion of India. The textbook says that Indian Muslims are not related to Mughals from outside, they are the sons of this country. At another place, the textbook highlights the role of Hindus kings in saving the honour of Hindu women from attack by the Mughals thus making the point that as to how the Yavanas are a real danger to the purity and chastity of Hindu women. The textbook highlights the role of the Mughals in the destruction of the Hindu temples and the valiant

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. pp. 23-4.

<sup>115</sup> *Dharma Shiksha*, Class X, p. 21.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. p. 60.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p.19.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. pp. 61-2.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

role of the Sikhs in the fight against them. (Banda Bairagi)

Books studied are *Rashtriya Naitik Shiksha* and *Samanya Gyan* for Classes II to V. Caste identities and caste hierarchies are strengthened by approvingly mentioning caste-based identities and ethics. Power-based hierarchies also justified, e.g., kingly violence. There is an obsession with authoritarian and ritualistic moral consciousness, like touching feet and blindly obeying parents and teachers. Superstitions are strengthened, with reference to otherworldly benefits or God curing someone without treatment. Moral behaviour is often mixed up with many a-moral (morally neutral) acts, like, cleanliness. Consequently, confusing the child about norms of morality. Moral teachings are often by way of commandments, which is bad pedagogy. Most of the lessons are full of prejudices and unscientific beliefs, e.g., left-handers are called uncultured. The books are also extremely gender-biased and the most of the moral discourse is around males only.

The books that have been examined are taught in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs: Vandana (Prayer Book), Sanskrit language books (4 volumes), English Primers (4 volumes), stories of Ramayan, stories of Mahabharat, Geography books (2 volumes for Class IV and V, History books (2 volumes for Class IV and V). All these books are for primary classes. All the books are uniformly Hindu-centric and do not show any regard for plurality of the country even as they claim to talk about the entire nation.

These books communalise the psyche of children and sharpen their Hindu identity by a two-fold process: (a) through repeated glorification of Hindu icons, practices, kings and other persons in history and (b) by presenting non-Hindus mostly in highly negative manner and belittling their characters and contributions. Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism are mentioned as within Hinduism. The RSS figures like Hedgewar and Savarkar get prominence and are repeatedly glorified. The exercises moreover have many questions on the role and personalities of the RSS.

The exercises in even science and maths are constructed with frequent mention of temples, offerings, rituals and Hindu-centric notions. In the exercises all the Hindu names are prefixed with 'brother' or 'sister' but the Muslim names (very few) are not so prefixed. Hindu-centric and militant nationalism is projected throughout. Both the language and style and content are oriented to this. Ritualism and superstitions are glorified repeatedly. What is disturbing is that the books are full of unscientific contents. Moreover, the contents actually stifle the critical capacity of children. The existence of Bharat as one nation in the modern sense of 'nation' is projected into the ancient past repeatedly to fill the child's consciousness with racial national pride.

The report observes that it is very important that this distorted and false presentation of national consciousness is weeded out of school curricula. Schoolchildren should not be fed with factually incorrect and distorted political imaginations that have no correlation with the actual ground realities. It is important to emphasise repeatedly in the curricula and to remind the young citizens constantly that the Indian nation, which emerged from the freedom struggle in 1947, is the equal inheritance of several religious, social, ethnic and linguistic groups that are represented in the Indian nation. No one group can claim a

superior right over the Indian national identity by any stretch of imagination especially in the context of the circumstances leading to India's emergence as an independent nation-state with an expressed commitment to pursue culturally pluralist, secular, democratic and republican values. To hark back to an imagined past, the interpretation of which depends wholly on the subjective preferences and cultural biases of the interpreter is to deprive the schoolgoing pupil of a sound and factually-based, scientifically-driven education, and more dangerous, deprive the pupil of his or her Constitutional rights. Mythology is constantly mixed up with history and Hindu mythology (alone) is presented as historical fact. Some progressive and secular personalities of history are appropriated but their forward-looking and critical thoughts are suppressed. For example Kabir is mentioned but his critique of ritualistic religions practices is not well emphasized; Vivekanand is presented mainly as Hindu preacher.

War and violence are glorified in the name of bravery and 'nationalism'. Ritual sacrifices are also justified. Non-violence is maligned as cause of cowardice (for example in section on Ashoka). Even comparatively good non-Hindu rulers are presented as only aggressors and cruel. Incongruously, the saffron flag of RSS is celebrated in the textbook. These are indeed odd examples to hold up and subtly glorify in a republic that affirms its commitment to universal and secular values. Prayers eulogize kings, artists, and scientists besides religious figures. Myth mixed with history.<sup>122</sup> No opportunity lost to mention heroic wars of kings against Muslims. Buddha, Nanak and Kabir incorporated within Hindu fold without a word about departures from tradition (one verse mentions even their scriptures are sources of knowledge for Hindus).<sup>123</sup>

**MADARSAS:** There are a large number of madarsas in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Particularly since 9/11, 2001, madarsas have found themselves the focus of hostile attention. They are accused of obscurantism, criticized for teaching mainly religious texts and of failing to equip Muslim children with credentials and skills necessary in today's labour market. Apart from imparting religious knowledge a large number of madarsas are teaching Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

There are three main division of madarsa education in the state of Bihar: (a) Bihar State Madarsa Board: Tahtania- Primary level, Wastania- Middle level, Foukania- Secondary level. (b) Imarat-i-Sharia Madarsa Education: Imarat-i- Sharia approved by the Bihar Rajaya Madarsa Board, Imarat-i- Sharia (not recognized). (c) Regional Madarsa Education: Madarsas run by volunteer organizations and regional leather business guilds.

Bihar State Madarsa Education Board recognizes both the government and private publications. Socio-religious organizations and private organizations also publish textbooks on their own initiative. Even after the establishment of Bihar State Madarsa Education Board textbooks have not been printed for many years. Only private publishers publish some guess papers and additional materials for the purpose of getting through the exams.

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<sup>122</sup> Ekatmata Stotram, pp. 11-20.

<sup>123</sup> Uttar Pradesh Report, pp. 7-8.

The report from Bihar gives a brief history of madarsas in India, from their establishment in mosques set up in the eighth century. It refers to the egalitarian principles of the Sufis, similar to those from which our Constitution takes inspiration, according to which people from different cultural contexts and of different religions would sit and dine together.<sup>124</sup> Coming to the contemporary context, after alluding to the fact that free and compulsory primary education was the price we paid for investment in higher education in the years after Independence, it argues that the free education provided by madarsas gives them a significant role in India today. Madarsas have structures in place for the transmission of knowledge, and they have institutional credibility in the community. Teaching is carried out with commitment. Although the vision behind this commitment is religious, it should not preclude the possibility of madarsas rising to the challenge of meeting the new expectations of them from society. All that is necessary is that this vision be renewed, which would provide them fresh impetus to carry on their work.<sup>125</sup>

For example, Delhi has around 40 madarsas.<sup>126</sup> Some of these madarsas follow the NCERT syllabus (Urdu medium), while others teach only manqulat (religious education). But the madarsas following the NCERT syllabus are handicapped by having to deal with poor translations of English textbooks.<sup>127</sup> Those teaching religious education follow a curriculum dating back to the eighteenth century. It includes the Quran, Fiqh (Jurisprudence), Sarf and Naheu (Arabic Literature and Grammar) and Tarikh (history from the Prophet to *Khilafat-I-Rashida*, 610-661 CE). The Delhi and Uttar Pradesh reports note that madarsas are using NCERT texts but most of them are still using medieval texts, which make no contribution to the education of children, in fact these can only help in the self-perpetuation of madarsas as they can only produce for madarsa teachers. As the qualifications provided by these madarsas are not recognized elsewhere, they prepare students only to become teachers themselves in these schools or to become Imams, Moazzins, Imams, Khatibs, Qazis and Muftis.<sup>128</sup>

Like Vidya Bharati, the Darul Ulum Devband and Nadvatul Ulema produce their own textbooks. Deeni Taleemi Council publishes for certain subjects (mainly religious education) but follows the recommendations of the State Board regarding others. The Council of Anglo-Indian Schools provides a curriculum and leaves the choice of books to school principals in consultation with teachers.

For Uttar Pradesh, the following Madarsa books were examined: *Kissalauumbia for children*, *Islam Ki Taleem*, *Khilafat-e-Raashida*, *Misaali Hukmaran*, *Ashraful Noori*, *Husn-e- Muasharat and Uski Takmeel Me Khwateen Kaa Hissa*, *Ummat-e-Musallima Ki Maen*, *Akhlaaqi Kahaaniya*, Urdu language books (from Class I to V), Hindi language books (from Class I to IV), *Aaina-e-Taarikh*.

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<sup>124</sup> Bihar Report, p. 45.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. pp. 46-7.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p. 3

The books do not say anything negative against any other religion and do not slander non-Islamic religions or people. But the books related to Islam glorify everything Islamic to a point of sharpening the religious identity of students. Blind faith, rather than critical and scientific thinking, dominates these books. The most troubling aspect is that children are deprived of alternative viewpoints. In some books, while talking of ideal persons, mostly Muslim characters are included and there are very references to non-Muslims. Thus, the discourse in these books is heavily Muslim-centric and worse still it becomes isolationist.<sup>129</sup>

But in some books (like Hindi language books and Urdu language books) large number of non-Muslim personalities are presented in an affirmative manner making these books impartial and open-minded.<sup>130</sup> Some of the books emphasize the positive values of communal harmony, objectivity, simplicity, honesty, and mercy for animals, equality, sacrifice and integrity. The Hindi language books, for example, focus on the importance of patriotism.

On gender issues the books are totally uncritical and status-quoist. While the domestic roles of women are highlighted their social roles are by and large given no space in these texts. Men's domestic responsibilities are almost absent. Promoting such retrograde impulses do not bode well for efforts to enhance consciousness of gender equality. The books *Husn-e-Muashrat* and *Ummat-e-Musallima Ki Mae* are only for girl's madarasas. The madrassas do not feel the need to tell girls about other good women or about good men or fathers or to tell boys about good women. These books mention only Muslim women, which narrows the students' ethos and horizon, and would undoubtedly hinder a sense of being part of the mainstream.<sup>131</sup>

These books are confessedly written from an Islamic viewpoint and not from a scientific viewpoint. Even historical events are treated as God-created thus making an understanding of history totally theistic and irrational. Some of these positions are shared with the RSS viewpoint. For example the reference to pre-Aryan cultures as extremely degenerate and describing the Aryans as great and gentle. Thus Aryans are praised in highest terms.

On Buddhism also there is some similarity between Jamaat's and Vidya Bharti's (RSS) perspectives. Both are uncomfortable with the Buddhist principle of non-violence and regard it as an impediment in putting curbs on wrongdoers. On the whole the books are replete with religious and theistic prejudices and superstitions.

Occasionally Hindu kings are maligned and Muslim kings are praised. The Bhakti period is presented within a very narrow and communal framework. The report noted that the communal bias of these books is obvious, but the tone is not aggressive and number of such references is small compared to the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs books.

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<sup>129</sup> Uttar Pradesh Report.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

But the Islamic viewpoint is so dominant that even the coercion on Muslims to follow Islamic rituals is mentioned with praise. But the coercion of non-Muslims is not praised. Overall the framework of these books is communal and extremely narrow and this can be seen in the criticism of Akbar's Deen-e-Ilahi.

Certainly, madarsas provide very limited education, and they are not an alternative to formal schooling. However, recent studies have pointed out that the choice of madarsas is a matter of inadequate alternative educational provision and it is a feasible recourse for those whose lack of resources leaves them little room for manoeuvre.<sup>132</sup> In rural areas and poor urban areas, madarsas are much more significant in Muslim formal education. They are meeting the unmet demand for schooling in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Nevertheless, madarsa education does have problematic implications. The special curriculum for girls exemplifies the problems of madarsa education. For example, madarsa students in Bijnor town in Uttar Pradesh are initially taught to read Urdu primers and simple extracts from the Quran.<sup>133</sup> The most commonly used Urdu textbooks include *Dini Talim* (Religious Education), *Talim-ul- Islam* (Islamic Education), *Fazail-e a mal* (Virtuous Actions). *Larkiyon ka Islami Course* books “contain 20-25 on topics ranging from recipes to dowry, and from embroidery to poems, questions and riddles with a theological bent.”<sup>134</sup> Most of them detail religious practices or stories criticizing harmful un-Islamic practices or deal with a woman’s domestic competence. It’s often in the form of advice literature for women and girls: Muslim women are to follow *adab* (etiquette) and *akhlaq* (moral virtues).

Contrary to stereotypes, one recent study found that of the 576 madarsas 553 i.e. 96.01 percent favour introduction of modern subjects to make the madarsa education more purposeful in ensuring a better future for the students.<sup>135</sup> The ability of madarsas to modernize by introducing subjects such as science, Hindi and English is constrained by finances. Arabic, Persian and Urdu and Islamic subjects occupy prominent positions in most madarsa curricula.

Several kinds of state intervention have been proposed: to regulate and inspect madarsas, to oversee their curricula and insist that they are registered with the government. Establishing Madarsa Boards is one form of regulation that some states have followed. This has also helped the process of modernization of curriculum. While modernization and regulation of madarsa curriculum is needed, it is ultimately a defensive strategy that poses no challenge to the structures that perpetuate Muslims’ educational backwardness. The danger of educating significant numbers of Muslim children separately from those of other communities provides few opportunities for interaction and dialogue and minimizes social contact between them and others. It creates the space for the escalation of prejudices and stereotypes and the reinforcement of particularistic and distinctive

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<sup>132</sup> Patricia Jeffery, Roger Jeffery and Craig Jeffrey, ‘Islamization, Gentrification and Domestication: A Girls Islamic Course and Rural Muslims in Uttar Pradesh’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 38, 1 (2004), pp. 1-53.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p.4.

<sup>135</sup> Qamaruddin, *Hindustan Ki Deeni Darshana Kul Hind Survey*, Hamdard Society, New Delhi, 1992

identities on both sides of the Hind-Muslim divide.

#### TEXTBOOKS PREPARED BY PRIVATE PUBLISHERS IN THE STATES

**JAMMU AND KASHMIR:** In Jammu and Kashmir as explained in the previous section, both private and public schools are made to follow the curriculum prepared by the State Board. Non-government schools do use support material published *outside* the state, as the state “has no reputed publisher for publishing the textbooks or reference books.”<sup>136</sup> However, these private publications do not figure in the teaching of senior classes, as Classes VIII to XII have to appear for public examinations.<sup>137</sup>

**KARNATAKA:** Although Karnataka State publications are what are used predominantly in both government and private schools, the State report brings out the issues of representation in the books published by private agencies within Karnataka. Subhash Book Agency publishes material for Classes I to IV. Its textbooks for Moral Science, *Bala Neethi*, are criticised for simplistic formulations (good vs. bad) and the fact that most diagrams depict men as the protectors of morality.<sup>138</sup> Some of the statements quoted “We must respect poor and rich people”<sup>139</sup>, amount to a very thin protest against the social manifestation of economic inequalities and in fact appear to reinforce them.

The ethics purveyed are essentially Hindu (good practices include devotion towards God, and Hindu myths offer examples) and authoritarian (bad practices include being demanding of one’s parents, and more outrageously, Ekalavya’s story demonstrates that “Devotion towards Guru is equal to devotion towards god”).<sup>140</sup> There is nothing on protecting the environment.

The Kannada and Social Studies guides published by Gadag in Mangalore (Mohan Guides and Ananda Guide) carry considerable gender bias<sup>141</sup>, an excess of Hindu references and also denigrate Muslims (supposed to have kept Hindus in conditions of slavery).<sup>142</sup> These guides have a much larger circulation through the open market as they are directly linked to examinations

The *Kannada Parimala* (published from Bangalore) offers lessons on Moral Science/Culture for Classes II to V. Hindu mythology and religion comprise the source of values, India is collapsed into Hindu (and all festivals and gods mentioned are Hindu) and the construction of sentences divides Indians into Hindus (the norm) and Others.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Jammu and Kashmir Report, p. 3.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>138</sup> Karnataka Report, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Bala Neethi*, Class One, cited on p. 15 of the report.

<sup>140</sup> *Bala Neethi*, Class Three, *ibid*.

<sup>141</sup> *Stree Neethi Sudhakara*, Letter no. 4, a woman should put up with a husband’s violence, in the hope of happiness “during her son’s time”. Discussed on p. 13 of the report.

<sup>142</sup> *Mohan Guide*, Class 5, p. 26. Cited on p. 14 of the report.

<sup>143</sup> The Class 3 textbook says on p. 27, “Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists and people from all caste-religions, who too are Indians, celebrate Republic Day” (Karnataka Report, p. 18).

The first chapter of the textbook for Class IV concludes, “It is good if friendship and relationship are made between two people of equal standing (equal people)”.<sup>144</sup>

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KERALA: The content analysis from Kerala is based on a survey of eight Social Science books (only one of which is published in Kerala) and three Malayalam textbooks. All of these are produced by private publishers and are used in private schools in Kerala.<sup>146</sup> There are no state mechanisms for regulating the content of textbooks used by private schools not recognized by the state.<sup>147</sup>

The Kerala group chose to extend the implications of its brief to see if the core curricular components of NPE and the values implied were adequately addressed, and whether the values presented, suggested or implied were in consonance with the prescriptions in NPE and the spirit of the Constitution. It also opened up the question as to whether textual content, learning activities and evaluation activities allowed scope for transacting the values by linking different situations/topics/activities with real life possibilities. It concluded that what is lacking is a coherent theory of values as the foundation of one’s understanding of ideas and issues encountered in literature and the social sciences.<sup>148</sup>

Hitherto, “value education” has been reduced to information about religions in History, inserted as topics on citizenship in Civics and as moral tales and hagiographies in the languages. Unimaginative evaluation exercises do little to sharpen the student’s ability to make values her own through reflection and testing. The report points out that the prevailing tendency is to make one’s starting point a list of topics to be covered and to try tacking on values and cultural perspectives at the end. Instead, the selection of topics should be based on a vision of the ideas and principles it is thought important that the student reflect on. Just as one’s interpretation of a topic indicates a cultural perspective, the exploration of a value opens up new areas within a subject. For instance, though the NPE identifies “international understanding” as a value, this is something rarely touched on by textbooks. Yet it has the potential to open up new dimensions of Indian history, like our relations with Myanmar, with South Africa.

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<sup>144</sup> The report argues that it is difficult to visualize “how publications in the private sector are to be ... regulated. Certainly if private publications are to be given in government schools (as in the case of the Infosys Library programme), they could also be reviewed and approved by [the regulatory board they propose setting up for State publications. Such boards could function in a more decentralized manner, at the district level.” The report suggests that it might be better to have an ombudsman type of office at the state or district level. At this office “people can bring to notice material that may be particularly offensive from the constitutional point of view (not necessarily promoting one religion or deriving values from one religion etc., but more when there is denigration of other creeds) or materials that are of an offensive character. This could be an office that is linked directly to the Lokayuta office, or the legislature or to the office of the Commissioner of Public Instruction, who is then empowered to investigate and act in the matter”. Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. pp. 5-6.

<sup>146</sup> Kerala Report, pp. 2-3.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

Both religion and especially the idea of a composite culture are usually imagined very mechanistically. Descriptions of religions are limited to narratives of their individual origins, and do not trace the histories of their mutual interaction or long term influence, like that of the tenets of Jainism upon Gandhi's code of ethics. And textbooks do not think beyond referring in token fashion to different religions and regions, sometimes offering summary accounts of all in a single unit. As the report puts it, the "actual impact of this representational approach is to de-emphasize the idea of a common cultural heritage... [as] sociological aspects that focus on interactions between the different streams in culture are ignored" and the more immediate impression is of the "boundaries of individual religions".<sup>149</sup>

Similarly social reform needs to be understood more imaginatively. The report argues that when social reform movements aimed at obtaining justice for oppressed castes are dealt with in one book<sup>150</sup>, the presentation leaves an impression of narrow identity politics, as the concerns of each caste are not shown as having a bearing upon one another.<sup>151</sup> Mention of social reformers is limited to the nineteenth century - Ram Mohan Roy, Syed Ahmed Khan - as those of the twentieth century tend to be subsumed under the narrative of the nationalist movement. This means that Ambedkar figures only as a "constitutional expert" the architect of the Constitution, and, as the report puts it, his "life's work for social justice and development of oppressed people remains untouched".<sup>152</sup> It is difficult to accommodate Ambedkar's conflicts with Gandhi over the mobilisation of the Dalits within the account of a unified nationalist movement.

The "exclusion of regional history" is seen as a "grave drawback...All the textbooks are prepared from an exclusively national perspective". Even in lower primary classes in Kerala, "what is presented under topics in civics, social environment and culture is far away from the experience domain of the student".<sup>153</sup> In Geography, it is the virtual exclusion of "the human angle.... values, culture and [the child's] real life experiences and needs" that appears to underlie the failure to integrate "themes like protection of the environment... with the main concepts in Geography".<sup>154</sup> The same cluster of criticisms is called forth by the government publications of Jammu and Kashmir. In this case it may be explained by the fact that seven out of eight of the Social Science books surveyed are produced by private publishers outside Kerala, and are marketed in many other states. But then the exercises if not the content should take into account the local experience.

A more serious implication of such a perspective is the issue of non-recognition. The report observes that "groups such as tribes and scheduled castes are marginalised into virtual non-existence by most of the textbooks", and the understanding of diversity remain confined to "geographical and linguistic diversity... write-ups on different

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid. pp. 6-7, and p. 25.

<sup>150</sup> *Social Studies* (H. & C. Publishing House), Thrissur.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

religions and regions.”<sup>155</sup> This distorts the understanding of contemporary India, as shown below.

Commenting on how Vedic culture is presented as spreading uniformly all over India, the report notes that when referring to the epics, the “references to other peoples and cultures are not touched upon”.<sup>156</sup> Such omissions do the kind of harm one anticipates from the distortions of books propagating the ideology of the Hindu Right. Elsewhere, the only allusion to tribals is in a single sentence, “A number of tribal people *still* inhabit the Bastar region”<sup>157</sup>, where the word “still” betrays the assumption that they are an anachronism in contemporary India.

The report observes that it is facile to use religious and regional diversity to project the country’s dense history and extensive territories. It is still simpler to reduce the meaning of diversity to the insertion of lists. It is a challenge of another order for lessons to engage critically with the power equations implicit in the historical relations between (or very definition of) marginalized and mainstream groups. It is also a challenge to extend the urban, upper middle class reader’s imagination to natural and cultural landscapes so unlike her own.

Visuals as well as the text help to sediment images of gender roles and rural and urban life that are marked by both exclusion and misrepresentation.<sup>158</sup> The report notes that writers appear oblivious of the importance of “non-sexist language.” The generic ‘Man’ is always the agent of historical change, in unsophisticated narratives that explain scientific process *backwards* from the ends at which it arrives (“He has developed for himself the telephone, the radio...to get information from any part of the world”).<sup>159</sup> Nor are stereotypes challenged, women being shown in traditional or subordinate roles, like teachers and road cleaners.<sup>160</sup> The ratio of male to female figures in visuals is supplied for three publications and ranges from nearly 2:1 to nearly 6:1.<sup>161</sup> Most importantly, there is no engagement with the social issues that underlie women’s inequality.<sup>162</sup>

Experience limited to a very small percentage of society (urban middle class) is often presented as generic. If there is acknowledgement of rural society and economy, this is in the shape of a formulaic binary:” A school in a town” and “A village school”. Ironically, fixed in these images, town and village present educational opportunities and environments so unlike as to undermine the assumption implicit in prescriptive passages of urban middle class experience being the norm.<sup>163</sup> We examine some examples of such privileging of urban experience.

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid. pp. 21-2.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. pp. 21-2. The book referred to is N.K Chowdhury, *Discovering our Country* (S. Chand and Co.).

<sup>158</sup> Ibid. pp. 18-20, Maharashtra Report, p. 11.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. p. 7, p. 9 and p. 12.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p. 10. The books are *Time, Space and People*, Class 6 (Oxford India), *Gems History and Civics*, Class 6 (Ratna Sagar) and *ABC of Social Studies*, Class 5 (Holy Faith International).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. p. 19, Figs. 15 and 16.

The report picks out visuals from primary school social studies, where the child is the focus in what appears to be a discussion of a balanced diet (as the captions of the visuals are breakfast, snacks etc). He (never she in the examples given) is identifiable as urban upper middle class by details of dress and cutlery. At once all that the accompanying text prescribes as a healthy breakfast/lunch excludes a large segment of its readers (not counting the still larger section of children outside the formal school system).

An illustration of “private property” offers an assortment including a television set, large trunks, a tea service and an armchair. This ignores both economic disparity and cultural practice. While a TV is arguably desired by a large proportion of those who can see themselves acquiring the means to buy it, armchairs or cups with saucers remain irrelevant to many domestic arrangements and dining rituals, however significant they may be to a certain class of consumers.

The report comments on the way in which illustrations of villagers present them as poorly dressed and in submissive stances, “with hands folded in respect while the Gram Sevak is holding up his hand in an aggressive gesture of authority”.<sup>164</sup> ‘National Issues’, like dowry and caste, are located in rural India rather than examined in their different dimensions across class and location.<sup>165</sup> And the problems of rural life are implied as being self-inflicted (poor hygiene, large families) rather than as structured by unequal relations with urban areas. It is worth quoting one such paragraph in full:

“Because of ignorance, villagers do not understand the importance of having a small family and continue to have many children. As a result, they find it difficult to properly feed, clothe and educate their children. Ignorance prevents them from getting their children vaccinated and these children fall prey to diseases. Many villages are still ignorant of the fact that using good quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides can increase agricultural production”.<sup>166</sup>

All three references to the ignorance of villagers mark the disjuncture between the perspective of the individual rural family and the inevitable “national perspective”. A child may have to be fed and clothed, but she is also made to assist agricultural activity (possibly at the cost of her education). If vaccinations are not easily affordable or accessible, parents may anticipate the loss of some children through disease, and it therefore does not make sense to restrict the number of their children. Increased agricultural production is desirable from the national point of view, where there are economies of scale not experienced by a poor family. For the latter, the cost of “good-quality seeds” may not be compensated for by the returns in terms of crop yields that they cannot usually sell directly in the market.

We have already noted how textbooks relegate environmental consciousness to the private sphere and to the public sector and the state. They do not enter sites of social

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p. 18, Figs. 11 and 12.

<sup>165</sup> *Gems School History and Civics*, Class 6, pp. 93-4, cited on p. 17 of the report.

<sup>166</sup> *History and Civics*, Class 6, Bharati Bhawan Publishers, p. 98, cited on p. 16 of the report.

interaction and conflict, like the ecological footprint of an urban village or unregulated use of air-conditioning. In related fashion, books mention the problems of population in the situation of a rural family, but the materiality of this situation is misread. This is because their primary concern is less the rural family than population as a problem for the State, which is responsible and accountable for employment schemes and the public distribution system.

The report concludes by suggesting that the core components, values and cultural perspectives in the NPE remain “very general, broad and often fuzzy concepts”, in need of clearer elaboration. It proposes the publication of a document on core values, “for the benefit of teachers, curriculum developers and textbook writers”, which would contain “practicable, precise and elaborate suggestions with examples” on “how the core components, values and cultural perspectives are to be translated into text content and activities”.<sup>167</sup>

It proposes further pedagogic interventions. Students should be enabled to understand “how data are interpreted” in a subject like history “where multiple interpretations are possible” depending upon the framework one brings. This would allow the student “to link data and knowledge to a number of situations in real life”.<sup>168</sup> It also argues that even after the formulation of “an effective pedagogic approach” to the social sciences, in such complex areas as the “struggle for freedom, religion, cultural heritage and social reform... there is a need for formulating policies/approaches to transact these”.<sup>169</sup> Regarding content, it suggests that the “guidelines for textbook preparation...include topics suggested for inclusion in the social science textbooks of different states”, so that there is “adequate representation of regional history, society and culture”.<sup>170</sup>

In RAJASTHAN Value Education books are written by authors identified by the parent organizations of schools like the DAV College Management Committee, Delhi or the Bharatiya Vidya Samiti, Rajasthan. They recommend private publications on the basis of a consensus of faculty members, who are approached informally by private publishers. “Interestingly each school identified a book shop from which students buy the books.”<sup>171</sup>

The president of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan states in the preface that “grandmother tales contribute to the internalisation of ‘fundamental values of life.’ Since technology and materialism give rise to erosion, the task of these books is to prepare students for gradual learning of tradition, history and culture. These eight books comprise nearly 153 chapters. Out of 153 chapters only three and two chapters provide information about Christianity and Islam respectively. These books are imbalanced. Secondly no stress is given on Indian constitutional norms and rules of civility.”<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. p. 25 and p. 28.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>171</sup> Rajasthan Report, p. 4.

<sup>172</sup> Rajasthan Report, p. 2.

According to these authors Muslims (who were aggressors) started marriages with Hindu girls. As a result for protecting culture and religion, Hindus started following rules of endogamy. Authors opine that endogamy leads to purity of blood of a caste.<sup>173</sup>

The UTTAR PRADESH report in defining its perspective on Education, the report imagines it as something that enables the child to “preserve and enhance [her]... courage to challenge an unjust social order”. It should also “widen the child’s sense of identity by transcending the narrow identities of caste, religion and class, and by ... enhancing his/her sensitivity for plurality of viewpoints and of forms of life...[and] empathy for people different from him/her.” Caste and class should be simultaneously recognized as implicated in an “unjust social order” and transcended through questioning and empathetic awareness.

This perspective is able to unpack many things that are disquieting in an elementary-level Moral Science textbook, *Rashtriya Naitik Shiksha Evam Samanya Gyan*<sup>174</sup> (used by most schools, though neither on the government approved lists nor on the lists of non-government councils), and the observations of the report are outlined below.

The terms of reference of epic literature are adopted uncritically in adaptations for children. In describing the accidental killing of Shravan Kumar, the reader’s sense of human suffering becomes secondary to caste identity, when Shravan, described as a Vaishya, reassures Dashratha that he will not incur the sin of killing a Brahmin.<sup>175</sup> The story of King Shivi maiming himself to feed a hawk (so that its prey is spared) belongs to a past whose experience of violence and norms of justice are alien to those of the modern world.<sup>176</sup> They ought not be imported into the world of a child of Class III without more sensitive mediation than is provided. The problem arises not only when having to work with the reference points and events of classical literature. In a set of ethical injunctions, the reference to domestic help as “servants” carries the feudal relations of the past into a society that makes claims to greater egalitarianism.

The moral principles the textbooks seek to instill are insufficiently developed, and the report cites several lessons in Classes II and V where a good act sets up the expectation of a reward, and ill deeds call forth the wrath of God.<sup>177</sup>

They are confined to a Hindu ethos, and only *one species* of Hinduism, which is never brought into dialogue with its spiritual, rationalist or actively ethical traditions. In Lesson 27 of Class II, idol worship is made a command. In Class III, Lesson 14, a woman lost in her devotions forgets to give her son his medicine. When admonished, her defense is that God’s intervention is more effective than human efforts, and this is borne out by the son recovering without the help of medicine.

<sup>173</sup> Textbook on Sociology for Class XII, written by M.L.Gupta and D.D. Sharma.

<sup>174</sup> *Rashtriya Naitik Shiksha Evam Samanya Gyan*<sup>174</sup> eds. K.N. Joshi, G. Ram & B.V. Chaturvedi (Ashok Prakashan, Deputy Ganj, Bulandshahar), Classes 2 to 5. Cited on p. 3 of the Uttar Pradesh Report.

<sup>175</sup> *Rashtriya Naitik Shiksha*, Class II, Lesson 2, quoted on p. 3 of the report.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. Class III, Lesson 4, cited on p. 4 of the report.

<sup>177</sup> For instance, Class V, p. 29 (Lesson 13), cited on p. 4 of the report; see also p. 5.

The moral teaching frequently takes the form of commandments, which is the least effective of pedagogic methods. The texts contain heavily loaded terms, whose complex meanings a child cannot understand, or correlate to his or her own life experience or imagined life situations. At the other extreme they deal with relatively trivial concerns, such as tidiness, whose breach could scarcely be called immoral. The instructions to the teacher seem to betray the writer's own lack of confidence in the material resonating with the reader. "The child must have inspiration from this story."

Seven year olds are encouraged to pray so that they may have the self-control to remain celibate. The uncritical worship of parents and elders is encouraged, of which the most egregious example is the moral affixed to the story of Ekalavya (reverence alone makes possible learning). Rituals with umpteen instructions, narrow identities/eating with left hand. Visuals/verbs are all masculine; a woman has no place in the world of morality while in the real world the most stringent norms are applied to women alone and emphasis given to stereotypes of dependent identity – such as the widow.

Indira Gandhi's famous last words "every drop of my blood will strengthen Bharat" has been highlighted while there is nothing on her pluralistic and secular ideology.

#### STUDIES COMMISSIONED BY THE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT THE FOLLOWING ISSUES

Content analysis of textbooks of State Boards and private publishers highlight two very different kinds of problems that need to be distinguished and addressed. One is the rank communal propaganda of textbooks used in schools run by religious and social organizations, especially schools affiliated to the RSS, and the other is the more subtle set of issues, for example, the homogenization of middle class life as the norm, which reports such as from Kerala and Karnataka highlight.

Communal bias is imprinted on school textbooks by weaving in absurd and unsubstantiated narratives and facts in a way that undermines not only the scientific quality and academic standard of the education meted out in schools but could have seriously damaging consequences for the quality and integrity of educational standards in the country. Such textbooks can contribute to the growth of a communal consciousness and must not be used in schools of any type.

This report provides numerous examples to substantiate how textbooks produced by social and religious organizations are written to 'supplement' and 'correct' the history that is taught in the government textbooks. These textbooks exaggerate and valorise the role of certain figures and personalities as against others. When Gandhi and Nehru are perforce mentioned as national leaders, Hindutva leaders are given equal importance. The danger in allowing such distortions of the Indian historical record is that it does not convey the actual context of the events as they unfolded and led up to the birth of independent India. It is a well known fact that as equally isolated were the Muslim communal leaders from the mainstream of public opinion, so too were the Hindutva

leaders of pre-Independence India and therefore to suggest that these leaders had the same stature as Gandhi or Nehru would be a gross travesty of historical truth. Besides their objectives use different methods, to divide not unify the people. They should not figure in the textbooks of a secular republic as heroes.

There is no distinction between fact, fiction and mythology. The entire aim of the history written in these textbooks appears to be the projection of the Hindu communal imagination that the Indian nation has always been primarily and essentially a Hindu one, with its most glorious moments and highest achievements unfolding under Hindu kings.

The textual materials greatly exaggerate ancient India's achievements without any of the factual and empirical substantiation required to make that case. They also echo the Hindutva chauvinist narratives that present the country as a victim of repeated foreign aggressions and invasions, especially by Muslim rulers.

All past achievements are referred back to the ancient pre-Islamic era. The landscape is bereft of all Muslim or Christian cultural or religious presence. History is shown to develop around a single axis, which bifurcates Indian people into true Indians and aliens, as Hindus and others, as victims and tyrants, as invaders and vanquished. The fact that India has since ancient times been a multi-cultural, multi-religious, syncretic society has not been emphasized sufficiently thus manipulating the future generation into a pattern of narrow-minded and intolerant thinking.

Textbooks produced by the private publishers show a blithe disregard of the constitutional framework. In the absence of any regulatory mechanism, textbooks in an extremely unrestrained fashion take it upon themselves to usurp the interpretation of content of important disciplines like history and geography and freely inject myth and fiction into them. Adding to this mythologisation of facts is the free categorisation of the significance of issues and factors, not at all in consonance with the prevailing realities requiring depiction. For instance, there is undue attention paid to the role of the Brahmin community, revealing an elite perspective rather than an accurate depiction of the prevailing social reality of different communities equally claiming public space. There is also a subtle and even exaggerated focus on a Hindu-Muslim division, drawing more from cultural imagination than on any actual historical record.

Most books mention that the Muslim League is a communal organization and rightly so but strangely enough, the communal and chauvinist orientation of the RSS as an organization openly committed to the launching of a Hindu Rashtra do not find mention in these books. In the narratives of history, mythology and Hindi literature, Muslims are portrayed in a negative light thus providing space and legitimacy for the promotion of crude propaganda against Muslims and Christians.

This is a direct reflection of the communal bias of the syllabus. This is a real cause for concern because the goal of education policy is to promote the values enshrined in the Constitution and to allow school curricula to deviate from the constitutionally-mandated adherence to the ideal of building a secular nation would be to violate the Constitution.

This is a dangerous trend which has to be urgently arrested if textbooks are to reflect the goals of our national education policy and the values emphasized in our secular Constitution which seeks to build a united India, fully conscious of the cultural, social, religious, linguistic diversities that are at work within the country but are sought to be welded together to produce citizens owing allegiance to the republic of India committed to pluralism, democracy and development.

The second sets of issues highlighted in the content analysis are concerned with the improper and inappropriate and at times offensive handling of caste-based discrimination, community and gender issues in all textbooks including State government books. Most textbooks are marked by little or no regional history /geography / culture, indicating a lack of sense of the immediate environment of the child

There is little account of the reality of rural India. What is presented highlights the extremely limited scope of elite imagination of rural India. Equally significantly, women, labouring classes, dalits and tribals are inadequately represented in the textbooks.

This comes as no surprise given that the books have no qualms about presenting the upper caste, upper class urban north Indian/regionally dominant male as the paradigmatic representative of Indian experience.

The fact that there have been many dissenting voices and opposition through the years to the homogenising and centralising tendencies in trying to build a national identity is curiously not reflected in either books sponsored by the right wing or government books.

Even State textbooks indulge in a great deal of homogenisation; there is almost no mention of class or social differences; the stereotyping of girls and women is all too common.

State government textbooks appear to implant these religious, regional and gender biases in a subtle manner through the over-representation of and over-emphasis on certain religious and cultural symbols and values in the textbooks, which by implication would devalue symbols and values of a different religious or cultural persuasion.

Such textual materials will submerge all secular interpretations in school level teaching and cause a serious deterioration in the quality of education, especially because of the failure to demand the minimum criteria of ensuring that textual content is strictly based on empirical data and scientific scrutiny. Our children will be little suited to face the real world or the rigorous standards of the world of scholarship.

It is imperative that textbooks strongly emphasize the plurality and syncretic nature of Indian society, the rich interactions within it of different cultures and traditions, its multi-ethnic, multi-religious character, its non-religious, as well as religious fault-lines, and its scientific-rational as well as spiritual and religious traditions. We must be conscious of our historic responsibility in producing textbooks for our children.

We must ensure that these young minds recognise that as citizens of the Indian republic their future is best preserved in a commitment to a national identity based on respect for cultural diversity and that all the diverse social, economic and linguistic groups that live in this country are equal inheritors of the national legacy. Our textbooks must emphatically reaffirm this important point or else our attempt to have a nationally relevant education policy would have little impact.

## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS ON REGULATORY MECHANISMS FOR TEXTBOOKS AND PARALLEL TEXTBOOKS

1.1 The state has a duty to provide a meaningful quality education for all as part of its duty to provide school education for all, as part of the latter's fundamental right. It is obvious that textbooks are a fulcrum of any system which seeks to provide quality education. We have now an enormous variety of textbooks in the country and the content analysis undertaken for this report shows that there many problems with textbooks in use in different types of schools. The provision of textbooks in our country is largely governed by a laissez faire approach prevails. While the plurality in the textbooks and textual materials so produced is and can be fruitful, it is important that these textbooks have to be informed by the philosophy of liberal, secular and democratic education. They need to keep the Constitution and its provisions in view. It is important that textbooks and textual materials are written and produced within this framework and the country must be satisfied that these processes are transparent.

1.2 There is an urgent need to set up an institutional facility to keep an eye on textbooks. Research on textbooks is an essential feature of a healthy education system, but in the context of the challenges we face, research must take the form of inquiry into specific problems relating to the quality of textbooks and the values they convey. An institutional structure to perform this task needs to be independent of any organization, which is involved, in textbook preparation. This would imply that the institutional facility we are recommending for exercising vigilance on textbooks cannot be associated with the NCERT at the national level and SCERTs at the state level. The NCERT is a major player in the textbook industry and is likely to remain involved in it in the foreseeable future. Therefore, while NCERT's and the SCERT s role as a research organization must extend to research on textbooks, independent institutional structures need to be set up to exercise vigilance on textbooks published by both government organizations as well as by others. The structure can be called National Textbook Council. The State governments may be encouraged to set up their own State Textbook Council. Both the National Textbook Council and State Textbook Council should be fully autonomous and representing genuine voices in civil society and the academia so that the monitoring of textbooks can be performed with intellectual rigour, sensitivity and commitment to constitutional values. The primary role of these Councils would be to review the contents of textbooks to ensure compliance with the constitutional values and national policies of education. The National Textbook Council may devise its own procedures for review. Given the fact that ordinary citizens do not have a forum where they can complain about content and quality of textbooks, even though their own children are involved, these Councils may especially respond to complaints received from the public about the quality and value perspective of school textbooks by conducting specific inquiries.

2.1 CAGE may set up a Standing Committee. The Standing Committee will inform CAGE from time to time about textbook-related matters and seek guidance from the National Textbook Council. The Committee will from time to time review and examine standards and relevance of textual materials for the educational enterprise and assess the social content of textbooks and textual materials and examine whether they are consistent with the vision of the constitution and the values of the national policy of education and in terms appropriate for children at different stages of development. It will submit its report to the government and this should be made public.

2.2 It is extremely important that the principle of periodic review of textual materials be accepted and review undertaken on a regular basis. The CAGE Standing Committee can decide the periodicity of such review.

2.3 Guidelines should be laid down for the periodic review of textual materials of all kinds so that Textbooks are consistent with the secular fabric of Indian governance. Standing Committee would be empowered to prepare the guidelines and outline the parameters for review. It is important that the criteria for approval of textual materials must include a proper analysis of content to assess its adherence to the core principles before the textbooks are approved and prescribed. These will need to be conducted by academic experts who can judge departures from core principles of egalitarianism, democracy, secularism and removal of social barriers, which define the national endeavour of education for all and nation building.

These guidelines must be strictly adhered to.

2.4 The Standing Committee should make these periodic reviews and reports public. It should be widely publicized through the media and other means to increase public awareness of the social content of textbooks and the importance of using textual materials that are in keeping with the values and spirit of egalitarianism, secularism and democracy.

2.5 The review process must be initiated without inconveniencing parents and children and completed within six months of the beginning of the new academic session.

3.1 It is a matter of concern that NCERT and SCERT have so far not taken up research on textbooks as a major area of research and this needs to be strengthened. The NCERT and SCERTs can be asked to set up units dedicated to research on textbook preparation and evaluation. Academic autonomy required for undertaking this function in an objective manner should be provided to the NCERT and SCERTs.

3.2 Adequate funding must be made available to concerned agencies for engaging in research on social content of textbooks. Adequate staff must be provided so that it could function in conjunction with and provide support to the CAGE Standing Committee for Curricular Review. The MHRD, State Education Departments and State Directorates of Education should earmark funds for this purpose and all institutions of higher learning should support research in school textbooks.