

EVALUATION OF CONTENT OF HISTROY TEXT BOOKS PUBLISHED BY NCERT – AN EXEMPLARY STEP FOR CONTINOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is an apex resource organization set up by the government of India to assist and advise the central and state governments on academic matters related to school education. The model textbooks published by the council for adoption by school systems across India have generated controversies over the years. The NCERT has operated as a semi official organization promoting a “STATE SPONSORED” educational philosophy.” Textbooks' are the major educational tools for the student. In India, text books 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 neatly. For this reason the content of textbooks or instructional material is a deeply contentious issue in several countries around the world.

KEYWORDS: Textbooks, Adoption, School

INTRODUCTION

The NCERT was established by the government of India in 1961 to improve teaching methods. In principle, it is an autonomous body, but in practice its powers are limited by the fact that it is financed by the government. The NCERT develops the curriculum and prepares model textbooks. It is indeed difficult to know exactly how many children use NCERT books students enrolled in the institutions affiliated to the CBSE represented 3 to 5 percent of the total student population, but there were, in addition, the students from the state and union territories were all recognized schools affiliated with central board.”

It may also be assumed that about 10 percent of students directly used the text books prepared by NCERT. Since 2004, the number of states adopting the text books prepared by NCERT has been consistently increasing. A meticulous review of History text books was organized by UNESCO, in connection to this, the renowned Indian Historian ROMILA THAPPPAR, in late twenties was asked to survey the books. Her report highlighted that these books contained outdated ideas and colonial stereotypes. Later, she was solicited by NCERT to write a history text book for Class VI on Ancient India. It was published in 1968 and gradually other text books were commissioned: Bipan Chandra prepared a textbook on modern India (1970), Ram Sharan Sharma on Ancient India (1977), Satish Chandra wrote on Medieval India (1978) and Arjun Dev on India and the World. The historians approached in the 1960s and 1970s ere inscribed in certain context which obviously influenced their way of conceptualizing history and influenced even more their way of writing the textbooks; the wrote history textbooks for a young country only a decade after it became independent. These historians felt that it was their duty to help to elaborate the new history books. Its that time it was understood as a “National Cause”. In 1969, a report of the committee of school text books reaffirms the importance of the teaching of history of uniting the ‘nation’. The aim of these books was, indeed, to promote the building of a secular national identity.

The History Text Books: A SECULAR NATIONALIST INTERPRETATION: - it is aptly quoted “The “omnipotence” of the textbooks give rise to the belief that whatever it contains can never be questioned. The only knowledge considered is that reproduced in textbooks; all other sources of knowledge and learning are of secondary importance. The school transmits knowledge and the rest are entertaining or just anecdotes. Thus, the “textbook’s monopoly on knowledge gives its contents an unparalleled strength. Students treat history as the most boring subject and few of them would like to take it up at the university level. The didactic of history in textbooks certainly participates in the student disinterest in the subject. These books expose India & history in a linear and uniform manner.

Thus, One the most sensitive areas demanding, delicate handling lines in the preparation of textbooks, for history in the schools. The discipline of the subject requires objectivity and precision and dispassionate study of facts.”

There is, however, an element of interpretation in the treatment of interpretation in the treatment of historical data and it is, however, an element of interpretation in the treatment of historical data and it is essential to ensure that history is interpreted in a manner which will assist in the cultivation of understanding and in promoting the sense of national integration.

“The historians who wrote the first set of textbooks shared leftist sensibilities.” And we’re influenced to different degree by the most prominent Marxist historiography, but above all they supported a secular conception of nationalism that influenced the way they viewed and presented history. These textbooks have some common features resulting from their authors’ efforts to bring out and present a kind of secularist consensual version of Indian history. Though text books are the aids which are indispensable to all method for the study of history yet it has contributed significantly the development of integrated information.

The Assertive Analysis: Text Books of History of the Middle School and in Depth Review

In case of evaluation of the textbooks of the first edition of the book (Published in 1966) compared with its current edition. We do not find any significant differences. The changes are primarily cosmetic. The introductory chapters discuss how history of the ancient period is reconstructed, the various sources of information for the same and how it began. The chapter as such makes very dry reading for the students because it contains very less illustrations. “A significant omission is the map, which, if included would have greatly facilitated the understanding of the essay type text.” On the contrary, the books make no attempt to relate the present with the past, even though the author remarks that one of the reasons for studying is to understand our present.

Man takes to city life

It is the chapter, which deals with the Harappan culture. In her 1966 edition Romila Thapar had made an erroneous remark.

“The earliest city to be discovered in India was Mohenjo-daro on the river Indus in Sind. Further up the Indus valley another ancient city was excavated and this was Harappa near the modern Montgomery.”

This was corrected in the latest edition.

“The earliest city to be discovered in India was Harappa in Punjab (Presently in Pakistan) further down in the Indus Valley another city was excavated and this was Mohenjo-Daro in Sind”.

The Archeologists called the civilization of these ancient cities the Indus valley civilization, because both of these cities and other sites sharing the same culture were found in the Indus Valley. But for the east forty years archeologist have been digging in other parts of northern. There are several examples of such inaccuracies and imbalances in the text book. There are certain historical issues where the evidence can be interpreted in different ways and does not at present allow any definite conclusions. In such cases, there is no right or ‘wrong’ view. A few examples of the inaccuracies and imbalances in the books are given below:

- The book suggests (pp. 59-63) that the Egyptian civilization is older than the Mesopotmean civilization while it is actually the other way assessed.
- The relationship between the Harappan and the Vedic cultures is a matter of unresolved debate.
- While the Harappans may have worshipped Linga-types object, it is incorrect they say that they worshipped Shiva in the form of Linga” (Page – 84), the statement on Page 90 that the Harappan worshipped the “SAPTAMATRIKAS” & “SHIVA LINGAS”. Is incorrect.
- Some of the statements about the Rigvedic culture are questionable, e.g. Rigvedic culture is questionable, e.g. That the four venues existed in the Early Vedic age. There is an exaggeration of the scientific knowledge contained in the Vedas. The statement about the status of the cow in the Vedic age is also questionable.”
- Examples of inaccurate over-glorification includes a description of the Upanishads as “the work of most profound philosophy in any religion and as the greatest works of philosophy in the history of humankind.” Indian and Chinese civilizations are the only ones which have survived right from the time they came into existence till date. All other earlier civilizations have no connections with the past ones. On page 107 confusion is created by making up the early colors with the later collapse.
- Eventually the book's emphasis on the life on the Indo-Gangetic valley, but developments in other parts of the subcontinent has not been adequate attention.

Similarly, the chapter No. 7 “The Age of Guptas has been referred to as the “GOLDEN AGE” because this period saw great achievements of Indian culture [1966: 101]. The present edition, however omits the phrase, consistent with Marxist historiography of D.D. Kosambi, D.N. Jha and other Marxist historians who find all kinds of Pedantic reasons for low grading the evaluation of this period and reject the term GOLDEN AGE.

Summarizes the historical evolution of the region as well as its religious tenets Thaper presents the advent of Islam to India regularly as an enriching experience. The distribution brought by Islamic armies is totally blocked out. In fact, the advent of Islam in India is balanced with the advent of Buddhism / Hinduism in South East Asia in the following words (Page 125). The Arabs not only introduced Islam, but also a number of new cultural influences to India, which were to grow and develop in later centuries. Thus, on one side India was exporting its culture and on the other hand it was importing a new culture.

When I read the textbook, I can articulate my impression to be more verbose, tedious and also difficult to relate you, the students of class IV, the text books was quite detached dispassionately, and to the extent it was more defecting and demotivating rather giving a “**Contextual approach**” the students as it not in compasses any significant attempt in the text book to relate India’s past with the present.

People and Society in the Medieval world (PP – 55-170)

The idea of the 'Medieval' is not explained assertively. There are numerous problems with the way in which the medieval period has been conceptualized. The text books reduce the socio-religious diversities in medieval India into two homogenous categories. The Hindus, lend the Muslims. This is the most serious misrepresentation of the period of Indian history. The civilization included in this chapter gives an incomplete description, i.e. It concentrates only on the political expansion, leaving the social-religious and cultural aspects. Indeed, it not only provides incomplete knowledge, but it also leads students to the state of confusion. More assessing the Chapter 02 Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire stresses of the wars and destruction, but no information deals with the socio-political economic and cultural aspects. It has provided over the knowledge of "Art and architecture" which considered as the magnificent creation of the period. So the text book is filled of details which neither makes the students inquisitive nor enhances their urge for their intellectual developments. The chronology is also very confusing. The very important chapter related to Economic structure is without any explanation and above all it badly framed sentences. Even it is observed that there is no clarity and leads to a hazy introspection. In a chapter like that on Vedic culture, where the panel has reported many distortions, the teacher is required to inform the students with the facts that how a historian examines the available sources and arrive at conclusions.

A chapter in history seldom touches upon economic conditions. Inequalities are registered in the text books only at the pivot point. Yet one would have expected textbooks to provide a perspective on the actuality of economic relations.

While discussing South-East Asia, Hindu influences are over emphasized. Buddhist and Islamic influences are marginalized. This presents an incorrect view of the cultural interaction between India and South East Asia. The chapter: The origin of Rajputs as a historical process is not discussed systematically. It provides rather an in structured, unparalleled and incomplete matter. The very important aspect, i.e. The political dimensions are not included. Thus, it presents an incomplete view. Similarly, the chapters on Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire is emphasized with the usage of phrases like "Muslim Invaders and Muslim rule" are completely inappropriate and problematic. The result of Muslim invasion: "The oppression of Women in the context of satire & Purdah System, solely presents the suppressive methods of Muslims. It provides incomplete information to the learners. It is also something shocking that the complete chapter concentrates on the perspectives on the relationship between gender and society. As a result this textbook has drawn serious academic criticism during the last few years. There are certain historical issues where the evidence can be interpreted in different ways and does not at present allow any definite conclusions. Above all, it does not create any room for the teachers to be in the compatible position for the transfer of learning.

The underlying rationale in this age of information explosion is that when the basic facts can be accessed more easily, it was no longer necessary to burden school goers with the task of memorizing them from voluminous textbook. Similarly, in order to have their own scales and their own evidences to measure the areas of various civilizations and their conclusions do not match with each other. As a result the units are burdened with political details (viz, chapter 10, 13 and 15) are very difficult terms are included which makes the transfer of learning more complicated.

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