

Understanding the Discourse on Revised Social Science Text books: Social Media-Based

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Abstract

This study examines the perspective of society on the revisions of the NCERT Social Science textbook first introduced in 2024 and reprinted in 2025 for Classes VI -VIII. In order to assess this perspective, a total of 400 responses were selected purposively from Twitter (X), Facebook, YouTube, and India's leading news portal websites, which were analysed through a qualitative interpretative-descriptive method. The findings revealed that two major categories of public responses, critical and positive, indicate the potential of digital media as a forum for educational dialogue. However, the majority supported the modifications to the textbook. The revision aligns with the National Education Policy (2020) and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023), especially in terms of decolonialization and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems.

Keywords: Textbooks, Social Science, History, Public Debate, Controversy

Introduction

School textbooks serve as an educational tool to promote diversity, foster social equity, a sense of academic opportunity, and restraint among all students, regardless of their social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The National Council of Educational Research and Training is an apex body set up by the Government of India to assist and advise the Ministry of Education for developing and formulating National Curriculum Frameworks (NCFs), syllabi, and model textbooks for each stage of schooling. In 2024-2025, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) also launched new social-science textbooks for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The new textbooks were widely discussed through both online and print media, with debate. According to Ojha (2022), NCERT has consistently received stakeholders' queries on many aspects of the curriculum and textbooks through comments, questions, recommendations, and RTI requests, mainly in social science. These discourses traditionally occurred in books, media, and academia, but in contemporary times also ignite on social media. This development makes social media an important staging ground for researchers to learn more about people's involvement in the controversies (Ojha, 2024).

Although social media has the potential to inform policymakers and facilitate democratic participation, it also risks spreading misinformation.

NCERT's Revised Social Science Textbooks

The Social Science textbook “Exploring Society: India and Beyond” was published by the National Council of Educational Research & Training, New Delhi, in 2024-2025 for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. This integrates four disciplines of social sciences: political science, history, economics, and geography. This integrated approach breaks rigid subject boundaries and presents Social Science as an interconnected discipline, marking a significant shift in the orientation, design, and pedagogy of school social science curriculum, unlike earlier NCERT editions that separated History, Geography, and Civics. The purpose of the textbooks is to build conceptual understanding of social science subjects, develop critical thinking, and implement child-centred pedagogies, aligned with the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023). The book is a curious, observational, and analytical thinking tool, designed to assist the students in making significant links between their own daily lives and the social reality around them. The textbook is primarily aimed at middle school students. However, it is also used by teachers as a valuable pedagogical resource offering clear explanations, age-appropriate language, organized visuals, and inquiry-based learning tasks that facilitate classroom participation and conceptual growth.

Objective

1. To examine the public reactions and debate that emerged on digital platforms regarding the textbook revisions.

Need for the Study

After an in-depth study of the literature, the researcher did not find any research on the new revised textbook (2025). While the revision of NCERT's new Social Science Class VI-VIII textbooks has generated significant public discussion over the past few months, much of it has occurred via digital platforms. Thus, the need for this study is to document and analyze these digital responses to the revised NCERT textbooks. By identifying both positive and negative commentaries, the study will enhance understanding of the perspective of the general public about the curriculum, along with feedback from policymakers and educators, which can inform a more inclusive, transparent, and accountable approach to the development and implementation of curricula.

Methodology

A qualitative, interpretive, descriptive methodological approach was used to analyze the new textbook content, public conversations related to this, and expert opinions. To answer the research questions, the researcher gathered data from several social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.), using a purposeful sampling technique. The data collection spanned from April 25th, 2025, to May 7, 2025, in the time frame prior to and after the textbooks were released. During this time, the public began discussing the textbook changes via social media. Data were collected through "likes", "shares", "retweets", and "replies". A total of 400 comments were analyzed. Approximately forty tweets were selected from the X

handle. A random sample of 300 postings was selected from the video content of major news agencies that had reported on the curriculum changes, along with postings made to their comment pages. Additionally, twenty-five Facebook posts were selected. Data was also collected from six online news websites (Times of India, Indian Express, Economic Times, Hindustan Times, India Today, Business Standard). Filtered by post type, article type, and video type, each dataset was pre-processed and cleaned to remove posts outside the study scope. Using NVivo 14, thematic analysis was conducted and coded into emerging categories of tweets and comments, for example, “support for curriculum change.” The opposing category included opposition. Inductive coding categories were created during multiple reads of the data.

Result

Public Perspectives on the Revised NCERT Social Science Textbook

An analysis purposively selected 400 comments from social media revealed two dominant categories of public responses: supportive and critical responses

A majority of social media users supported text book changes. They perceived that changes were essential for mainstreaming the indigenous history, regional dynasties, and Culture of India. Many users viewed these changes as corrective measures that reduced overemphasis on select historical periods while allowing space for a diverse narrative. According to them, these changes are in line with the National Education Policy guidelines and are viable for decolonisation of education. A user on Twitter (X handle) commented.

“At last, we will read about more Indian Dynasties and less about invaders in our textbooks”. Similarly, a YouTube user commented, “It is time for our kids to know about the glorious history of India, minus the glorification of the people who governed us”. Several responses also supported syllabus rationalisation, highlighting concern about **academic load**. **One user noted, “Students are already stressed post-COVID. NCERT's decision to rationalise the syllabus is pragmatic”.** Another user clarified **“It has not been dropped. Repetition has been eliminated. Repetition should not be present. The Mughal period is part of India. Equal importance should also be accorded to other times, particularly India's golden era”.** These responses are evidence of the public's demand for learning India's indigenous history and cultural achievements. A user posted, **“It was in line with the objectives of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, in which it has been mentioned that Bharatiya knowledge systems and ethics should be included”.** Thus, A majority of users stressed the benefits of reducing syllabus load.

A smaller proportion of responses expressed concern about the revision. A senior educationist, cited in a news report (2025), expressed concern that all periods of history should be considered essential to India, both in terms of its impact and span. One user posted, **“If any part of the History textbook is missing, it is considered a break in continuity. Where one end is closely connected to the other, then neither the first end nor the last end can be connected. If we do not teach books, students will read online, which can lead to getting the wrong ideas. If you teach in class, the teacher can guide”.** In response to the concerns, the NCERT, in its press release, announced the formation of a high-level committee of

experts to review and incorporate all recommendations (NCERT Press Release, 2025). The responses indicate that it is a responsible national-level government body.

Discussion

This is research evidence that the revision of NCERT social science school textbooks has become a significant area of public engagement and discussion. The majority of positive comments on this subject suggest that the public supports new curriculum directions that emphasize indigenous knowledge systems, local/regional histories, and culturally relevant stories and narrative perspectives. These positive comments reflect a broader public acceptance of curriculum reform grounded in the principles expressed in the National Education Policy (2020) and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023).

Although there have been several criticisms of the new curriculum which indicated that several individuals still have concerns regarding potential imbalances in the representation of the range of historical events, the continuity of history and the educational integrity of the new curriculum; therefore, educators must to provide an open forum for dialogue with parents and the community as to why educational materials were being modified, what pedagogical objectives would be accomplished by the modification and how the educator intends to teach the new curriculum.

Overall, this research demonstrates that textbook revisions are not merely instructional decisions; they are socially constructed processes that reflect issues related to identity, memory, and nation-building. The fact that many members of the public are actively engaged in discussions about textbook revisions on online forums demonstrates the increasing democratization of curriculum discourse. This process provides opportunities for both education policymakers and educators to promote dialogue among stakeholders, correct misperceptions about the curriculum reform, and build public confidence in the processes by which education curricula are developed.

Limitations

The study offered fascinating insights into public perspectives on textbooks. However, it has some limitations, including a small sample size and potential for misinterpretation. The authenticity of people's identities on social media is diminished. Digitally literate and politically active individuals comment on social media, potentially introducing bias in sentiment analysis. Additionally, since online discourse is dynamic, the dataset includes responses from a limited time period (April–May 2025), and these responses may change after this date.

Conclusion

The finding shows that although the majority of perspectives hailed these revisions as a long-standing affirmation of Indian civilizational pride, a sizable group viewed them as politically instigated or exclusionary. However, it also stresses the importance of democratic discussion in the curriculum design. The findings of the study demonstrate that digital spaces are becoming increasingly important in shaping how education policy and curricula are

developed and in how society engages with them. In addition, the study emphasizes the need for increased transparency and dialogue among all stakeholders involved in the curriculum development process, including curriculum authorities, educators, and the general public. Future studies could explore further into classroom implementation, teachers' mediation of new or revised curriculum content, and ultimately the effects of the revision of the textbooks on students' historical awareness and civic consciousness.

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