Ideology, Curriculum and Textbooks:

A comparative study of the National Curriculum Framework of 2000 and 2005

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "Ideology, Curriculum and Textbooks: A Comparative Study of the National Curriculum Framework of 2000 and 2005" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or in any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an extensively researched discipline which is associated with its own problems. There have been scholars who have debated and reflected on various aspects of education. Amartya Sen sees development as a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy.[1] There are two roles of freedom – one is expanding the capabilities of people to lead the kind of life they value. Again, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public. Freedoms are the principal means and primary ends of development. Education and health can seem to be valuable to a person's freedom in the following ways:[2]

Education is a valuable achievement in itself. Herein lies its *intrinsic* importance. Education, in the intrinsic sense does not mean that it is a means to an end. Rather, education is seen as valuable on its own. Secondly, education also has *instrumental personal roles* in the sense that education is not only a value in itself, but it also helps one to make use of economic opportunities. This instrumental value of education shows that education can be used to get access to employment and other economic opportunities. Thirdly, education has instrumental social roles in the sense that education can facilitate one to participate in public discussions regarding social needs, and also the effective utilization of social facilities. Fourthly, there are certain instrumental process roles of education. These roles refer to ideas like more schooling facilities will lead to less incidence of child labour. Fifthly, empowerment and distributive roles of education can help one to organize politically. Again, there is more participation in decision making in different social groups and even the family.

Sen correctly argues in favour of education and also points out to us the valuable advantages that education carries. However, in our country, is it possible to get access to the advantages that education carries along with it? Successive versions of the National Policy of Education have

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[1] Sen, Amartya (2000), *Development As Freedom*, Oxford University Press

[2] Sen, Amartya And Jean Dreze (2002), *India: Development and Participation*, Oxford University Press

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recommended that the Government of India should invest six percent of the country's GDP on education. However, we do not see investments anywhere near six percent of the GDP on education. Free and compulsory education was made a Fundamental Right for all children in the age-group of 6-14 years through the 86th Amendment of the Constitution enacted in December 2002. However, the implementation of this Right has been far from satisfactory.

There are various problems associated with education in India which include whether education should be in private or public hands, how to get back child labourers out of the factories and bring them back to school, how to annihilate caste and gender divisions and the humiliation related to caste and gender inequalities. However, it is important to remember that the curriculum and text book writing is a major element in furthering such inequalities and problems which the education sector faces today. When one reflects upon such theorizations, some very significant questions still remain such as – What constitutes the curriculum? Textbooks are written on the basis of the design of the curriculum. So an understanding of the elements which constitute the curriculum is a must. The second question that arises is that is education necessarily training us to serve the economic interests of the industrialists? This is a very significant question as we have to understand whether a student gains knowledge for its intrinsic value or for serving the interests of the industry, in the sense that it is important to understand whether education is a value in itself or is it a means to an end. The third question is - who shapes the curriculum of schools? It is important to answer this question because one has to understand the reasons behind the framing of a particular kind of curriculum. The fourth question is - who writes the textbooks to be read in schools? Textbook writers have a vast pool of knowledge to choose from. They must identify and select elements which must be added or removed from the textbooks. However, it is important to know the reasons behind such a selection. A very significant question which crops up is - do ideologies of political parties in power in some way or the other influence the curriculum and the content of textbooks? We have to understand whether ideologies of political parties are using education to serve their political gains.

What do we mean by the term 'curriculum'? Krishna Kumar, who has served as the Director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and also as Professor of Education and Dean at the University of Delhi, has written extensively on various aspects of education in India. According to Kumar, "The term 'curriculum' refers to the amalgam of the

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content of a topic, the manner in which the content has been codified in a text book, and the manner in which the teacher's interaction with students ultimately shapes the transmission of the content."[3] However, in the Indian circles of education research, he argues that content is treated as the core of the curriculum and the role of students and teachers and the conventions of pedagogy that they follow are completely ignored. According to Kumar, schools are supposed to provide knowledge and skills to students so that they can serve the economy in accordance with the politics and culture of the society. He states that, "The complex time-table.....classification of knowledge into departments, and that of departments into distinct courses....are all aspects of an Industrial culture."[4]

My major argument in this dissertation would be that the state (run by the leading political parties or political alliances) uses education as a mechanism to propagate its ideology among the masses. To make my argument more contextual, in this dissertation, I attempt to analyse the relation between Ideology, curriculum and textbooks at the primary level in India. For my study, I look at the *history* and *civics textbooks* in post-colonial India as they have been the centre of much controversy. I argue that the state uses history and civics textbooks to train the citizens for the broader ideal of nation building. For the purpose of my study, I have also referred to the colonial period and have argued that the British used education as a tool to civilize the Indian masses for their own benefits.[5]

Literature Review:

Education in the Colonial Era:

In the initial stages, the British had no interest in investing on education for the Indian masses. However, they soon realized that English education could be a link for them to connect to the native people. Moreover, a section of the British government tended to view Indian education

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[3] Kumar, Krishna (1989), *Social Character of Learning*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 62

[4] Ibid., p. 123

[5] The British believed that they could civilize the Indian masses for a variety of reasons which are mentioned in the subsequent section titled 'Education in the Colonial Era' and in detail in Chapter 1.

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and culture as backward, isolated and conservative. This would mean that the Indian traditional texts would be opposed to the advanced European sciences and literature. Again, there was another problem that the British were facing. Running the vast British Empire meant the increasing demand for labour. Thus, the British colonizers decided to impart European education to the Indian masses to train them and serve their specific interests. Moreover, the colonizers expected that western education would avoid the Indian masses from being hostile to the British government. English education gradually grew in prominence with the coming of missionaries to India. Again, Indians had started realizing that English education would help them get employment opportunities with the East India Company.

Before the British came to India, the education system was made to preserve segmental identities of the *Advanced* and *Ordinary* traditions. The *Advanced* education (that of gurukul and madrasseh) was aimed at catering to the elites and the *Ordinary* tradition (that of pathasala and maktab) represented the practical education provided to the administrators and merchants through dominant local vernaculars.[6] With the coming of the British, schools started developing as opposed to the traditional Indian education systems.

Initially, the missionaries started setting up schools and their approach was very different from the government system of education. Many of the missionaries were keen to set up rural schools with local vernacular languages as the medium of teaching. Whereas the British government wanted to impart English education to the respectable members of Indian society. Their selective policy of providing English education to particular members of respectable communities actually led to the dichotomy of English, considered as the privileged language, against the vernaculars.

Kumar argues that there is not only a link between the selection of school knowledge which was made under colonial rule and present day pedagogy and curricula in our country, but the very idea of what is 'worth teaching' remains greatly affected by how the colonizers viewed the Indian society.[7] He uses the term 'enlightened outsider' to refer to the colonizers who selected

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[6] Khubchandani, Lachman M (1981), *Language, Education and Social Justice*, Poona: Centre for Communication Studies

[7] Kumar, Krishna (1991), *Political Agenda of Education*, New Delhi: Sage Publications

and decided school knowledge in colonial India.[8] Thus the schools disseminated knowledge which was disassociated with the forms of knowledge and skills in India, which were to be symbols of 'ignorance', and a symbol of a deficient culture.[9]

The introduction of the English language as a medium of teaching removed every possibility of the child's everyday life from being identified to the school curriculum.[10] Again, some forms and skills were taught in distinctly labeled institutions which were usually reserved for dominant groups. Kumar argues that the eighteenth century English political idea of a civil society was permeated so that a minority of property holders was trained in the attitudes and skills of the colonial rulers.[11] To be educated was to be intellectually separated from the masses, and to aim a legitimate share in the powers and resources of the colonial state.

Kumar also argues that ideas such as the practice of enquiry and application of knowledge to solve daily problems were alien to the agenda of moral upliftment which had a central place in both nationalist and imperialist discourses.[12] In the colonial view, the knowledge and capacity to enquire lay with the colonialists, and the subject population was to remain quiet and follow. Similarly, Kumar states that the nationalist discourse, which drew heavily from Brahmanism, followed the same pattern.[13]

The theory of utilitarianism was brought in, but Brahmanism was also given a new dimension. So, a person was expected to work according to his individual rights, but being circumscribed in the boundaries of caste and tradition. Thus these two views of the predominant roles of Brahmanism and colonial rule actually can be seen as a manifestation in teacher student relationships. Kumar writes that, "Historically, this view of knowledge can be linked to the

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[8] Kumar, Krishna (1991), *Political Agenda of Education*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 93

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

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tradition of regarding the teacher or guru as an infallible authority. Colonial rule ...... provided an indirect support to this perception."[14]

Again, during this time, anti-Brahmanical movements had started pressing for equality in education. Kumar argues that the demand for equality in opportunity, "was historically related to the urge for justice that the downtrodden castes had expressed in many earlier periods."[15] Even the cultural revivalism did not alter the concept of worthwhile knowledge. It merely changed the lingua franca. The upper caste literati used cultural revivalism to change the class dialect of the educated to Hindi. The Hindi movement's pedagogic agenda in northern India was to transmit to the younger generation a language rooted in the tradition of Sanskrit and remove the history of Urdu. And this had implications of the shaping of politics in northern India. Kumar goes even ahead and says that its pedagogy was its politics.

The colonial rule had changed the education system in India from a personal, decentralised one to a bureaucratic and centralized one. Kumar notes that the low salaries of teachers left him with no choice. He had a dual personality "one representing the salaried employee of the education system, and the other representing a literate, traditionally revered member of the local community."[16] In fact, such a system of education continued in the post-independence period where the country saw bureaucratic and quasi bureaucratic authorities deciding and shaping the curriculum. Education system in independent India remained an agency contributing primarily to the maintenance of law and order, where the teachers are seen simply to teach and maintain discipline among the students.

Education in the Post-Colonial Era:

After independence, the state in India saw the education system and especially textbooks as a means to develop a program of national construction and national culture. However, the ideas of

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[14] Kumar, Krishna (1991), *Political Agenda of Education*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 93

[15] Ibid., p. 201

[16] Ibid., p. 93

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national culture put forward by the Nehruvian elites were criticized by the late seventies by voices who believed in alternative definitions of national identity.[17]

The educational agenda which was outlined by the state immediately after independence reflected the vision of a monolithic and unitary nation, and not one which is made up of varied identities and groups who had their own visions. In fact, contesting identities were seen as divisive and dangerous. Such a vision was pointed out by the Secondary Education Commission Report, also known as the Mudaliar Commission Report, in 1952.[18]

However, we see that the Kothari Commission Report (1966) is a little different than the last report.[19] The Kothari Commission Report, although emphasizing the idea of national integration, admits the importance of the impact of local, religious, linguistic and regional loyalties on national solidarity. The Commission believes economic disparity and the rural urban divide to be the main barrier to national integration. The Commission sought to promote social and national integration by reducing class disparities. It proposed a Common School System and the development of a modern language curriculum. The language formula became very important for subsequent education policies but the dream of a Common School System remained a dream.[20]

Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister saw the education policies being driven towards a consolidated nationalist ideology. This is the time when Nehruvian ideologies came under attack from the growing Hindu right wing politics. Rajiv Gandhi's tenure saw the shifting of education to the Concurrent List, a well received move which aimed at greater cooperation between the centre and the states. However, the same notion of a common core curriculum was formed which would derive its legitimacy from a common cultural past.

In 1984, the NCERT started putting together a national curriculum framework, an exercise which has been repeated in 2000 and 2005. The National Curriculum Framework 2000 (under the

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[17] Advani, Shalini (2009), *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English and the Indian Modern*, Oxford University Press, p. 77

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

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Bharatiya Janata Party led National Democratic Alliance government) was a confused document which accepted the importance of IT and technology, and at the same time aimed at national unity through a return to the glorious and traditional past. With the coming of the Indian National Congress (INC) led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, the NCF 2005 focused again on the need to reform the nationalist agenda of education. This document emphasized the pedagogic importance of the constructivist approach and the use of local knowledge as an educational tool.

Language and Education in post-colonial India:

In the colonial era, we have seen the growing importance of English language. The post-colonial era also shows the increased demand and significance of the English language. However, we also see the problems associated with multilingualism in post independent India. The predominance of English in the public sphere today is largely a creation of the British who adopted language policies for their own ends. It is well known that India is a largely multilingual nation with 1652 mother tongues belonging to four major language families of the world i.e. the Austric, the Dravidian, the Tibeto-Chinese, and the Indo-European language families.[21] Thus, it is impossible to teach all languages especially when some languages predominate over the others. Very few Indian languages are taught and even fewer are used as the medium of instruction in schools and universities.

The recent past tells us that the linguistic minorities have made an unending attempt to safeguard their rights in favour of mother tongue education. A certain sense of toleration and acceptance for minority languages has been injected into the policy circles. Thus, we find that the safeguards for mother tongue education have found their way into the Three Language Formula in 1956. After considering several reports of committees and conferences like Secondary Education Commission (1953), Central Advisory Board of Education (1956), Conference of the Chief Ministers (1961), Education Commission (1964-66), the Three Language Formula (TLF) gradually developed. The National Policy of Education (1986) laid down the principles of Three Language Formula which should be implemented by the states.

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[21] Chaturvedi, M.G. and B.V.Mohale, (1976), *Position of Languages in School Curriculum in India*, National Council of Educational Research and Training

According to the Three Language Formula (TLF), the mother tongue or regional language has to be taught from Grade I to Grade X. And this is compulsory.[22] Teaching of the second language starts from Grade V and goes on to Grade X. The second language could either be Hindi or English, the Official Language or the Associate Official Language respectively. At this level, a student could learn Hindi or English (whichever is not compulsory) as an optional language. From Grade VIII to X, all students are required to study three languages, and the third language is the one which has not been taught to the student before i.e. Hindi or any regional language. During these three years, a student can also study optionally one or more modern Indian languages. At the higher secondary stage, a student has to compulsorily study any two of the languages he has studied earlier, or any two of the following and one or more Indian languages optionally: Modern Indian Languages, Classical Languages (they could be Indian or Foreign) and Modern Foreign Languages.

If this formula is followed, then it is expected that a student on the completion of lower secondary stage will have acquired sufficient hold of three languages i.e. mother tongue and two non-native modern languages. Hindi will be the official medium and a link language to communicate with people within India and English will be the associate official medium and a link language for higher education and international communication.

One has to note here that although the TLF has been accepted by the Government of India, it has not been implemented *in toto* by the states. For example, in some of the states, linguistic minorities whose mother tongue is different from the dominant and official language of their State, are offered a four language formula, i.e. mother tongue instruction along with the state's dominant language as the medium.

Language is not only inevitable for all interpersonal relations and social interactions. It is also the medium through which all our interpersonal and intrapersonal relations are structured and changed.[23] Language instruction is thus a basic requirement of all levels and types of education.

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[22] Chaturvedi, M.G. and B.V.Mohale, (1976), *Position of Languages in School Curriculum in India*, National Council of Educational Research and Training

[23] Ibid

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It has also been argued that students who do well in languages also do well in other subjects.[24] However, educationists have equated the study of languages as any other subject of the curriculum, be it mathematics or history. So, it is not treated as a foundation of the total curriculum. However, language is the foundational basis of all education and it is so particularly when it becomes the medium of instruction.[25] The present state of affairs is because these inter-complexities of language dissemination have not been objectively studied.[26].

In this case, V.V. John argues that mother tongue has not been put in its proper position.[27] He goes on to say that "there is no sign that under the new language dispensation, they have any ambitious programmes in which the mother tongue would be used to achieve the desired transformation of the quality of our education."[28] He gives the example of schools in America and says that the University High School at Minnesota encourages the learning of Russian, Spanish and French. However, the liveliest programme is the study of the mother tongue, i.e. English.

According to John, a well designed school curriculum in the mother tongue will definitely serve two purposes: Firstly, the course in the mother tongue would lead to the joy of learning for any student. And no other subject or language can achieve this. This will lead to the sharpening of intellectual power and the deepening of sensibility which is the primary goal of any liberal education. The other purpose that would be fulfilled if the student is taught in his or her mother tongue would be the instilling of intellectual self confidence. This self confidence and intellectual maturity would actually help the student to learn other languages and subjects with much ease.

One must also not forget that there is an increasing preference for English education because of the supposed social and economic benefits that come with it. The speakers of the minority

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[24] Chaturvedi, M.G. and B.V.Mohale, (1976), *Position of Languages in School Curriculum in India*, National Council of Educational Research and Training

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] John, V.V. (1969), *Education and Language Policy*, Nachiketa Publications

[28] Ibid., p. 24

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languages seem to prefer English to their own languages.[29] Again, there have been well established traditions in the country that encourage people to learn the dominant language for purposes outside their homes and use the mother tongue in their private domain. In the states like Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim, mother tongue is the medium of instruction in less than 50% of the schools.[30] Consider these figures: Sikkim 1.95%, Arunachal Pradesh 2.89%, Goa 14%, Jammu and Kashmir 19.45%, Meghalaya 42.03%, and Nagaland 43% used mother tongue as media of instruction at the upper primary stage.[31] Major languages such as English and Hindi and the other VIIIth Scheduled languages occupy a place of importance even in the states where the speakers of the non-scheduled language are in a majority.

Various languages of India come with their own struggles and histories and demand a place in the curriculum to be learnt. However, some scholars have argued that, "school language textbooks are marginally concerned about language or literature in and of itself. Their primary occupation is one of schooling the young learner to imbibe, accept and value what is a 'prescribed' idea, or rather desired idea, of being Indian, Tamil, Bengali, Gujarati, etc."[32]

The writing and re-writing of history:

Textbooks have become a part of the public sphere where actors from various fields including politicians, educationists, teachers, parents, feminists, and students have participated in discussions as to what the curriculum should be like and how should textbooks be written. However, we see that among most subjects, social sciences have generated rigorous debates. More specifically, history textbooks have been the centre of controversies. This is because

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[29] Sharma, J.C. (2001), "Multilingualism in India", *www.languageinindia.com*, Vol. 1, 8th December, Accessed 14 August, 2011, URL: http://www.languageinindia.com/dec2001/jcsharma2.html

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 144

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history textbooks have been seen to be representative of the contestations between the ideologies of the various political parties in power.

For Neeladri Bhattacharya, re-writing of history is a creative act undertaken by historians.[33] This is the way the knowledge of history develops. The main aim of historians is to critique the dominant and accepted frameworks of history and re-write them. All histories are not the same in the sense that different histories tell us different stories. And when historians analyse histories, what we ultimately read is the different interpretations of history. Historians discover new meanings in history and ask different questions in re-writing history. This makes a very rich understanding of the past.

Bhattacharya argues that the re-writing of history is not problematic or objectionable.[34] However, he says that all re-writing of history is not the same. He argues that we need to scrutinize the process of re-writing history so that problematic and intellectually untenable re-writing of history is not done. K.N. Panikkar, on the other hand, argues that historians in the process of re-writing histories actually bring in new methodological insights into history.[35] Referring to the saffronisation of history textbooks during the BJP led NDA regime, Panikkar states that methodologies applied could be different, but they need to have common grounds. Otherwise, the consequence is a failure in distinguishing between myth and history.

According to Panikkar, there is an undeniable connection between myth and history. However, we need to differentiate them. It is true that myths are not verifiable like history is. However, Panikkar argues that reality in some form or the other is embedded in myths and thus what actually happens is that history and myth are viewed as inseparable. He argues:

> "Rewriting of History is a continuous process into which historian brings to bear
> new methodological or ideological insights or employs a new analytical frame
> drawn upon hitherto unknown facts. The historians' craft, the French historian,

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[33] Bhattacharya, Neeladri (2002), "The Problem", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February, p. 18

[34] Ibid.

[35] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9

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Marc Bloch, whose work on feudal society is considered a classic, has reminded us, is rooted in a method specific to history as a discipline, most of which has evolved through philosophical engagements and empirical investigations during the last several centuries. No methodology which historian invokes in pursuit of the knowledge of the past is really valid unless it respects the method of the discipline. Even when methodologies fundamentally differ, they share certain common grounds, which constitute the field of historian's craft. Notwithstanding the present scepticism about the possible engagement with History, a strict adherence to the method of the discipline is observed in all generally accepted forms of reconstruction of the past. A departure from such norms of the discipline tends to erase the distinction between myth and history, which the forces of the Hindu rightwing, actively supported by the present government, is seeking to achieve."[36]

According to Bhattacharya, "History in India began its modern career implicated in projects of colonial knowledge."[37] Bhattacharya argues that when researches were made into India's historical past, such historical representations were structured by orientalist ideas. According to him, orientalists like H.T. Colebrooke and William Jones told us that there was a glorious classical age when the Indian civilization came into being. However, the time between the classical age and the British period showed a gradual degeneration. Thus, the orientalists saw themselves as mediators who would act as a link between the Indian past and the present by translating the Indian juridical and religious texts in order to capture the lost glory.[38] Bhattacharya states that as the translation of Indian texts started, journals and institutes for historical researches of the Indian past began to be set up. This was the beginning of a form of modern colonial history.

Bhattacharya argues that with the coming of the 19th Century and the increasing importance of liberalism, the orientalist ideas of Indian history started coming into question. While the orientalists argued in favour of India's glorious past and their golden age, liberal histories

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[36] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9, p. 1

[37] Bhattacharya, Neeladri. (2002), "The Problem", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February, p. 18

[38] Ibid.

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condemned India's past. Liberal histories were in favour of the principles of the west – i.e. freedom, individualism and democracy. According to the liberal histories, modernity had emerged from the age of darkness to the age of Enlightenment to the modern age.[39] However, the liberals saw no such transition in India's past. According to the liberals, India was stagnant because of its social institutions like village and caste.

The liberals saw India as a static society which would never change because of its social institutions. They believed that western education was the only way through which they could improve themselves. Thus, they went in favour of the British government providing education to the Indian masses. Therefore, Bhattacharya argues that, "Oriental despotic society was transformed and modernized in progressive stages through education, rule of law, railways, expansion of the market and diffusion of useful scientific knowledge."[40]

But in the late 19th century, the trajectory of colonial history had begun changing again. This was because rebellions had started whether on behalf of the peasants or mutinies on behalf of the army.[41] Thus, with the coming up of such internal problems, the liberal histories started viewing Indians as unchangeable and there was no effort on the part of British government to change the Indian society with the help of western education and facilities.

Nationalist histories on the other hand, were framed in opposition to colonial history. Although nationalist histories developed in opposition to imperialist histories, Bhattacharya argues:

> "While the nationalists mounted a critique of colonial ideas, they continued to accept many of the key categories through which imperial representations of Indian society were fashioned. Nineteenth century imperial history had shrouded India's past in darkness, denuded its history of any evidence of change and achievement, and stamped its people with permanent marks of inferiority. To constitute a sense of self, nationalists returned to the ancient past and rewrote history, identifying golden ages when literature and culture flourished, economy

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[39] Bhattacharya, Neeladri. (2002), "The Problem", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February, p. 18

[40] Ibid., p. 13

[41] Ibid.

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and society developed, territories were unified and law and order were established."[42]

Thus, we see that the nationalist discourses on history made an attempt to go back to the glorious classical age when culture and literature were at its peak and when the economy and society had started developing. The nationalist discourses celebrated India's golden past because a sense of national pride had to be brought in within Indians. This is the time when a major section of elites including academics, poets, writers, started celebrating the glorious past through their works. This national pride would encourage the Indians to join the freedom struggle against the British Empire.

While the nationalist discourses prescribed unity in India's past, communal interpretations of history saw India's past as one filled with inter-community conflict and violence. However, Bhattacharya argues that the nationalist discourses of histories tended to bring to the forefront the ideas of nationalism and individual rights. Bhattacharya goes on further to say that most nationalist histories went on to periodise pre-colonial histories in religious categories. They established a link of ancient India with Hindus and medieval India with Muslims. They referred to these periods as if the whole age was representative of unitary religious essence.[43] Bhattacharya argues that, "They reaffirmed the communal idea of 'Muslim tyranny' – an idea that transformed all Muslims into an evil mould, and implicated them all, whether high or low, in the practice of a power that they had little association with."[44]

Bhattacharya correctly argues that the nationalist histories celebrated the Hindu past. The national histories tended to overlook the Muslim era (which they associated with the medieval period) and directly celebrate the ancient Indian past. Such a construction of the Hindu classical age paved the way for Hindu nationalists to situate themselves in it. Moreover, I agree with Arnold when he argues that though Bengali scientists proclaimed rationalism and secular

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[42] Bhattacharya, Neeladri. (2002), "The Problem", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February, p. 14

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 14

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nationalism, they decided to associate themselves with the ancient Hindu past.[45] In fact, they tended to ignore the contributions of the Islamic civilization and the interaction between the Hindu and Muslim sciences in the medieval and modern times.

Ideology, curriculum and textbooks:

History is not stagnant. Historians are in a constant process of writing and re-writing history. However, Bhattacharya argues that since history describes our identity, the consciousness of the self and our position in the world, history is not free from subjectivity and the political.[46] However, a problem arises when re-writing of history is done with the intentions of denigrating particular communities or groups, considering such intentions stem from particular antagonistic ideologies, then such re-writing of history is undoubtedly very disturbing and problematic. Moreover, such re-writing of history is more problematic when done for political gains.

My hypothesis is that the Indian state uses education for its own interests and to propagate its ideologies among the masses.[47] For the purpose of this study, I have referred to primary resources and secondary resources. Among the primary resources, I have referred to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) 'History' textbooks for Classes VI, VII and VIII which were produced under the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2000. I have compared these textbooks under NCFSE 2000 with the NCERT 'History' and 'Social And Political Life' (Social Science) textbooks for Classes VI, VII and VIII, which were produced under the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005. I have referred to the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2000 Document, the National Curriculum Framework 2005 Document and the Position Papers of the National Focus Groups set up to look into the problems related to the school curriculum. I have also consulted educationists and activists working on education.

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[45] Arnold, David (1999) 'A Time for Science: Past and Present in the Reconstruction of Hindu Science, 1860-1920' in Daud Ali (ed.) *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[46] Ibid.

[47] State interests here mean political goals. Every state has its own ideology and the state uses education to educate the masses so that they are in conformity to their ideology.

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Chapterization:

This Dissertation looks at the post-colonial forms of education and the problems relating to curriculum and textbook writing. The first chapter deals with education in the Colonial Period, the second chapter analyses in detail the saffronisation of education by the NDA government post NCFSE 2000. And the third chapter looks at the new NCF 2005 which promises to bring in ideal changes in the curriculum. And finally, the Dissertation concludes with my arguments and problems with curriculum and textbook writing.

Chapter 1 – History of Textbook Education in India:

In this chapter, we see that the British, though initially not interested in imparting English education to the Indians, did start imparting English education and encouraged the teaching of the western sciences and literature. This is because they saw ancient Indian texts as passive and outdated and as hostile to the advanced literature and sciences of the West. Again, they needed Indians for running the vast British Empire. Moreover, Indians also started realizing that English education was their only way of getting good employment opportunities with the British Government. This chapter argues that the British used education as a tool for the furthering of its own interests.

This chapter goes on to establish a link between history and nation building and attempts to join the debate between scholars arguing on the importance and the link between history and the nation building exercise. The chapter also briefly discusses the educational trajectories before the British came to India, i.e. the Vedic Period, the Buddhist Period and the Medieval Period. And then discusses the development of the trajectory of education during the colonial period. A reading of this chapter will give the reader a better idea of the coming of missionaries, the dichotomy between vernacular education and English education, the Occidental-Oriental Controversy and the various schemes and policies of education taken up by the British Raj.

In this chapter, I look at the textbook controversy which attracted a good deal of attention when the BJP led NDA government was in power. The NCFSE 2000 which was drafted under the BJP led NDA Government was a very problematic one. The BJP Government is the political wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which believes in Hindu cultural nationalism. They believe that India is for the Hindus and no one else. The NDA government, being a coalition of different parties could not explicitly rewrite textbooks in the Hindu nationalist style. However, there was a quick inclusion of elements in history textbooks which celebrated the Hindu glorious past and succinctly portrayed the Muslims as the 'other', as the enemy. This chapter also sees that history and civics textbooks had a major role aimed at nation-building.

This chapter is an in-depth study of the relation between Hindu nationalist cultural ideology, curriculum and history and civics textbook writing. In the initial pages of this chapter, I have attempted to show the link between Hindu nationalism and communalism in some circumstances. Then, I have moved on to the various debates among scholars at the time of this textbook controversy revolving around the saffronisation of primary education. Then comes the discussion of the NCFSE 2000.

This chapter also looks at history textbooks from different states of India to show that how the respective governments of the respective states write their own histories which favour their political gains. Then, the discussion moves on to the concept of power and its relation to history. Here, references are drawn from textbooks about Kings and subjects and much more to show the superiority of a strong centre and the subjectivity of the citizens. And finally, the discussion changes to the relation between religion, history and the nation. Here, too, references are drawn from textbooks – references which try to prove the greatness of Hindu culture and the supposedly inevitable link between Brahmanism, Hinduism and India. A reading of this portion of the chapter will lead to greater insights as to how the NCERT textbooks silenced the non-Hindus and showed them to be much inferior.

The chapter then moves on to a discussion of civics textbooks. This chapter recognizes that civics as a subject of study was introduced in the Indian school curriculum by the British, the reason being that the British were growing familiar with the increasing disloyalty of Indians

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towards the British Raj. Thus, they planned to include civics as an instrument to bind Indian loyalty towards the British. This chapter focuses on the civics textbooks which were produced under the NCFSE 2000. Here, I find that civics textbooks are basically used by the state to tame the masses to be good and loyal citizens. This chapter also brings out interesting insights and meanings of terms like Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, Citizenship and Democracy in the context of civics education in school textbooks.

Chapter 3: National Curriculum Framework 2005:

The Indian National Congress (INC) led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government came to power in 2004. Under the UPA government, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 was drafted. This document was to be a major change from the last controversial NCFSE. This Chapter studies the NCF 2005 and tries to find out whether it simply omits out the problematic elements in the NCFSE or does it promise to do even better.

This chapter looks at the basic questions addressed in the NCF 2005 and the aims of education pointed out as per the NCF 2005. This chapter also studies the recommendations put forward by the National Focus Groups to look into the different aspects of the curriculum of Indian schools and focuses on the recommendations of the National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (NFGTSS).

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HISTORY OF TEXTBOOK EDUCATION IN INDIA

Introduction:

Education has always been seen as a means to upward mobility, be it social or economic. However, education is also an instrument which has been used by successive governments and political regimes to implement their ideological agendas among the masses. Such a phenomenon can be seen in post Independent India where the state uses education as a tool to mobilize masses in conformity to their particular ideology. In this regard, one finds that colonial education was no different from post colonial education. The British Raj used education as a mechanism for civilizing the Indian masses according to their specific needs.

The British needed to impart English education to the Indian masses for a number of reasons. One of the main reasons for the British introducing English education was that the British considered vernacular Indian education to be passive, conservative and opposed to the western sciences and literature. They had to find a link to the Indians which would enable the Indians to get access to the western literature and sciences. English was the best alternative for serving this link. Although many sections of Indian society initially were against English education, gradually Indians began to realize the importance of English education. This is because English education was their mechanism to avail government jobs and better economic opportunities.

During the colonial era while English was increasing in popularity, many elite sections of the Indian society took upon themselves to find various ways of imbibing nationalism among the Indian masses. Soon began the mushrooming of private Indian schools and newspapers. Many such eminent personalities who took the lead in spreading awareness about nationalism and also cultural nationalism reverted to India's rich cultural past to find evidences which would strengthen their arguments and ideologies. Thus was found a connection between history and nation building. History started to be used as a mechanism to educate the Indian masses about their rich cultural and religious heritage, the end goal of which was nation building.
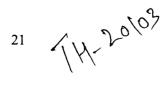
History and Nation Building:

For an understanding of the changes in education policies in India, it is important to understand the importance of history in the process of nation building in India. According to Peter van der Veer, orientalism played a formative role in the building of nationalist ideologies.[48] Veer argues that nationalism and orientalism are intimately connected. orientalism constructed the Sanskrit Canon as a representation of India's past before the invasion of Muslims. Thus, the celebration of the Hindu past was the celebration of a past before the Muslims arrived. The orientalist construction of the Hindu past carved the place for the Hindu nationalists to situate themselves in their celebration of India's past. Within such a construction, Muslims and other religions were not a part.

Such a practice can also be found in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries when Indian science tried to establish a relation with the past.[49] This acts as a reaction to the orientalist construction of India's past which saw the blooming of science in India only to be later degenerated, but arrested by the British. Thus, scientists started to draw upon the past to question the superiority of the western sciences and contest the orientalist assumptions about the degeneration of the Indian sciences. Especially, Bengali scientists associated themselves with a glorious Hindu past although they advocated rationalism and secular nationalism. They completely ignored the contributions of the Islamic civilization and the interaction between the Hindu and Muslim sciences in medieval and early modern times.

Powell goes on to ask questions about the modification and moulding of national identity through learning processes with selective biases.[50] Powell considers the cases of India and Pakistan and argues that in both the countries the teaching of history holds central importance in the nation building process. Although India and Pakistan share the same history before their

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[48] Veer; Peter van der (1999) 'Monumental Texts: The Critical Edition of India's National Heritage' in Daud Ali (ed.) *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[49] Arnold, David (1999) 'A Time for Science: Past and Present in the Reconstruction of Hindu Science, 1860-1920' in Daud Ali (ed.) *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press

[50] Powell, Avril 'Perceptions of the South Asian Past: Ideology, Nationalism and School History Textbooks' in N. Crook (ed.) *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia* (Publisher name and year of publishing not available)

independence, the history textbooks in India and Pakistan treat history in separate ways. In Pakistan, there has not been much publicity on the textbook issue as there is a wholesome agreement to the 'Pakistan Ideology' which derives its basics from the Two Nations Theory. The textbooks written as a part of 'Pakistan Studies' courses focus on particular eras which prove the importance of the spread and institutionalization of Islam in South Asia.

The selection of geographical labels or coinage of geographical labels are also in accordance with hidden nationalist agendas. For example, Pakistani textbooks use terms like 'South Asia' and 'subcontinent' to refer to the concerned territorial entity rather than use India. In Pakistani textbooks, eras and events which are not applicable or threat Pakistan's ideology are not included. Examples could be the neglect of the Vedic era or the creation of Bangladesh. Powell argues that history textbooks are seen as transmitters of information about social and religious goals, past or present, or future. Krishna Kumar argues that school texts of history become like authoritative stories, totally undisturbed by conflict or doubt due to inadequate evidence.[51] He argues that any other subject like science can be proved through a formula. However, in the case of history, the child does not have the intellectual capability to challenge the existing tales of history. Thus textbooks are controlled by government agencies without facing any opposition. There is a dominant 'textbook culture' in India and Pakistan where textbooks are prescribed and not recommended. This textbook culture leaves no room for alternative texts and readings.

Mushirul Hassan argues that the knowledge of history has been used and misused to legitimize national identities as well as authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships.[52] Even during the British Raj, textbooks were used as ideological tools by the British to criticize the pre-colonial past. He argues that BJP has been using history as a tool for its own propaganda. R. Rajesh suggests that the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2002 has its

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[51]Kumar, Krishna (2002) 'Partition in School Textbooks: A Comparative Look at India and Pakistan' in S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta (ed.) *Pangs of Partition: Vol II: The Human Dimension*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications

[52]Hasan, Mushirul (2002), "The BJP's Intellectual Agenda: Textbooks and Imagined History", South Asia: *Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, no 3, pp 187-210.

own acquired and manipulated notion of history.[53] It sees pre-colonial history as a period which was ancient, changeless and free of social conflicts, a period in which the context of pre-colonial education systems helped to rationalize the socio-economic structure of that period. According to the NCFSE, the British were to blame for disturbing the harmonious social order and hierarchies.

Romila Thapar argues that one needs to read and study the early texts like the Vedas, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the like in order to find out the causes for the changes in the system of knowledge over the years and also understand the relevant questions emerging from current knowledge.[54] Thapar argues that one should first focus on the writings of the 19th century because this period is projected as 'tradition'. She points out that even during the 19th century, writings were not straight jacketed with a single point of view.[55] Rather, scholars writing in Sanskrit, Persian and what we call regional languages now debated among themselves. What she aims to point out is that knowledge has not advanced on its own in one single direction. The credit for the advancement of knowledge goes to the rich traditions of dialogue and debate.

Shalini Advani, on the other hand, argues that through textbooks, the nation is constructed as a 'monochromatic and flattened identity.'[56] These textbooks try to achieve and maintain a sense of homogeneity and are bent on removing difference. According to her, when one analyses the textbooks of the late 1960's, one finds that the nation space was shaped by what Satish Deshpande calls economic geography. These textbooks were being written and published in the Nehruvian era. The Indian economy was fore grounded as the basis of unity among the people of India. Therefore, the national citizen remained unmarked and unidentified in the sense that he or she was classless or casteless or region-less. The aim was to promote a secular urban citizen.

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[53] Rajesh, R. (2002), "National Curriculum Framework and Its Values: A Parent's Perspective", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 42, October 19-25

[54] Thapar, Romila. (2005), "Knowledge and Education", *Frontline*, January 28.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Advani, Shalini. (2009), *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English and the Indian Modern*, Oxford University Press

The 1980's and 1990's saw the Nehruvian ideas under attack especially from the Hindutva forces.[57] According to Advani, by this time, religious identities were growing in prominence. Consequently, religious identities criticized the Nehruvian model of viewing the nation as a homogenous unit.[58] Thus, these identities were included in the mainstream construction of the nation but the attempt was to remove the differences between these identities as much as possible.

However, to understand precisely the problems and concerns with post colonial education in India, one has to understand that post colonial education was necessarily a continuation of colonial education with its own additions and subtractions. It is significant to look at how the paradigm of education changed through the various periods – Vedic, Buddhist, Medieval and the British period to finally reach the Nehruvian era.

The Vedic period dates back to 4000 B.C. when education was not institutionalized. The only formal educational institutions were the *Gurukuls* or *Ashrams*. The head of the Gurukuls or Ashrams were highly revered for their knowledge and purity.[59] At the Gurukuls, imparting the knowledge of the Vedas were an essential part. Instructions were delivered in medicine, astrology, archery, arts, crafts in response to the interests of students. The inculcation of spiritual and ethical values was also an important element of the Gurukul system of education. Interestingly enough, education during the Vedic period was not for the masses.[60] Neither was it seen as a means for social upliftment.

Gurukuls imparted the traditional education of Sanskrit and vernacular languages and Brahmanic sastras. Such education imparted by the Brahmins, as is well known, was only restricted to the Brahmins. Gurukul education was never opened to the majority of the masses. Again, only boys and not girls were admitted into the gurukuls. Moving on to the the course content at the gurukuls, it was a myth that students passing out of gurukuls possessed capabilities of being a

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[57] Advani, Shalini. (2009), *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English and the Indian Modern*, Oxford University Press

[58] Ibid.

[59] Pawar, N.G. (2004), *Development of Educational System in India*, Book Enclave

[60] Ibid.

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good citizen. In fact, all that the student did at gurukuls was rote learning of brahmanic sastras which hardly made them versatile.

Education to the society was a major aim during the Buddhist period. During this time, education was much more accessible to the masses as compared to the Vedic period. Educational institutions like *Vihar* and *Math* were attracting more and more students. These institutions imparted knowledge of subjects of daily along with scientific methodology of teaching.[61] The Buddhist period saw a change from the rigid system of Vedas, and strict domination of the *Chaturvarnya* sytem prevalent in the Vedic age. The Buddhist period sought to counter social evils through the spread of education among the masses.

The Medieval period saw the growing importance of religion in India. Education was institutionalized on a massive scale with the rise of *Madarsas* and *Maktabs*.[62] Maktabs were meant for primary education whereas Madarsas were meant to impart higher education. During this time, Hindu pathashalas also emerged with the support of educational facilities from Akbar. This period also saw the increasing importance of moral science, arithmetic, agriculture, geometry, astronomy, politics, medicine, logic and history.

Development of the education trajectories during the British Raj:

In the early 1800, colonial India saw the rise of the Oriental-Occidental controversy.[63] The orientalists, under guidance of H.T. Princep, were in favour of spreading education for the advancement of Indo-Arabian languages. They deemed to preserve the original institutions whereas the Occidental group proposed to abolish the existing institutions in order to save the government from further expenditure on these institutions. Lord Macaulay was appointed as a legal advisor to the Council of Governor General in 1834. This is when he suggested to shut down the existing institutions on the pretext of further governmental expenditure. He believed in the spread of western learning through the use of English language.

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[61] Pawar, N.G. (2004), *Development of Educational System in India*, Book Enclave

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

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Following Macaulay, Lord Bentinck as Governor General of British India was also interested in bringing a solution to the Oriental-Occidental controversy. However, neither Bentinck nor Macaulay could find a solution to the problem. Lord Auckland took over as Governor General and gave his resolution in 1839 which suggested that institutions of Oriental learning should be allowed to continue with the financial assistance which was provided to them before Lord Bentinck's resolution.

The East India Company had to look into the problems associated with education in India especially because the Charter Act of 1813 and 1853 had been introduced.[64] And moreover, since the Oriental-Occidental controversy could not find an end, the Court of Directors issued a document known as the Wood's Despatch in 1854 under the Presidency of Charles Wood. Wood's Despatch suggested that education should be made to safeguard the interests of the British without being insensitive to the demands of Indians. It suggested that European education would allow Indians to understand the importance of labour and capital.

A very welcome change offered by Wood's Despatch was that both English and the vernaculars were to be used in imparting education. English would be used to teach western science and knowledge whereas vernacular languages were to be used to educate the Indian masses. New schemes in education proposed by Wood's Despatch included the establishment of the Department of Public Instruction, the establishment of Universities, provision of graded schools, scheme of grant-in-aid, training of teachers, education and employment, encouragement towards oriental learning, vocational education and education for women.

However, the recommendations of Wood's Despatch was implemented unsuccessfully. And this did not satisfy either the Missionaries or the orientalists. The next step taken was by Lord Ripon who appointed the Indian Educational Commission (also known as the Hunter Commission) under the presidentship of Sir William Hunter in 1882.[65] The Hunter Commission realized that government expenditure on education was increasing due to the increasing demands of the Indian population. And thus, it suggested that the responsibility of the government be shifted to

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[64] Pawar, N.G. (2004), *Development of Educational System in India*, Book Enclave, p. 26

[65] Ibid., p. 46

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district and local boards to run all elementary schools.[66] Thus, what the Hunter Commission did was it recommended the government to shirk off its responsibility of funding education for the masses.

Lord Curzon came to India in 1899 as the Governor General. He was dynamic in his approach to develop the education system in colonial India. He conveyed a secret educational conference in Shimla which passed the Lord Curzon's Educational Policy. He attached great importance to university education and affiliated colleges. And thus, according to the provisions made by Indian Universities Commission, 1902 and Indian Universities Act, 1904, Curzon increased the grants-in-aid to universities and affiliated colleges. During his tenure, government schools were funded even more so that they could become perfect model schools for the private schools to follow. Private schools were also given considerable grants to allow them to become as efficient as government schools. Medium of instruction during middle school was to be in the vernaculars, whereas English was to be the medium of instruction for high school.

Again, in primary education, schemes were formed for training of teachers, and revision of curriculum. The Sadler Commission Report published in 1917, under the presidentship of Dr. M.E. Sadler, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds, considered secondary education to be the gateway to university education and thus concentrated on secondary education. It is due to the Sadler Commission Report that there was a massive rise in the number of colleges and universities from 1916 to 1922.

The Wardha Scheme of Education was introduced by Mahatma Gandhi in 1937. The Wardha scheme suggested that elementary education for the age group of 7 to 14 years should be free, universal and compulsory, education had to be based on crafts, medium of instruction should be mother tongue and education should be self supported.

The Wardha Scheme failed because it was not seen to be a practical solution by the British. In fact, the British were not eager in funding the Wardha Scheme of Education. However, the importance of the Wardha scheme lies in the fact that the Wardha scheme was reflected when the educational policies were being framed in post independent India.

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[66] Pawar, N.G. (2004), *Development of Educational System in India*, Book Enclave

After the Hunter Commission's report, it was seen that Indians were more and more interested in getting educated as the government was pushing its way out of providing English education to the Indian masses. The attraction of employment and economic and social upward mobility lead Indians demanding English education. National consciousness had already been enmeshed in Indians and it was soon realized that providing English education to the Indians was a 'grave political miscalculation.'[67]

Western education in Colonial India:

When the British came to India, they came as merchants to trade. However, they gradually became very successful and powerful in trading with India and outdoing the other competitors. By the end of the eighteenth century, the status of the East India Company had changed from being merchants to being rulers.[68] The Battle of Plassey in 1757, the battle of Buxar in 1764, and the grant of Diwani in 1765 helped the British not only to conquer territories in Bengal, but also to defeat their European competitors and curb the powers of Indian rulers in Oudh, Mysore and Peshawa. Consecutive successes led to the development of a superiority consciousness among the British who felt that India consisted of bad institutions and corrupt people who were beyond repair.[69] Along with such superiority complex came ideas of how to tame the Indian population. Thus, began the introduction of education policies by the British for the Indian masses.

According to Shalini Advani, there were three reasons why the British introduced English in India.[70] First of all, the British believed that scientific rationality could not be taught by the vernacular languages. The colonizers saw the Indian texts as backward and looked down upon the Indian vernacular languages. English was seen as a vehicle of the upliftment of science and reason which could not be brought about by the vernacular languages. The second reason why

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[67] Ghosh, Suresh Chandra. (1993), 'English in taste, in opinions, in words and intellect': indoctrinating the Indian through textbook, curriculum and education', in J.A. Mangan (ed.) *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and education in the British Colonial Experience*, London: Routledge

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., p. 178

[70] Advani, Shalini (2009), *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English and the Indian Modern*, Oxford University Press

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the British introduced English education in India was because the British saw English as a tool for social control. They knew that with the spread of English, they could discipline and civilize Indians and introduce Indians to their culture. The third reason was the growing demand for learning English from the Indian side. Starting with the elite Indians followed by others, English education seemed very lucrative as it was viewed as a means to access government jobs and economic opportunities.

However, English education was seen with skepticism by the Indian middle class. Although the knowledge of English was crucial for practical purposes in the public sphere, there was a conflict between the public sphere and the cultural sphere. This is because one could be an English speaking elite in the public sphere but one had to hold on to the cultural roots in the private sphere. With the growth of the nationalist movement, it became clear that no language could be marked with a single essence, a fixed innate character and an inscribed identity that no one could re-figure.

With the coming of the British, schools started developing as opposed to the traditional Indian education systems. Initially, the missionaries started setting up schools and their approach was very different from the government system of education. The missionaries were keen to set up rural schools with local vernacular languages as the medium of teaching whereas the British government wanted to impart English education to the respectable members of Indian society. Their selective policy of providing English education to particular members of respectable communities actually led to the dichotomy of English considered as the privileged language against the vernaculars. However, Veronique Benei argues that the differences between the missionaries and the government education departments have always been exaggerated. He points out that, "In 1855, two-thirds of the school-registered children were in government-controlled schools which were run by various missions or, much more rarely, by influential local people. Some of these missionaries were even recruited by the educational department to the posts of translators or inspectors, or had close connections with them."[71] Veronique states that

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[71] Benei, Veronique. (2002), "Missing Indigenous Bodies : Educational Enterprise and Victorian Morality in Mid-19th Century Bombay Presidency", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 17 (April 27-May 3), p. 5

educationists working with the government department of education in Bombay presidency shared much in common with the educators of the missionaries.[72]

Anu Kumar points out that in the late 18th century in Calcutta, indigenous schools of elementary, called pathshalas, and higher learning existed along with missionary run English schools. Bengali, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian languages were taught in the indigenous schools.[73] Kumar argues that Calcutta's elite were to organize and improve the pathshalas. This time also saw the setting up of the Calcutta Book Society and Calcutta School Society in 1817 and 1818 respectively. By the late 18th century, English pathshalas had started commencing to cater to the needs of indigenous English speaking people of Calcutta.[74]

There was also an attempt to balance vernacular and English education. Kumar states that, "During Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar's tenure as the principal of Sanskrit College (1851-58), a condensed course in Sanskrit was introduced along with some exposure to English language and literature (Acharya). Thus, a balance was sought between the claims of English and vernacular education. Other schools such as this came up, in the so-called Anglo vernacular model."[75] Such a school based on the Anglo vernacular model was started by Rabindranath Tagore's father, Debendranath Tagore.[76] However, these schools based on the Anglo vernacular model did not prosper as there was a massive demand for English education. This was because English education was the way to get employment with the British colonial bureaucracy. Moreover, a massive program was launched to translate English works into the vernacular languages. The British government encouraged educated native writers to write original works and commissioned such projects and provided financial grants for such projects.[77] They also started

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[72] Benei, Veronique. (2002), "Missing Indigenous Bodies : Educational Enterprise and Victorian Morality in Mid-19th Century Bombay Presidency", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 17 (April 27-May 3)

[73] Kumar, Anu. (2007), "New Lamps for Old: Colonial Experiments with Vernacular Education, Pre- and Post-1857", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 12

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., p. 1

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

commissioning local officers to oversee the production of school text books. All this was done because the British realized that they had to make way for Indians to get access to European sciences and literature. They had also expected that by imparting English education to Indians, Indians would stop turning hostile to European culture and their governments.

Rajive Tiwari states that although English education was growing in prominence and vernacular education was vanishing from the scene, the British reflected upon a fundamental question posed by Charles Grant i.e. whether it would be easier to rule over Indians if they were kept ignorant. Tiwari notes that, "Grant and some others argued in favour of setting up an educational system not only because 'spreading the right knowledge' was a matter of 'moral duty' but also because this would help attain the colonialists' primary goal of material progress."[78] Charles Grant believed that British goods did not attract much demand in the colony because of the economic and cultural backwardness of Indians.[79] He was confident that the only way things could be made better was by providing Indians with European education. He said:

> "The true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied, it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us."[80]

Tiwari refers to the different phases of the colonial education policy.[81] The first phase of colonial education policy i.e. pre-1814, was one where policy makers were not interested in imparting European education among the Indian masses although some like Grant believed that the Indians should be educated in English and be allowed access to European literature and the sciences for the above mentioned reasons. According to Tiwari, the second phase from 1814 to 1835 saw the

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[78] Tiwari, Rajive (2006), "A Transnarrative for the Colony, Astronomy Education and Religion in 19th Century India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 1, p. 1

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., p. 1

[81] Ibid.

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increasing teaching of traditional Indian texts. The changed idea behind this was that there should be a focus on oriental learning yet the learning of European sciences was to gradually blend in. Tiwari points out that the third phase started after 1835 when the increasing demand for western education came from eminent Indian personalities like Raja Rammohan Roy. This difference in attitude set the way for Macaulay's entry into the educational scene. This phase saw the growth of medical, engineering teaching and the teaching of the European sciences.[82] Therefore, what happened was not a sudden intrusion of western education but a gradual and subtle blend of European education with its Indian counterpart until the former gained much prominence.

The British actually recognized three tiers of education.[83] The first tier was English medium education for the elites in urban areas. The second recognized Vernacular medium for primary stage and English medium for advanced stage in towns. The third tier referred to the use of vernacular medium in the rural areas to impart primary education.

Thus, English had acquired the position which was previously enjoyed by Sanskrit. This selective English policy was vehemently criticized by Gokhale, Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo and other leaders of the national freedom struggle. The politicization of the language issue during the freedom struggle concentrated on the *medium* aspect rather than the *content*. The issues of national and cultural resurgence in those times shaped the demands for vernacularization and equal opportunity through education.

Krishna Kumar argues that there is not only a link between the selection of school knowledge which was made under colonial rule and present day pedagogy and curricula in our country, but the very idea of what is 'worth teaching' remains greatly affected by how the colonizers viewed the Indian society.[84] He uses the term 'enlightened outsider' to refer to the colonizers who selected and decided school knowledge in colonial India. Thus, the schools disseminated

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[82] Tiwari, Rajive (2006), "A Transnarrative for the Colony, Astronomy Education and Religion in 19th Century India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 1

[83] Khubchandani, Lachman M. (1981), *Language, Education and Social Justice*, Poona: Centre for Communication Studies

[84] Kumar, Krishna. (1991), *Political Agenda of Education*, New Delhi: Sage Publications

knowledge which was disassociated with the forms of knowledge and skills in India, which were to be symbols of 'ignorance', and a symbol of a deficient culture.

The introduction of the English language as a medium of teaching removed every possibility of the child's everyday life from being identified to the school curriculum.[85] Again, some forms and skills were taught in distinctly labeled institutions which were usually reserved for dominant groups. The eighteenth century English political idea of a civil society was permeated so that a minority of property holders was trained in the attitudes and skills of the colonial rulers. To be educated was to be intellectually separated from the masses, and to aim a legitimate share in the powers and resources of the colonial state.

Walsh argues that between 1850 and 1947, British colonial power and its institutions reshaped the indigenous Indian childhood of English educated Indians in a way that such a change brought about a major impact on the Indian ways of family and domestic life.[86] According to Walsh, English education and the common structures of institutions of the British led to a commonality between English educated Indians no matter how different they were in terms of language or region. Walsh states that, "Where indigenous regional communities had once offered children traditionally sanctioned, predefined adult identities and occupations set (by and large) in relatively stable, established geographical locations, colonial India now demanded that an elite group of Indian children face a variety of new gender-related, educational and occupational choices, all set into a life mode of considerable geographical mobility."[87]

This meant that students seeking to get British education had to go to the metropolitan cities to get their education. When the students left their villages and towns to seek English education, they were moulded into a new form of modernity imbibed by the western knowledge. Western knowledge gave the Indian learners freedom in such a way that this freedom became hostile to the family, village or the Indian way of growing up. Walsh actually bases his essay on biographies of various members of the English educated elite. She finds that when the English

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[85] Kumar, Krishna. (1991), *Political Agenda of Education*, New Delhi: Sage Publications

[86] Walsh, Judith E. (2003), "English Education and Indian Childhood during the Raj, 1850-1947", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Monsoon.

[87] Ibid., p. 36

learners got used to the freedom and advanced knowledge available at the English centres of learning, it became quite difficult for them to adjust to the orthodox and traditional practices when they went back home. Many of them have written in their biographies that often they had disagreements with their family members when subjects related to caste and religion came up and so, many decided to stay away from their families in the main towns and cities.

It is evident that there is a significant difference in the formative years of children in India and children in the West. The Indian child grows up not to be an independent individual but an adult who is still not independent. This is because for an Indian adult, it is not possible to be free from familial ties. Moreover, the joint family system which still prevails in India, which was even more prevalent during the colonial times, encourages such dependence on the family and vice-versa. Walsh argues that the power structures of the British challenged these various structures through the English educated Indians. Walsh also points out that the, "students of this educational system came to be called 'the English educated elite'. This all Indian, (predominantly) high caste, westernised male elite would dominate regional societies and politics in the late nineteenth century, nationalist politics in then twentieth century, and the economic and political structures of post-Independence India as well."[88] She points out that the young learners of English education were the ones who were going to be the predominant elite class to dominate the nationalist politics before and after India's independence. This of course, does not mean that nothing much changed in the education scenario post independence.

We see that by the twentieth century, schools imparting English education and students for English education had grown quite much and there was this uniform way of educating the Indian learners. This is because the British had set up educational institutes which had uniform methods of teaching, uniform syllabi and had a commonality. Moreover, other private schools which were under the purview of the British government had to also conform to this uniformity. Walsh argues that this uniformity in the British educational experience had put the English learners in possession of not only a language but also common perspectives, assumptions and values through which they could easily communicate with each other, no matter what their differences were.

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[88] Walsh, Judith E. (2003), "English Education and Indian Childhood during the Raj, 1850-1947", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Monsoon, p. 39

Walsh also points out that all tiers of the British education system were aimed at a civilizing process of the Indian learners. The textbooks seemed to be a mechanism to implement their civilizing procedure and encourage the English learners to not only become a part of this civilizing mission, but also to give up their traditional ways of life. Walsh states that, "The central message to students was 'acculturate'. Accept the British modernity represented by the ideas, values and related life-ways of the West, the educational system said, and become partners in the governing and ruling of British India."[89] With all these techniques, by the late 1880's, English language institutions had produced in India an 'imagined community' known in publications of that period as the 'English educated elite' and numbering as many as 50,000.[90] This 'English educated elite' were different from the others in their dressing, education, speaking and way of life. Thus, this 'imagined community' made it very easy for English educated Indians to interact and engage with each other without any difficulty whatsoever.

Indian learners who joined the English schools and the civilizing mission of the British responded well to the imbibing of modernity. The late nineteenth century saw the growth of various associations and student groups among which many tried to transform India and Hinduism on the basis of their education of the West.[91] Walsh argues that, "Much of the writing by English educated Indians in this period repeated the themes of the history textbooks – a 'New Dispensation' was needed: a reform of caste, a programme of physical and political nation-building to be taken up under the tutelage of the British."[92] When students spoke of Rationalism and Enlightenment, they spoke of them in such vigour as to associate them with the ancient Aryan past.[93]

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[89] Walsh, Judith E. (2003), "English Education and Indian Childhood during the Raj, 1850-1947", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Monsoon, p. 41

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., p. 49

[93] Ibid.

Walsh mentions Gandhi as one of the English educated elites of the time period.[94] She argues that it was because of Gandhi that the 'imagined community' and the shared experiences of the English educated elite gave them an opportunity to use this commonality to 'good political effect'. He points out that even after Gandhi tried to reconsider his identity as an Indian while staying in South Africa, there were remnants of British education which were still in him like punctuality and convincing his followers to do their own manual labour. Walsh correctly argues that the synthesis of English education and his Indian identity led him to make the Gandhian movement successful. Walsh states –

> "For it was in Gandhi and the Gandhian movement of the twentieth century that the effects of the changed structures and experiences of Indian childhood and the self-identity of the English educated found their mutual catharsis. Gandhi's political behavior towards the British – his courage, his principled positions, his insistence on truth and non-violence – brilliantly asserted all those virtues which the British textbooks, educators and officials alike, insisted were lacking in Indians. His political dramas repeatedly reversed the negative stereotypes of Indians. Again and again, Gandhi's tactics revealed that it was the British who possessed those very weaknesses – lack of principles, truthfulness and integrity – that they claimed to despise in Indians and had taught Indians to despise in themselves. It was the British who lied promising self-government and yet refusing to grant it. It was the British who were cowardly – setting troops to beat down non-violent protesters."[95]

Thus, we see that English educated elites had already imbibed in themselves the modernity which the West boasted of. Therefore, English education lead to a very unstable relationship between the modern ways of living and the traditional Indian concepts of village life and familial interdependence. However, we see later that with the coming of Gandhi, the already established 'imagined community' made it much easier for the English educated elite to fight against the British Empire. The mechanism with which the British wanted to tame Indians went against its own interests.

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[94] Walsh, Judith E. (2003), "English Education and Indian Childhood during the Raj, 1850-1947", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Monsoon

[95] Ibid., p. 63

The British used education as a mechanism to serve their own interests. We see that initially the British government did not think it was necessary to invest in education for Indians. However, they soon realized that if they had to employ from the Indian masses to conduct the administrative affairs of their massive empire they had to educate Indians. The other reason for educating Indians was that the British believed that traditional Indian texts were conservative and out of date. Thus, they needed to usher in English education which would let Indian learners access to the advanced European sciences and literature. This would also ensure that the Indians stay as a subject population under the British Empire. It took various phases of British education policies to finally put an end to the Oriental – Occidental controversy and focus on imparting European education among the masses. As we have already understood that western education was not brought into the educational scenario overnight. It was brought in a very gradual manner ending with its prominence over the Indian texts.

The spread of English education and the growing popularity of the European sciences and literature also paved the way for not only elite Indians but also many other sections of the Indian population to get access to the ideals of the western world. The elite sections of the population took upon themselves the task of reviving the past and glorifying the cultural heritage of India. All of this made way to the rising of national consciousness among Indians. Soon, the British realized the mistake they had made of educating Indians. This is because Indians had started to reach high and prominent positions in the government as well as in trade. Moreover, nationalist consciousness was penetrating the Indian minds gradually and was preparing them for the freedom struggle against the British Raj.

The post independence period saw the continuation of the structures and institutions of education from the colonial times. However, in the Nehruvian era, an attempt was made to homogenize the Indian population and rule out differences on the basis of caste, sex, class and religion. Such attempts at homogenization were reflected in the textbooks which were published during the Nehruvian era and even later. However, this homogenized education strategy did not manage to gather much ground especially in front of the religious and communal forces in the 1980' and 1990's. This is the time when for the first time the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, came to power in the Centre. This period saw the framing of the National Curriculum Framework 2000 which aimed at saffronising education to

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mobilize the Indian masses in favour of right wing Hindutva ideology. The next chapter deals with how the BJP led NDA government used education as a tool for purposes of nation building and to further interests which conformed to their Hindutva cultural nationalism.

National Curriculum Framework 2000:

Saffronisation of the Indian Curriculum

There have been various debates providing us with ways of understanding the past. The understanding of history is not static. There is a constant process of writing and re-writing of history. However, when the re-writing of history stems from hatred and political gains, then such such re-writing of the past becomes very problematic. According to Neeladri Bhattacharya, such re-writing of history "attacks the very discipline of academic history."[96] Bhattacharya argues that all history is political in a sense. History defines our past and in this process moulds our identity, our consciousness of the self and our position in the world. Thus, he argues that history is not free from subjectivity and the political conditions. However, the re-writing of history becomes problematic when political considerations become the main reasons for excluding and including certain elements which conveniently complement the ideologies of the ruling political party.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2000 which was drafted by the NDA Government was a largely disturbing and problematic one. During this time, there was a quick inclusion of elements in history textbooks which celebrated the Hindu glorious past and succinctly portrayed the Muslims as the 'other', as the enemy. My larger argument in this chapter would underlie the fact that every political party uses education as a tool for propagating their ideology among the masses. To contextualize my argument, I would argue that under the rule of the NDA Government, primary education went under a phase of saffronisation[97] where the hidden agenda of education was to glorify the Hindu past and project India as a Hindu nation. In this case, history and civics textbooks had a major role aimed at nation-building.

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[96] Bhattacharya, Neeladri (2002), "The Problem", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February, p. 18

[97] The term 'Saffronisation' comes from the saffron robes worn by Hindu sannyasis or religious hermits. The term 'Saffronisation' is used to indicate the politics of right wing Hindu nationalism which make the state adopt policies which favor the glorification of the Hindu past. By 'Saffronisation' of education, I mean the changes made by the BJP led government in the school curriculum and textbooks which lead to the glorification of the Hindu cultural past.

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Considering the communal practices of the BJP in India, be it at the Union level or at the State level, it becomes increasingly difficult to delineate communalism from Hindu Nationalism. Some scholars seem to differentiate Hindu nationalism from communalism. According to John Zavos, nationalism is a very complex category which can be considered as an ideology.[98] However, Zavos argues that communalism is not an ideology and that it depends on other ideologies to extend itself. Manjari Katju on the other hand states that:

> "...communalism evolved not merely as a politics for socio-political and economic dominance, but also took shape as a coherent ideology, a belief system that imagined a community of co-religionists whose interests were diametrically opposed to another community of co-religionists. Not only this, but it went further in imagining and propagating that the two opposed communities constitute two separate nations aligned antagonistically while sharing the geographical space. It is here that communalism (or communalisation) and Hindu nationalism cannot be divorced. They share their ideological ground-space."[99]

Katju also argues that the indulgence of a group embodying Hindu nationalism in communal propaganda and violence makes it even more difficult to differentiate between Hindu nationalism and communalism.

K.N. Panikkar argues that the communal interpretation of history has its roots in the colonial era.[100] According to him, the writing of history of the Indians by the colonizers took into account a religious view of the past. During this time, Indian history was divided into Hindu and Muslim periods and such a view was carried forward by Indian historians who never attempted to critique this imbibed idea of the past. Thus, Panikkar argues that Indian history is seen thorough stereotypes which are embedded in religious identity. Panikkar argues that, "Such an interpretation of history has been a part of the textbooks, both of school and college, for a long time, moulding the historical consciousness of society and in turn the social perspectives and

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[98] Katju, Manjari (2005), "Saffronisation and Indian Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. 40, No. 11 (March 12-18)

[99] Ibid., p. 3

[100] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9

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behaviour of several generations. This divisive notion of history was one of the several ideological weapons that colonialism invoked to construct its legitimacy."[101] Panikkar goes on to distinguish between the Hindu communal ideology and the colonial communal ideology. He states that,

"In the Hindu communal worldview and politics the religious interpretation of history has an entirely different import, even if it shares much of the colonial assumptions. Unlike the colonial history which mainly emphasises social divisions, despite invoking the tyranny of the Yavanas and the Muslims its focus is more on social antagonism and political hostility, which differentiates the Hindu communal from the colonial communal. The antagonism and hostility encoded in the interpretative structure of the former, which identifies the 'outsider' as enemy, turn history into an ideology of communalism. The politics of Ramjanmabhoomi temple is a good example of the mediation of such history in the making of popular historical consciousness. The organising principle of this politics was not only the privileging of faith over reason, but also the identification of an enemy who acted against the religious interests of the Hindus."[102]

The meaning of secularism as stated in our constitution was not only aimed at non-discrimination of citizens on the basis of religion, be it in the matters of public employment or state funded educational institutions, but also aimed at protecting the rights of all citizens. According to Gohain, "Saffronisation of education is part of a far-reaching agenda to reverse such historic trends. And it actually harks back to the period of turmoil to which the secularism of the Constitution had been an answer."[103] In the post independence period, two major wings of studying history emerged – Nationalist history and Marxist history. Nationalist history stems from the anti-colonial struggle and emphasizes on studying the national movement. Whereas, the

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[101] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9, p. 2

[102] Ibid., p. 2

[103] Gohain, Hiren (2002), "On Saffronisation of Education", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 46, (November 16-22), p. 1

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Marxist wing dealt with processes of production and changes in economy in understanding India's historical past. However, both of them tended to avoid the social and cultural domain as differences in these domains could run counter to a shared notion of united India. The Subaltern Studies, which aimed at critiquing mainstream ideology, came up much later in the eighties.

One of the purposes of education is ultimately to advance knowledge.[104] Thapar frames this question in two ways –

1) What does advance in knowledge involve in relation to history?

2) What does advance in knowledge involve with respect to practical aspects of education that involve governmental bodies and institutions?

The debate on history teaching and text books is not limited to the writing and interpretation of history but also it revolves around three major questions:

1) How committed are we in advancing knowledge in a particular discipline?

2) What are the methods used to advance the knowledge?

3) What is the degree to which we are aware whether a particular discipline is being used by a political party for its mobilization?

Thapar argues that we need to examine early texts like the Vedas, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the like in order to find out why the system of knowledge changed over the years and what are the relevant questions emerging from current knowledge. She zeroes down on the writings of the 19th Century because this period is projected as 'tradition'. However, the interesting part is that even during the 19th Century, writings were not straight jacketed with a single point of view but scholars writing in Sanskrit, Persian and what we call regional languages now debated among themselves. The advancement of knowledge, Thapar is trying to argue, has discussions and debates centering inside it.

The second aspect refers to the methods used to advance knowledge. History is not science where data can be verified or falsified in a laboratory. "Historical method involves the process of

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[104] Thapar, Romila, (2005), "Knowledge and Education", *Frontline*, January 28.

understanding the nature of the data and learning how to analyse it."[105] The data in this case could be a coin, an inscription or a text. And finally we come to the question where a political organization may be using a particular discipline for purposes of political mobilization. This is evident when the NDA Government came to power. The textbooks of the NCERT brought out by the BJP led Government show evidences of passages and portions being deleted since they were not acceptable the BJP. This was done not by historians but organizations sympathetic to the BJP ideology.

India's past is used for mass mobilization and also for the creation of particular communities for which a major factor is India's continued civilization. Dipta Bhog and others argue that, "histories that see Hindus and Muslims as homogeneous communities in the past, or those that juxtapose the region and the centre as oppositional categories, are framed within or are powerfully influenced by the politics of the present."[106] The skills and abilities which should be a matter of concern in the study of social sciences are neither used for framing the curriculum, nor are they considered significant in determining pedagogy.

When the Janata Government was in power from 1977 to 1979, the existing history textbooks like Romila Thapar's 'Medieval India' and Bipan Chandra's 'Modern India' were being threatened to be withdrawn on the ground that these books represented a marxist understanding of Indian history and were not compatible with a proper representation of India's tradition and culture. Then, in the year 2000 the NDA government formed a curriculum framework that made significant changes in the patterns of writing history textbooks. It is significant to mention here that the saffronisation of education had begun much before the NDA government came to power. Panikkar states that the RSS had begun creating its own educational network since 1942.[107] During the NDA regime, a parallel system of Hindu education was encouraged with the government providing administrative and financial support. With the support of the Union

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[105]Thapar, Romila, (2005), "Knowledge and Education", *Frontline*, January 28, p. 39

[106] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj, (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 144

[107] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9

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government, an all India organisation for Hinduised education called the Vidya Bharati Shiksha Sanstan was set up in 1978.

The NCERT released a 'National Curriculum Framework for School Education: A Discussion Document 1999' for public debate in the country. The debate mostly centred around the hidden agenda of the curriculum mostly regarding the issues of the teaching of history, Sanskrit and religions.[108] These history textbooks represented a clear tint in favour of the right wing ideology of Hindu nationalism. In these textbooks was a "...nation fired by pride in religious (read Hindu) traditions and practices, where spirituality...would determine the superiority/exclusivity of the Indian nation. History was to be the site for generation (and reawakening) of this patriotic fervor."[109]

The heavy inclination of the NCFSE 2000 towards Hindutva nationalist ideology created a large scale controversy across the country. A consequence of this controversy was that a citizen petition was filed against the government in the Supreme Court.[110] Some of the opposition parties also came together and rejected NCFSE 2000 and demanded a revision of the framework. However, in 2002, the Supreme Court approved the curriculum. As Sangeeta Kamat points out, "In September 2002, the court approved the curriculum stating that there was no real distinction between religious education and value education and both are necessary to promote morality in society and as such Curriculum 2000 does not violate the Indian constitution."[111]

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[108] Mallikarjun, B. (2001), "Languages In The School Curriculum: Challenges Of The New Millenium", Vol. 1: June-July-August, *www.languageinindia.com*, Accessed 21 January, 2011, URL: http://www.languageinindia.com/junjulaug2001/school.html

[109] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 144

[110] Kamat, Sangeeta (2004), "Postcolonial Aporias, or What Does Fundamentalism Have to Do with Globalization? The Contradictory Consequences of Education Reform in India", Postcolonialism and Comparative Education, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 40, No. 2, May, Special Issue (28)

[111] Kamat, Sangeeta (2004), "Postcolonial Aporias, or What Does Fundamentalism Have to Do with Globalization? The Contradictory Consequences of Education Reform in India", Postcolonialism and Comparative Education, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 40, No. 2, May, Special Issue (28), p. 15

The NCFSE 2000 observed that "... the concerns and issues of the contemporary world need to be kept in the forefront. To this end, the quantum of history may be substantially reduced. Past developments could be studied as a backdrop for understanding the present. As such the needs and challenges of today must be responded suitably. ... This would necessitate considerable increase in the coverage of courses in civics."[112] According to Subramaniam, the NCFSE does not recommend the study of history as a subject.

Rather, inferences of events may be drawn from history. The NCFSE document suggests that the, "Study of Indian civilization and its rich cultural heritage along with other world civilizations and their interconnections may be the major area of study drawn from history. It ought to include the different cultural movements and revolutions in the life of the country and also the spread of its culture in other lands"[113]. Sangeeta Kamat, refers to the NCFSE 2000 document and states that, "The genius of the document lies in the fact that it embeds a conservative nationalist agenda within a liberal discourse of equity, excellence and democracy, and provides new direction to an education system that everyone agrees is ineffectual. In this way, it appeals to populist sentiments that seek to overhaul the education system and presents a new vision that purports to fit a rapidly transforming nation and world"[114].

Subramaniam argues that the NCFSE document reduces the study of history into a mere description of events. Over and above that, Indian history has to be seen in terms of its contribution to the world and has to be measured in relativity after comparing itself with other great civilizations. According to Irfan Habib, the main aim of history is the pursuit of truth.[115]

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[112] Subramaniam, C.N. (2003), "NCERT's National Curriculum Framework: A Review", Vol. IX, No. 2, September, www.revolutionarydemocracy.org, Accessed 2 March, 2011, URL: http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv9n2/ncert.htm, p. 1

[113] Subramaniam, C.N. (2003), "NCERT's National Curriculum Framework: A Review", Vol. IX, No. 2, September, www.revolutionarydemocracy.org, Accessed 2 March, 2011, URL: http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv9n2/ncert.htm, p. 1

[114] Kamat, Sangeeta (2004), "Postcolonial Aporias, or What Does Fundamentalism Have to Do with Globalization? The Contradictory Consequences of Education Reform in India", Postcolonialism and Comparative Education, Comparative Education, Vol. 40, No. 2, May, Special Issue (28), p. 14

[115] Habib, Irfan (2002), 'The Rewriting of History by the Sangh Parivar', in Against Communalisation of Education, Essays Press Commentary Reportage, New Delhi: Sahmat&Sabrang.com

Any kind of bias, be it religious or national must be avoided. The history of a nation is a part of world history. Habib argues that it is absurd to project only our country's history, with one-sided evidence, to prove that our history is superior to others.[116] The same applies when we are writing about past of particular regions or communities.

In the Indian History textbooks, time travels very fast where learners are introduced to stories of early man at the age of nine and within the next two years, they find themselves studying the Indian national movement. During this speedy process, national heroes crop up time and again without detailing their period or context so as to connote the meaning of a shared past. Krishna Kumar states that eminent leaders of the freedom movement fall in a homogeneous category.[117] However, the history textbooks are not successful in explaining why these eminent figures should be seen as distinct personalities and political figures.[118] According to Sumit Sarkar, the greatness of the anti-colonial era lies in the acceptance to regular debates and self-questioning in various ways largely by eminent personalities like Tagore, Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar.[119] However, Sarkar argues that "It is this complex and often contradictory heritage that the forces of Hindutva today seek to wipe out from present-day realities and historical memory alike, in significant part through collapsing the narratives of the anti-colonial era into a simple story of monochromatic heroes and villains."[120]

History as a discipline is vast and has lots to say. All of history has to be told but in fewer words. Thus, what the learners find are abstract report cards which simply state the facts without explaining why some event occurred and what the relation is between the events which occurred. The learners are flooded with facts which they have no choice but to memorize. Moreover, the process of memorizing a subject without understanding it naturally makes the subject dull for the learner. Ultimately what happens is that the study of History in textbooks becomes a burden on

[116] Habib, Irfan (2002), "The Rewriting of History by the Sangh Parivar, in *Against Communalisation of Education*, Essays Press Commentary Reportage, New Delhi: Sahmat&Sabrang.com

[117] Kumar, Krishna (2003), "Peace With The Past", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February

[118] Ibid.

[119] Sarkar, Sumit (2003), "The Limits of Nationalism", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February

[120] Ibid., p. 24

the learners which they have to continue through their middle and secondary education. Kumkum Roy, with reference to the Class VI history textbooks, argues that, "The authors of the textbook seem to operate with the notion that history is a record of some kind of an Olympic event, given their preoccupation with classifying developments as the first and the best, occasionally at the cost of truth."[121]

History Textbooks in Different States of India:

In Madhya Pradesh, the Eklavya Social Science programme, which started way back in 1982, is an initiative which looks at the Social Sciences teaching in a very different manner. Let us dig deeper into how the Eklavya Social Science programme is different from the others. After discussing with teachers, students and researchers, the Eklavya team tried to figure out the problems with history textbooks and the reasons why history seems to be such a dull subject for the students.

The teaching of history has been one of imparting values rather than giving the learner a scope of critical questioning. There prevails an *externalist* notion of learning history which convinces the learner to use the past as a source of learning lessons in the present day. Again, there is the *synoptic* approach to the learning of history where the learner is expected to study a brief idea of a long period of history in a particular order. There is hardly any elaboration of the concepts and thus history learning boils down to simple methods of rote learning and memorizing. Krishna Kumar argues that school texts of the discipline of history become like authoritative stories, totally undisturbed by conflict or doubt due to inadequate evidence.[122] He argues that any other subject like science can be proved through a formula. However, in the case of history, the child does not have the intellectual capability to challenge the existing tales of history. Thus textbooks are controlled by government agencies without facing any opposition. There is a dominant

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[121] Roy, Kumkum (2003), "What Happened To Confucianism?", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February, p. 68

[122] Kumar, Krishna (2002) 'Partition in School Textbooks: A Comparative Look at India and Pakistan' in S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta (ed.) *Pangs of Partition: Vol II: The Human Dimension*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications

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'textbook culture' in India and Pakistan where textbooks are prescribed and not recommended.[123] This textbook culture leaves no room for alternative texts and readings.

Considering the prevalent modes of teaching and writing history, the Eklavya team took upon itself to write history textbooks.[124] "...textbooks produced by Eklavya adopted multiple strategies to convert the learner from being a passive receiver of information, to 'learn through an activity and discovery method'."[125] For this, fictional narratives and multiple historical sources were used to make history textbooks much more interesting for the learner.

The textbooks developed by Eklavya proved how within the existing and limiting framework of textbook writing, textbooks could be made much more interesting along with the making the learner an active participant in the process of knowledge dissemination. However, inspite of these efforts, history textbooks tend to remain indifferent to the learner's needs. Similarly, the textbooks of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and the Centre also remain unaffected by the demands of the learner's needs.

The Uttar Pradesh textbooks are very different from the others. Here, there are three textbooks introduced in middle school titled 'Bharat Ke Mahaan Vyaktitva' (BKMV).[126] These textbooks use the lives of personalities and celebrate their glory. Through the dissemination of knowledge, values are instilled in the learners through the examples of great heroes which come live out of the history books. One interesting fact with the UP textbooks is that there is not much differentiation between myth and history for figures like Ram, Krishna, Nachiketa stand alongside Gandhi and Alexander.

However, the usage of myths and the auras of such personalities actually makes the textbooks quite grasping and interesting for the learners. What ultimately happens is a blend of myths,

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[123] Kumar, Krishna (2002) 'Partition in School Textbooks: A Comparative Look at India and Pakistan' in S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta (ed.) *Pangs of Partition: Vol II: The Human Dimension*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications

[124] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar

[125] Ibid., p. 150

[126] Ibid.

history and religion which gives rise to a feeling of commonness about the past. Dipta Bog and others argue that, "Armed with a bricolage of personalities – who are mostly child prodigies with a photographic memory, superb skills...read religious books like the Mahabharata and Ramayana...books seek to make the learners 'good bharat vasis' over a three year period."[127]

Krishna Kumar refers to the changes that had been made in the high school history textbooks by the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh.[128] According to Kumar, the BJP considers education as a stamina-building exercise which gives gradual accretion of the 'right' motivations and reflexes. Kumar argues that the cultural agenda of the BJP is diffusely present in the mindset of the educated classes of the North Indian society.

Thus with such internalized presence of cultural revivalism, it hardly matters which party alters the content of history textbooks. Such a situation becomes worse as there is a lack of skilled manpower to write text books. Usually such a writer is expected to be steeped in the general beliefs of history that the urban middle class shares.

The problem with the secular political agenda in our country is that its proponents have not made an effort to build a pedagogical culture consistent with their vision. According to Kumar, the UP textbooks are only a part of the colonial agenda of education which subordinated the intellectual role of education to a mere role of maintaining the social order.

History and Power:

Power is a major element in the discourse of history as seen in the history textbooks. History as seen in textbooks, be it at the national or the state level, is basically a 'narrative of power' whether it refers to kings or family or wars or the society.[129] Power manifests itself in the history textbooks in the form of conquests, alliances and annexations by kings. The king plays a central

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[127] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 152

[128] Kumar, Krishna (1992), "Education and Ideology, Continued Text", *Seminar* 400, December

[129] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar

role in defining power in history. With the supremacy of the king comes the greatness of monarchy and centralization. A strong centre is seen as most desirable for a kingdom. Interestingly, wars are seen as brief periods of unrest before they give rise to a powerful kingdom with one supreme King.

Dipta Bhog and others provide an example from a class 7 Uttar Pradesh BKMV textbook which enunciates the above phenomenon – "The rule of Chandra Gupta Maurya's kingdom was extremely well managed. His rule became the ideal of other rulers...the ultimate power of administration was in his hands."[130] The same is the case with the NCERT history textbooks where the centralization of the powers of the kingdom in the hands of the king is seen as a form of welfare practice for the benefit of the powerless subjects of the king. Subject people are meant to be law abiding and any kind of revolt against the king would naturally invite punishment. Not only this, military force is also a sign of political recognition.

The West Bengal textbooks represent considerably the world wars and particularly World War I is seen as a result of imperialist tendencies. The nuclear attack on Hiroshima is also a matter of grave discussion in these textbooks. However, the history texts surpass mentioning India's own nuclear tests and the state repression. The ideologies of the various states and governments in those states decide the importance of historic events and characters. To put it more blatantly, governments of various states use the history textbooks as a tool to select and emphasize on those events and characters from history which fit their ideological standpoints. Further, more Bhog and others suggest that, "Personalities get positioned to suit agendas of governments keen to espouse their vision of the nation...in the case of Gujarat, Gandhi's contributions in the political arena are underscored as those visioned and acted upon by others prior to him."[131]

Kumar argues that before children have the capacity to make sense of the past, they are already socialized into its many legacies.[132] First the family and then the school present the history in

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[130] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 154

[131] Ibid., p. 158

[132] Kumar, Krishna (2001), *Prejudice And Pride: School histories of the freedom struggle in India and Pakistan*, India: Penguin Books

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such a way that they can influence the child's responses to present day situations. The school and family together shape the attitudes and behavior of the children in later life. He points out very clearly that textbooks omit and stress on certain historical events which serve their own purpose.[133] For example, the Muslim League is not given much importance in Indian text books but is repeated continuously in Pakistani text books. While the Indian texts sharply divide the communal and the national, the Pakistani counterparts construct monolithic Hindu and Muslim concepts. Pakistani text books say that all Hindu leaders had the same viewpoint. They forget that Jinnah had followers in the Congress who tried hard to incorporate his main demands in the Nehru Report. For the Indian children, history seems to end with the independence of India in 1947. However, in Pakistan, history moves on even in the post-partition phase, the reason for which some people believe is that this is one of the periods that Pakistan can call as its own.

Mushirul Hassan argues that the knowledge of history has been used and misused to legitimize national identities as well as authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships.[134] Even during the British Raj, textbooks were used as ideological tools by the British to criticize the pre-colonial past. He argues that BJP has been using history as a tool for its own propaganda.[135]

Religion, Nation and History:

Through emphasis on some aspects of history and silencing the others, history textbooks manage to frame an idea of a shared past. The mainstream history that the textbooks produce is north Indian history.[136] Legendary characters, rulers, and kingdoms from the Indo-Gangetic plain seem to be representative of the entire nation. Comparatively, there is little representation of southern India in the history textbooks. For example, "From Mohenjodaro to the Aryans to the Mauryas, Ashoka, the Sultanate, the Mughals and finally the British...familiar sequence dominates, to be

[133] Kumar, Krishna (2001), *Prejudice And Pride: School histories of the freedom struggle in India and Pakistan*, India: Penguin Books

[134] Hasan, Mushirul (2002), "The BJP's Intellectual Agenda: Textbooks and Imagined History", South Asia: *Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, no 3, pp 187-210.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar

occasionally interrupted by chapters on 'Kingdoms in the South'."[137] The connection between India and Hinduism is established through various procedures. One is by establishing a link between Brahmanic culture and the geography of the Indo-Gangetic region. Another is to include all foreign influences into the mainstream of Hinduism. Or another one could be linking political power and religion.[138]

In this context, K.N. Panikkar argues that,

> "According to this (Hindu communal) view all those who migrated to India and their descendants are foreigners and therefore not part of the nation. Thus the Muslims, Christians and Parsis, who are not indigenous to India and hence outsiders should either 'indianise' themselves or live like 'second class citizens without any rights or privileges.' This naturally raises the question who the original inhabitants were. Were the Aryans to whom the upper caste Hindus trace their lineage indigenous to India? The opinion of scholars of ancient history, based on archaeological and linguistic evidence, has been that Aryans had migrated to India, in all probability in small groups, over a period of time. If this view is correct the assumption that the non-Hindu is the only 'outsider' becomes untenable and the historical rationale for the Hindu nation based on Vedic lineage also becomes suspect. The present attempt to invent the indigenous origins of Aryans, which is supported more by speculation rather than tangible evidence, is rooted in an anxiety to overcome this paradox."[139]

In fact, Uttar Pradesh is seen as the origin from where seeds of civilization were transmitted not only to Southern India but also to South East Asia. In the Gujarat history textbooks, the ancient origins of the Hindu civilization are seen as sacred and ideal. Buddhism and Jainism are seen as religions which were religious movements with the aim to purify Hindu society. Aryans and Kshatriyas with their unique skills and weapons seem to be a main cause for the defeat of the

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[137] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 166

[138] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar

[139] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9, p. 4

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Dravidians. Moreover, the Ramayana and Mahabharata are seen to be religious texts which are a representation of the feuds and reconciliation between Aryans and non-Aryans.

In the Class VI NCERT History textbook, there is a chapter on *Major Religions*. In this chapter, Hinduism has the most prominence and the chapter almost tries to convince the reader that Hinduism is the greatest of all and that some religions were born because Hinduism existed. In fact, the chapter begins by saying that, "Hinduism is a very old religion. It is also known as Sanatana Dharma i.e. the Eternal Spiritual Tradition of India."[140] Then it goes on to say that Hinduism also gives freedom to believe and worship any number of gods. Concerning other religions which get very little space in the chapter as compared to Hinduism, the book states that, "Following the philosophical tradition of Upanishads and six philosophies in Hinduism quest for salvation through knowledge continued. This gave rise to Jainism and Buddhism...."[141] Moreover this superiority complex does not restrict itself to religion but also extends itself to Indian culture. In the Class VII NCERT History textbook, there is a mention of the time when the Europeans had commercial links with India. The textbook says that the Europeans were only interested in commercial links but "They were not interested in cultural interchange as the culture of India was too superior for them to imbibe."[142]

If one reads through the Class VIII NCERT History textbooks, then examples of glorifying Hinduism and downgrading of Islam and other minority religions is very clearly visible. For example, the chapter on the *19th Century Social and Cultural Awakening* states that Christian missionaries had started attracting Indians towards them. However, during this time of enlightenment, "they (Hindus) without ever thinking of giving up their own religion and the noble traditions of their age-old culture, they earnestly thought of removing many superstitions from their creed"[143]. Again, in the section on socio-religious awakening among Muslims, it is

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[140] Parakh, B.S. (ed.) (2002), *India And The World, Social Sciences Textbook for Class VI*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. 133

[141] Ibid., p. 135

[142] Pant, Nalini (ed.) (2003), *India And The World, A Social Science Textbook for Class VII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. 161

[143] Pant, Nalini and P.K.Mishra, 2004, *India And The World, Textbook in Social Science for Class VIII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. 60

written that Muslims tied down by their tradition were more hostile towards the West than Hindus. It also says," Besides, they were less educated and less open to new ideas."[144]

In another instance, one can read the chapter on 'Terrorism' in the Class VIII NCERT History textbook. This chapter clearly states Pakistan as an enemy and provides a framework where the reader is convinced that India is always on the right path no matter what. This chapter states that, "Some hostile neighbouring countries and some other countries encourage fundamentalist forces, separatist tendencies and terrorism in India. Secularism in India, built upon the principle of unity and diversity, gets adversely affected due to the presence of some neighbouring theocratic states."[145] External actors and nations seem to be problematic for India's great culture and heritage. Such notions erase out problems like internal dissent and government repression on the citizens of India. By linking terrorism to religion, the textbook points out to the Muslims as the 'other' and harp on the greatness of Hinduism. An interesting example would be the extract below:

> "In response to the terrorist attacks on World Trade Center (WTC), New York, on 11 September, 2001, the United States of America declared war against global terrorism...Incidentally, it was on this very date in 1893 that Swami Vivakananda in his memorable speech at World Parliament of the Religions at Chicago had convinced the international community about love and peace as the essence of all the religions of the world."[146]

The BJP sees Sanskrit as India's mother language.[147] However, this is not true. Sanskrit is not the mother of all languages. Each language evolved through complex, non-linear interactions between various ethnic groups, cultures and linguistic entities. Sanskrit was rather the language of India's ruling elites, guarded and controlled cautiously by the Brahmins. This means that re-introducing and celebrating Sanskrit as mother language would mean giving unfair advantage to

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[144] Pant, Nalini and P.K.Mishra (2004), *India And The World, Textbook in Social Science for Class VIII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. 69

[145] Ibid., p. 246

[146] Ibid., p. 245

[147] Bidwai, Praful (2002), "Sanskrit and Sanskriti as Weapons" in *Against Communalisation of Education*, Essays Press Commentary Reportage, New Delhi: Sahmat&Sabrang.com

only the upper caste minority. According to the Paliwal and Subramaniam Social Science teaching basically concerns itself with the inculcation of ideologies and values[148]. Nationalism, secularism, communalism, feminism and other issues keep competing to get a place in the social sciences. A textbook is an organ of the state and thus it propagates the ideology of that state. The authors ask that if the condition is so, then where does the process of the autonomous pursuit of knowledge stand in relation to government textbooks?[149] For children, what matters most is a textbook which gives them access to the glorious past where people lived in.

In class societies, education is treated as an ideological apparatus of the state which aims at enhancing the interests of the state.[150] Such apparatuses work for partisan interests and put forward national and cultural explanations as excuses. This builds a foundation for a new system of education which privileges the indigenous and celebrates the religious and outdoes the secular and universal.

Gohain Hiren argues that although the exponents of Hindutva ideology believe that theirs is a stark reaction to the western hegemony, Hindutva ideology actually is an imitation of the colonial system. He argues that colonialism continues to shape our consciousness. According to Hiren, "It manifests itself first in a lack of confidence in one's own creativity and a dependence on western centres of learning for the very conceptions of academic and cultural excellence. This mental dependence is also actively promoted by western powers and their lackeys for obvious reasons."[151] .

Pannikar argues that the BJP Government sees the post colonial education system as alien and western. Thus, they have come up with an 'indigenous' proposal which was considered by M.S. Gowalkar as religious in character. Now, the emphasis was on tradition, discipline, military training and romanticisation of the past. All this was being done with the objective of creating a

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[148] Paliwal, Rashmi & C.M. Subramaniam (1992), "Ideology and Pedagogy", *Seminar*, 400, December

[149] Ibid.

[150] Panikkar, K.N. (2002), 'Whither Indian Education' in *Against Communalisation of Education*, Essays Press Commentary Reportage, New Delhi: Sahmat&Sabrang.com

[151] Gohain, Hiren. (2002), "On Saffronisation of Education", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 46, (November 16-22), p. 2

Hindu identity and national pride. The scheme of value education is connected with the communal, cultural and political project. Again, Hindu religion oriented courses and religious interpretation of history are directly linked to the same purpose. Panikkar argues that this transition from secular to communal is happening at a time when transnational capital is flowing into the Indian economy. Education is slowly being privatized with the withdrawal of the state from higher education.

Panikkar argues elsewhere that Indian history defined the relationship between communalism and revivalism.[152] Revivalist ideas associated with early protagonists like Swami Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswathi and Bankim Chandra Chatterji, came into prominence in the nineteenth century. They celebrated ideas and institutions from the Hindu past to revitalize Hinduism and the Hindu community. Panikkar argues that their orientation was communtarian rather than communal. They never brought in ideas of antagonism against the other religions or communities. Some like Dayananda Saraswathi were critical of other religions. However, their motive was to search for truth through the comparison of various religions. Panikkar argues that, "These early articulations of revivalist tendencies were not rooted in relation to the 'other' in terms of a community within society2. It was more in the nature of internal revitalisation and consolidation in the context of colonial domination."[153] On the other hand, communal histories view the 'other' as the enemy which is responsible for the loss of its indigenous achievements. The mediation of communal history actually led to the transformation of revivalism into communalism.

Moreover, in another case of the implementation of communal ideology and religious nationalism, Nalini Taneja points out a move by the Home Ministry to find out the details of Christian schools receiving 'country affiliations and foreign funds'.[154] The idea behind such a move is to prove to the people that Christian missionaries run on foreign funds and thus they are

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[152] Panikkar, K.N. (2000), "Outsider As Enemy: Politics of Rewriting History in India", *Shorenstein APARC Round Table*, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, September. 9

[153] Ibid., p. 3

[154] Taneja, Nalini (2002), 'Targeting Christian Schools' in *Against Communalisation of Education*, Essays Press Commentary Reportage, New Delhi: Sahmat&Sabrang.com

anti-national. The state considers education as a major mechanism for nation building. To contextualize this argument, one can say that history textbooks are a means of citizenship training for nation building. Although Krishna Kumar argues that this nation-building role is vested in history textbooks and history teaching leaves no ground for any pedagogic activities which can encourage the learner to have an interest in history or impart to the learner the intellectual capabilities with which he or she can understand the past.[155] Such citizenship training is necessary for the state for nation building as this training inculcates a feeling of subordination among the citizens to the state.

In this regard, an argument put forward by Sangeeta Kamath is an important one.[156] Kamath finds a link between globalization and the saffronisation of education during the NDA regime. She finds it very surprising that on the one hand, the NDA regime decided to include a conservative Hindu nationalist curriculum in school textbooks. Yet, on the other hand, it opened India's economic and social sectors to liberalization to compete with the global world. Kamat argues that the NDA government needed to use history as a mechanism to train citizens in a certain manner so as to overcome the plaguing problems of poverty and social unrest and to make the citizens ready to embrace globalization.[157] According to her:

> "Neoliberal reforms of privatization, deregulation and marketization have led to a widening gap between the poor and middle classes and a greater struggle among the rural population to secure basic needs such as water, food and electricity. The tropes of common culture, patriotic spirit and team work can be read as necessary accommodations by the postcolonial state faced with increased poverty and unrest among the people at the same time that it is required to present a workforce that is eager, hardworking and disciplined to attract multinational investment. In other words, Curriculum 2000 may be understood not purely as the ideological expression of the Hindu nationalist government but

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[155] Kumar Krishna (2003), "Peace With The Past", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February

[156] Kamat, Sangeeta (2004), "Postcolonial Aporias, or What Does Fundamentalism Have to Do with Globalization? The Contradictory Consequences of Education Reform in India", Postcolonialism and Comparative Education, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 40, No. 2, May, Special Issue (28)

[157] Ibid.

the efforts of a populist state mediating the contradictions of increased poverty and social unrest with the demands of economic liberalization."[158]

The writing of Civics Textbooks:

Civics as a subject of study was introduced in the Indian school curriculum by the British. There was a reason for this. The British were growing familiar with the increasing disloyalty of Indians towards the British Raj. Thus, they planned to include Civics as an instrument to bind Indian loyalty towards the British. The same tradition continued in post Independent India till the year 2006 when at the middle school level 'Social and Political Life' was introduced and at the secondary level 'Political Science' supplanted Civics.

Colonial Civics was to be associated with developing features like rationality, obedience, discipline and loyalty among the Indian citizens. After 2006, 'Political Science' replaced Civics. 'Political Science' has the potential to analyse the relationship between political and social formations and the process of change. Although this change seems promising with the coming of the NCF in 2005, it is important to look at the curriculum of Civics textbooks and their pedagogy before such a significant shift took place.

History textbooks have always been a subject of debates and discussions. However, there has remained striking similarity in the Civics textbooks of the past two decades. Over and above this, Civics textbooks have warranted little attention whether in the form of debates or public discussions. While history textbooks have always been assigned the task to disseminate ideals and values on patriotism and nationhood, Civics textbooks have to bear the responsibility to teach the idea of citizenship, from the view point of the state, to the learner. Moreover, an analysis of Civics textbooks shows as to how political ideologies influence and re-align these

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[158] Kamat, Sangeeta (2004), "Postcolonial Aporias, or What Does Fundamentalism Have to Do with Globalization? The Contradictory Consequences of Education Reform in India", Postcolonialism and Comparative Education, *Comparative Education,* Vol. 40, No. 2, May, Special Issue (28), p. 17

pedagogies to conform to their ideas and world views.[159]   These Civics textbooks teach the reader to have faith and respect in the political system by introducing them to state institutions.

Manish Jain argues that policy documents acquire a new meaning especially when it comes to the post colonial state.[160] Jain argues that the post colonial state takes over from their colonial predecessor to complete the mammoth task of transforming a backward looking set up into a modern nation state. If one takes a look at policy documents from the colonial era like Bombay Report (1844), Wood Despatch (1854), and the Sargent Committee Report (1944), one notices that a similar practice was prevalent where the cultural project of colonialism was to transform natives into citizens.[161] Jain argues that, "Similarly, in the 'nation-building' policies of the new Indian state after Independence, we can see the process of instilling a nationalist ideology and creating 'good' citizens through the educational system along with administrative regulations and the mass media."[162]

The problem with the Civics textbooks is that they have been highly undemocratic in the manner of disseminating knowledge on the ideas of democracy and citizenship. There does not seem to be any sort of inclusion of dissenting or suppressed voices. Such textbooks promote gender equality and yet it becomes evident how gender inequality exists in these textbooks[163]. All that the learner learns is from the viewpoint of the mainstream actors.

One of the main concerns of Civics textbooks is communicating the ideal of *democracy.*[164] However, these textbooks promote democracy in a very stagnant and institutional manner.[165]

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[159] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar.

[160] Jain, Manish. (2004), "Civics, Citizens and Human Rights: Civics Discourse in India", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid., p. 168

[163] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity, Nirantar.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

Democracy is seen without any history or understanding. It becomes a very stagnant concept to be accepted as it is. Moreover, democracy is associated with structural elements like political parties, elections, Constitution, Parliament and so on even in the middle and secondary stages of school. "With no further explanation or elaboration, they (Civics textbooks) are robbed of their radical possibilities or any link with the learner's life world"[166]. There is no mention or understanding of the fact that democracy can get out of its institutional mould and play a significant part in one's social, political, cultural and economic life. Such a notion of democracy is seen in the national level textbooks as well as in Tamil Nadu Civics textbooks.[167]

In states like Gujarat, where an attempt is made to connect democracy to the cultural domain, it is done so to glorify the greatness of the Hindu nation. Here, democracy is associated with the making of an ideal and dutiful citizen in an ideal nation like the *Ram Rajya*. The spirit of brotherhood and fraternity comes from the composite culture to which dutiful and loyal Indian citizens belong. Such a culture is celebrated as a blend of the best characteristics of the cultures from the East and the West. The family is also seen as a consolidated body which is very essential for making the ideal compact nation. "The Indian Nation exists in a timeless frame and the values and traditions it bequeaths are the core principles informing our existing democratic spirit."[168]

This notion of democracy which promotes the idea of dutiful Indian to bow before a strong centre has its impact on the ideas of *citizenship*.[169] The basic idea of Indian citizenship is associated with a feeling of privilege which comes from being born into this great country. Citizens are expected to behave like what they have been groomed by the state. These Civics textbooks act like agents of the state which inform young Indian minds how to be good citizens. The main features of being a good citizen include discipline and following rules and regulations. The role of the family, community and the state come in here as they are the ones who set the

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[166] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 210

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid., p. 210

[169] Ibid.

rules and their subjects are to follow them perfectly well. In the Class VII NCERT textbook, it is stated that, "It is not good enough to be a citizen. A good citizen accepts responsibility and obeys the laws of the land. Such citizens should be conscious of their rights and duties."[170]

Moreover, Civics textbooks teach the learner about Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties. However, it is very clear that the stress is on Fundamental Duties and not Fundamental Rights. The citizen evidently has his or her rights but when it comes to resistance or revolt, the focus shifts to the anti-colonial struggle. Human Rights is seen as acceptable till they are not too radical and fall in a decent and comfortable sphere of civil, social and political rights. Any step beyond this sphere could mean a step against the nation. The state today has become increasingly repressive and a stress on Fundamental Duties can be seen as a method to conceal the repression of the state. Moreover, by concealing its increased repression, the state demands loyalty from the citizens by increasingly harping on Fundamental Duties.

The focus on developing a good citizen seems to indicate that Indians lack the qualities of becoming good citizens. This also indicates that self interested Indians have no responsibility to the nation or the society. Jain argues that, "This failure to do their duty is upheld as proof of their moral weakness, which is attributed to their ignorance about state institutions and government efforts. By providing them with information, it would be possible to make them more 'aware' and create in them 'desirable attitudes'."[171] Jain argues that although the Constitution of India and the struggle for India's independence leaves scope for civil disobedience, the Civics textbooks seem to denounce people's movements by portraying them as illegitimate demands which threaten public order. The civics textbooks give the state the power to decide which demands are legitimate and which ones are not.[172]

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[170] Pant, Nalini (ed.) (2003), *India And The World, A Social Science Textbook for Class VII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, pg. 186

[171] Jaih, Manish (2004), "Civics, Citizens and Human Rights: Civics Discourse in India", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring, p. 178

[172] Ibid.

There are also various forms of exclusion and inclusion which Jain points out.[173] One of them is the rural urban divide. Rural people are viewed as illiterate, ignorant and poor masses who are incapable of acquiring knowledge about new methods of agriculture. Jain states that, "Villages are represented as having narrow lanes, growing in an unplanned manner, with thatched houses made of mud, very small in size and population, and as unable to fulfill people's needs."[174] The overwhelming notion seems to be that the rural areas are backward and underdeveloped and the only way to improve them is to spread awareness. A similar phenomenon was in practice during the colonial era when the urban areas were representative of order, hygiene, science and technological superiority unlike the rural areas.[175]

Jain argues that the negative portrayal of the rural areas is the consequence of the exploitation of cheap rural labour by the wealthy from the urban areas. This phenomenon, which began in the colonial past, is even more explicit now with India opening up to the global economy. Jain argues that, "What seems to be at work here is an attempt by the dominant culture to project all the qualities and characteristics it most fears and hates within itself onto the dominated the uneducated and illiterate. The educated class is using textbooks to impose a negative self-identity on the 'other'."[176]

The chapter on terrorism in the post NCFSE 2000 textbooks tells the reader about different types of violence and also characterizes terrorism into different categories like ethnic terrorism, Naxal terrorism and communal terrorism. Textbooks post NCFSE 2000 at the national level and also in Gujarat sees secularism as a majority-minority issue where the main focus is on the Muslim community. References are drawn to the World Trade Centre attack where the intended understanding is that the Muslim community is the root cause for terrorism. These textbooks also mention political parties which appease the Muslim community in return for votes.

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[173] Jain, Manish (2004), "Civics, Citizens and Human Rights: Civics Discourse in India", *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring

[174] Ibid., p. 182

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid., p. 180

Dipta Bhog and others argue that the relationship between women and democratic formations is the basis for the inclusion or mainstreaming of women in textbooks. If one reads through the textbooks, one finds that an intricate picture develops as development objectives, patriarchal notions, construction of nationhood and sexual politics form the basis for democratic participation of women. There is an attempt at projecting gender equality in the textbooks, yet patriarchal overarching notions grip control over women. Bhog and others, referring to this inherent contradiction argue that, "What is evident is that it is possible to uphold 'gender equality' and yet be driven by patriarchal notions of family and the desire to monitor women's bodies and sexuality."[177]

Bhog and others argue that women are considered to be the targets of development in the sense that the empowerment of women is seen as one of the benchmarks which will provide India with the status of a developed country. However, the protection of women's honour and limitation of women in heterosexual and monogamous marriages is viewed as compulsory for maintaining the existing structures of family, community and nation. There seems to be an overwhelming fear that giving equal status to women might be a reason for the dismantling of such well preserved structures. Again, biological and reproductive capabilities of women are seen as the source of their entrance to the public sphere. In the textbooks, whenever the public sphere is mentioned, the attention from men is diverted to women when issues like sex ratio and fertility control come up. In the textbooks, gender issues are handled comfortably with the use of legal commitments and policy pronouncements. Moreover, the problematic equations of caste, class, religion and gender are annihilated, thus making it easy for the textbooks to show gender equality, autonomous of problems relating to caste, class or religion. Bhog and others correctly argue that,

> "The NCERT textbooks produced post-2000 too evade uncomfortable discussions by merely reprinting policy pronouncements or legal commitments to include those on the margins. In the case of women, abstract, formal language – like that used in the domain of policy making – becomes another way of stripping down the politics of marginalisation to a delivery/access oriented or legalisitic discourse...In the majority of texts, women appear devoid of any geographical or social location: they are neither lower/upper caste, tribal, Hindu

[177] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 217

or Christian, rural and so on. This flatness too allows for particular erasures that textbooks perform while discussing caste, ethnicity or communalism."[178]

History is an ongoing process where different ideas and analysis of the past lead to different interpretations of the past. However, considering the fact that everything or everyone has a past, it is a very difficult task to write history textbooks in the sense that historians who write the history textbooks have to decide whose history has to be included and which parts of it must be excluded. Historians usually make such selections on the basis of their judgement of what is important and worthy of being taught at the school level. This selection becomes even more magnified when history is taught in schools as there is too much to teach and even more to learn.[179] However, we must check whether these selections have been made on any biased grounds – in this case for political gains? If so, then the situation becomes very problematic.

It must be quite evident now that the 2000 NCFSE document hinted at many aspects which would ultimately lead to the saffronisation of education. The BJP led NDA government used the NCERT to frame a National Curriculum Framework which would ultimately end up serving its own purpose of holding up its Hindutva nationalist ideology. The NDA regime used education as a mechanism to train citizens for the ultimate purpose of nation building. This is why we see the stress on the culture of submission to the power of centralized rule where there is only one leader and the subjects are expected to dutifully follow their supreme leader.

A closer look at the NCFSE 2000 reveals the heavy focus of Hindu traditions and the celebration of the rich Hindu past. This is done in two ways in the history textbooks. Hinduism is projected to be the all encompassing religion which has been glorifies for its greatness from eternity. The other way by which Hinduism is celebrated is by degrading other religions, especially Islam. Enemies of the Hindu nationalist tradition change from time to time as the reader reads on. At times, it is the British Raj especially when these textbooks talk about the anti-colonial era. At

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[178] Bhog, Dipta., Disha Mullick & Purwa Bharadwaj (2010), *Textbook Regimes – a feminist critique of nation and identity*, Nirantar, p. 218

[179] Bhargava, Rajeev (2003), "Community sentiment and the teaching of history", Rewriting History, *Seminar*, 522, February

other times, enemies are minority religions especially the Muslims when it comes to the celebration of Hinduism.

By associating Northern India with brahmanical notions and linking Hindu with the Indo-Gangetic plain, the textbooks seem to annihilate the inclusion of neither the people of Southern India, nor those who are not Hindus. This narrow definition of 'being an Indian' overshadows the intricate complexities of culture, caste, religion and sex that plague India today. Thus, the idea of Hindu nationalism overpowering the contradictions and complexities in itself, becomes a very rigid and defensive ideology which cannot open itself to free and unbiased thinking.

In the Civics textbooks, concepts like *democracy* and *citizenship* are seen like institutionalized and stagnant concepts which are simply to be accepted as they are. They fail to go deeper into understanding of the concepts and also analyzing how democracy and citizenship are problematic concepts in the sense of their definition. They fail to convey simple ideas like democracy and citizenship could mean very different ideals for people from different regions, sexes, castes or classes. An ideal Civics textbook should consider these problematic categories and concepts and also include the marginalized voices which do not find a place in the mainstream understanding of democracy and citizenship.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2005

Before we begin a discussion on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, we have to try and understand the historical context in which it is situated. The last National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), 2002, was vehemently criticized by scholars and educationists from all over the country. The NCFSE 2000 which was published under the NDA Government was blamed for its highly communal character and its grave disrespect for religious communities other than the Hindus. The history and civics textbooks which fall under the NCFSE 2000 served a two-fold purpose. First, they were heavily tilted towards Hindutva cultural nationalism where they celebrated the traditions and the glory associated with India's history. And secondly, they used history and civics to train Indian citizens in such a manner that they are conducive to nation building. I had argued in the last chapter that the BJP led NDA Government used education as an instrument to mobilize the Indian masses according to their own ideologies.

In this process of saffronisation of education, the reader of such textbooks will find that India does not have one enemy. The enemy changes from the British Raj to Muslims and other communities whenever it suits the purpose of Hindutva ideology in these textbooks. Moreover, certain sections of voices are missing or have been given little attention in these texts. Through an interlinking of 'brahmanical notions', 'Northern India', 'Indo-Gangetic plains' and 'Hindu' (please refer to the last chapter to understand the correlation between the four), the history textbooks not only overshadowed Southern India or those who are not Hindus, but they also tended to overrule the complexities and problems of caste, sex, religion and culture which plague our country today.

The NCFSE was also accused of having copied materials from western school text books without giving them due credit. Usha Menon cites the example of the NCERT mathematics text book for Class I and claims that "Even a cursory look at the book gives the impression that the illustrations were copied from some American comic/text book, although there is no acknowledgement anywhere."[180] She refers to the "pink cherubic face of the anchoring

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[180] Menon, Usha (2003), "Where Have the Mangoes Gone?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 3, p. 1747

child...the faces of the comic strip characters of Flinstones...steeped in the social meanings of other cultures."[181] Menon uses these examples to prove the importance of local cultures and surroundings with which a child can relate.

In the 2004 general elections, the Indian National Congress (INC) led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government came to power at the centre. The UPA was a coalition of the centre and left political parties then. In 2005, under the UPA government, the NCF 2005 was framed. It must be understood that if the NCF 2005 had been formed in order to counter the last NCFSE, then the NCF 2005 was expected to make amends to the problems of the NCFSE. However, there are certain questions which we need to ask?

1. Has the NCF 2005 has proven to be a refreshingly better answer to the NCFSE 2000?

2. Do we still find history being used as a mechanism to train the masses to be ready for nation-building?

3. Has the NCF 2005 simply erased the problematic elements of the NCFSE 2000 or has it taken another step towards an ideal curriculum?

To find an answer to these questions, one has to look at the NCF 2005 in depth as well as analyze the debates surrounding it. The basic questions addressed in the NCF 2005 were:[182]

1. What educational purposes should the schools seek to achieve?

2. How can these educational experiences be meaningfully organized?

3. How do we ensure that these educational purposes are indeed being accomplished?

To address these questions, twenty one focus groups were formed to cover major areas of curriculum and also cover elements of national concern. The National Focus Group on Aims of Education (NFGAE) state the aims of the education as per the NCF 2005:[183]

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[181] Menon, Usha (2003), "Where Have the Mangoes Gone?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 3, p. 1747

[182] Accessed 25 March, 2011, URL: http://www.ncf2005.blogspot.com/

[183] National Focus Group on Aims of Education (2006), "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*

1. In schools, the knowledge that is disseminated among children is mostly external as the child learns a lot at home or in his/her community. However, the school should not be a de-link from the child's experiences at home or his/her community. Rather, it should be able to impart knowledge which acts as a bridge between the community, home and school learning.

2. Self knowledge comes by knowing and being just to the other. One cannot know the other without being just to the other. Education should be a continuous process of self discovery and learning the truth regarding oneself. This process can be insightfully facilitated by the schools.

3. The child has to be taught that a life of virtues is much superior to a life of wickedness. This can be done by an interesting questioning of the social structure and projecting to the child that discontent comes from lack of virtues.

4. A child must be taught to respect cultural diversity. For this, there has to be a balance between cultures at the centre and those at the peripheries.

5. Children have different skills and capabilities. Thus, the schools must encourage the different skills of children whether in academics, poetry, drama, music, dance and so on

6. Schools and educators must understand that there are different forms of knowledge and there are different ways to gain knowledge. There could be artistic and literary creativity along with deductive reasoning and laboratory experiments in gaining knowledge.

7. Education must be seen as a liberating process. Thus, the child must be free from any kind of exploitation or bias relating to caste, sex, religion and so on.

8. Learning among teachers and students should be taking place in an aesthetically pleasing environment. Children should be encouraged to participate in order to create such an environment.

9. It is important for education to encourage children to have an intimacy with ones who are directly connected with achievements which are part of our national heritage. However,

the pride in the nation's achievement should not mean that the child does not feel proud of the achievements of humanity as a whole.

The views and suggestions of the Focus Groups are as follows:[184]

Planning the Curriculum:

The Focus Groups suggest that the natural and social environment should be seen as an integral part of language and mathematics with gender sensitivity. For this, children have to be engaged in activities which make them understand about the natural and social environment through observation and illustration rather than abstractions. Illustrations need to be drawn from the physical, biological, social and cultural aspects of life.

According to the Focus groups, at the upper primary stage, the subject-area of Social Science drawing its content from history, geography, political science and economics would be introduced. Again, the child should be introduced to contemporary issues and problems. Contemporary issues should be looked at from multiple perspectives introducing the child to social and economic problems of society. Moreover, emphasis needs to be given on pressurizing issues of poverty, illiteracy, child labour, bonded labour, caste, class, gender and environment.

At the secondary stage, social sciences comprise elements of history, geography, political science and economics. This is when the learner will be initiated into a deeper understanding of the social and economic challenges facing the nation. The learner will also be given a glimpse of India from the perspectives of the adivasi, dalit and other subaltern populations and it must be seen whether the content is able to relate as much as possible to the children's everyday lives.

They suggest that, "India's nationalist movement and its developments as an independent nation will be taught in the context of developments in the modern world. Issues relating to geography should be taught keeping in mind the need to inculcate in the child a critical appreciation for conservation and environmental concerns. In political science, the focus should be on discussing

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the philosophical foundations that underlie the value framework of the Indian Constitution, i.e. an in-depth discussion of equality, liberty, justice, fraternity, dignity, plurality and freedom from exploitation. As the disciplinary area of economics is being introduced to the child at this level, it is important that the topics discussed are from the perspective of the masses."[185]

The secondary stage is seen as very important for the learner because this is the time when the learner shapes his or her aptitudes and interests. This will decide their employment or course of further education.

The Proposed Epistemological Frame:

The following points are the basis of the drafting of the new syllabi:

1. The curriculum must show how concepts of the nation and national unity are viewed through local perceptions of the people.

2. The general notion of textbooks is seen as instructive. However, that has to be changed to suggest which will encourage further reading beyond textbooks.

3. The social science curriculum has always been utilitarian in nature in the sense that it presses more importance on developmental issues but is not sufficient to understand the normative dimension i.e. issues of equality, justice, and dignity. There has to be a shift from utilitarianism to egalitarianism.

4. It has also been suggested that Political science takes the place of Civics. This is because the civics that is taught in the Indian curriculum is colonial civics where emphasis is given on the obedience and loyalty of the citizens and creation of civil society according to the universal values of progress. Whereas, political science suggests dynamism that involves the process that produces structure of dominations and their contestations by social forces. Political science imagines civil society as the sphere where more informed, receptive and responsible citizens could be produced.

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[185] Executive Summary of 21 National Focus Group Position Papers (2006), Accessed 25 March, 2011, URL: http://www.ncf2005.blogspot.com/, *National Council of Educational Research and Training*, p. 15

5. Gender concerns need to be included to make the perspectives of women integral to the discussion of any historical event and contemporary concern. There is a need for a shift from the predominant patriarchal nationalist frame.

Teaching of Indian Languages:

According to the Focus Groups, language is not only a tool of communication but also a phenomenon that to a great extent defines our social relationships in terms of both power and equality. All specific linguistic development is socio-culturally mediated. The Groups are concerned over the fact that educational planners and language policy makers have not able to capitalise on this innate potential of the child. When children join school, they come with multilingual competence. However, one of the major reasons for school drop outs is the failure of children to associate the language of schools to their surroundings. According to them, most children leave school with poor levels of reading and writing even in their mother tongue. There are various reasons why such a phenomenon occurs:

1. Lack of any understanding about the nature and structure of language and the processes of language teaching-learning, particularly in multilingual contexts,
2. Acute failure on the part of educational planners to appreciate the role of language across the curriculum in contributing towards the construction of knowledge,
3. Not paying enough attention to the fact that a variety of biases, including caste, race, and gender, get encoded in language,
4. Inability to appreciate the fact that language consists of much more than just poems, essays, and stories;
5. Unwillingness to accept the role of languages of the home and neighbourhood.

Thus, the Focus Groups have suggested that provisions are made for education in the mother tongue(s) of the children and teachers are trained to maximise the utilisation of the multilingual situation. Again, it has been suggested that educational planners need to pay attention to language across the curriculum in all its dimensions with effort to eradicate class, caste or gender bias.

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Teaching of English:

The Focus Groups acknowledge the growing demand for English education. They believe that English education is now a matter of political response to people's aspirations rather than an academic or feasibility issue. According to them, "The goals for a language curriculum (Sec. II) are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency, such as is acquired in natural language learning, and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through, for example, literacy. This argues for an across-the-curriculum approach that breaks down the barriers between English and other subjects, and other Indian languages".[186]

English language does not stand alone in itself. Learning of English will lead to learning of other languages. At the initial stages, English may be one of the languages for learning activities that create the child's awareness of the world; at later stages, all learning happens through language. The Focus Groups clearly state that, "The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilinguals who can enrich all our languages; this has been an abiding national vision".[187]

Inputs like textbooks, learner-chosen texts, and class libraries allowing for a variety of genres, print (for example, Big Books for young learners), parallel books and materials in more than one language and media support (learner magazines/newspaper columns, radio/audio cassettes) are a prerequisite for learning.

Now, let us focus on the views of the National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (NFGTSS). The Social sciences mainly include History, Geography, Political Science, and Economics. The NFGTSS realized the fact that in today's neo-liberal era, the general perception in India is that Social Sciences is not a job oriented subject. Thus, the NCFTSS decided to first analyze the general perceptions of the Social Sciences among the larger community and then incorporate them in the proposed curriculum.[188]

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[186] Executive Summary of 21 National Focus Group Position Papers, (2006) Accessed 25 March, 2011, URL: http://www.ncf2005.blogspot.com/, *National Council of Educational Research and Training*, p. 9

[187] Ibid., p. 10

[188] National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (2006), "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*

What are the prevailing perceptions of the Social Sciences?[189]

1. Non-utility subject: The general perception of the social sciences is that it is a non-utility subject in the sense that it does not result in good employment opportunities. Moreover, there is this overarching notion that the natural sciences are far superior than the social sciences. Thus neither the teachers nor the students, who are termed as inferior to students studying the natural sciences, are interested in studying the social sciences in the classrooms. There is a need to emphasize that social sciences are able to give the students the social, cultural and analytical skills and the intellectual capability to understand political and economic realities in this interdependent world.

2. Unconnected with real life: Another perception of the social sciences is that the study of social sciences burdens the students with facts which are to be memorized and reproduced. There is no relation of the textbooks with the outside world.

3. Redundant subject: There is this perception that the social sciences do not offer the students desirable jobs and that students studying the social sciences are not able to adapt to the real world. Thus, the importance of the social sciences in the service sector and in the moulding of analytical and creative minds must be impressed.

The NFGTSS addresses the following issues:

1. Load of information: There has to be an attempt to minimize the load of information which acts as a burden on students. It is difficult for textbook writers and syllabus framers to select information from such a vast pool of knowledge and thus they should concentrate on important concepts and analysis of socio-political realities. Again, we live in a pluralistic society and thus all voices need to be heard. However, this is impossible with a centralized nature of producing textbooks. Thus, alternatives have to be looked for where teachers, students and the local community can all contribute their voices in textbook writing. Moreover, local teaching-learning resources must be harped on.

2. Un-scientific social sciences: It is a prevalent notion that only the natural and the physical sciences are scientific in the sense that they can contribute to scientific enquiry. Again,

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[189] National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (2006), "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*

the social sciences are seen as unscientific. It must be emphasized that the social sciences lend themselves to scientific enquiry as much as the Natural and Physical sciences do.

3. Normative Values: The social sciences carry in them normative responsibility to imbibe human values like freedom, trust, mutual respect and respect for diversity. These values should be taught to the learner who would be alerted about the threats to such values.

4. Inter-disciplinary Approach: Mainly the disciplines which fall under social sciences are history, economics, political science and geography. An attempt should be made to make these subjects inter-disciplinary by zeroing down on concepts that facilitate an inter-disciplinary exercise.

Based on the prevailing perceptions of the Social Sciences and the issues to be addressed, the NFGTSS proposed the basic epistemological framework which would include the following aspects:[190]

1. Alternative to the developmentalist approach: As per the suggestion of the Kothari Commission, the NFGTSS believes that the developmentalist approach views casteism, poverty and illiteracy as barriers to the development of the nation. This approach also ignores gender issues. Thus, there has to be a change in the approach in the sense that there must be a balance between the centre and the local. With the inclusion of local perceptions, a better understanding of the nation can also be achieved.

2. Beyond Textbooks: Textbooks have always been viewed as the end all for the learners. Therefore, textbooks must serve to provide with the platform which leads to further enquiry and accumulation of knowledge with other resources for both students and teachers.

3. Beyond development: The social sciences have always harped on development issues. However, this is not enough to understand and analyze normative issues like equality, justice and dignity in the social and political sphere. There has to be a systematic shift from utilitarianism to egalitarianism. The NFGTSS also adds that history courses have overlooked many sections of society as well as many regions. Now, history courses must include them.

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[190] National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (2006) "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*

4. <u>From Civics to Political Science:</u> Civics can be traced back to the colonial period where it was introduced against the increasing disloyalty among Indians towards the British Empire. According to the NFGTSS, "Emphasis on the obedience and loyalty of citizens; the colonial ethos of order, improvement, and rationality; the discourse of the shortcomings of personality in the Indian;—these were the key features of colonial civics. By contrast, 'political science' suggests the dynamism of a process that produces structures of dominance and their contestations by social forces."[191]

5. <u>Including Gender concerns:</u> Social sciences lie within a patriarchal framework where women have mostly been used as examples. Including gender in the social sciences curriculum does not mean increasing the number of their examples. Rather, it is important to include perspectives of women in any historical event or any contemporary phenomena.

Ramya Subrahmanian believes that for the Right to Education to be successfully implemented, much work has to be done in the education sphere to give space to diversity, difference and exclusion.[192] She argues that the vigilance against the imposition of narrowly framed conceptions of education can only be strengthened by the giving space for citizens, particularly those who are outside the education system to contribute their views and arguments on the nature and shape that education should take to realize their fullest aspirations. Kumkum Roy seems to be quite encouraged with the NCF.[193] Roy refers to the History syllabus and argues that the NCF's aim seems to shift attitudes away from rote learning in order to help the learner to develop skills of history analysis. Again, there are new mechanisms to deal with diversity. However, she feels that challenges lie in transforming the syllabus into textbooks and in improving teacher training methods.

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[191] National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (2006), "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*, p. 16

[192] Subrahmanian, Ramya (2003), "'Right to Education': Opportunities and Challenges", *Education Dialogue*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Monsoon

[193] Roy, Kumkum (2005), "Looking Ahead, History Syllabus in NCF 2005", *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 1

According to K.N. Ganesh, the steerers of the present curriculum are under the impression that deleting and omitting of the problematic elements of the NCFSE will be sufficient to make the education system secular.[194] The curriculum is essentially a social document, which states not only the directions that the teaching-learning process, syllabus, textbooks, evaluation and school design will have to take, but also the basic social objectives of education in a given context. This cannot be just a statement of platitudes and slogans. If India is a multicultural society with regional, caste, gender, and economic divergences and contradictions, with complex characteristics, then the form that teaching learning process will have to take will have to take into account this reality.[195]

Anil Sadgopal draws our attention to Yash Pal's foreword statement to the Draft National Curriculum Framework, 2005.[196] According to the viewpoint of Yash Pal,

> "It was tempting to assign blame for many things that have not gone as well as we wished many decades ago. We have tended to avoid the blame game - perhaps due to the fact that we are all responsible in some way or another. Most of us are responsible, as members of a middle class that had begun to emotionally secede from the mass of people in the country.... we talked very little politics in our extensive discussions."[197]

Sadgopal argues that Yash Pal's statement refers to three basic problems that the NCF-2005 suffers from. First, it is being presumed that the reason for things not having gone well can be related to the errors committed by individuals, groups or organizations. Second, the primary responsibility for the prevailing state of education lies with the middle class that had started to emotionally secede from the mass of the people. Such an idea suggests that had the middle class not seceded, the education scenario would have been better. This perception is, at best, an oversimplification. It leaves no scope for examining the role of the state in building or destroying

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[194] Ganesh, K.N. (2005), "National Curriculum Framework 2005: A Note", Debating Education, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, (September to October)

[195] Ganesh, K.N. (2005), "National Curriculum Framework 2005: A Note", Debating Education, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, (September to October)

[196] Sadgopal. Anil (2005), "On the Pedagogy of Writing a National Curriculum Framework: Some Reflections from an Insider", Debating Education, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, (September to October)

[197] Ibid., p. 2

a pro-people education system. Third, the entire exercise was presumably devoid of politics as if the character of the kind of education that we have is unrelated to the nature of Indian politics. This is a highly problematic view.

When we speak about curriculum, the first thing that comes to our mind is text books. Questions relating to the implementation of the curriculum into text books need to be reflected upon. However, Romila Thapar argues that along with the questions of text book writing, we also need to consider two other important components of curriculum development – training of teachers and re-working of the examination system.[198] According to Thapar, text books are not the only source of knowledge for a child in school. Neither does it always allow critical thinking. If they are sensitively written, however, they might achieve both the functions. The accepted function of textbooks is to provide a framework for the student to access knowledge in a particular subject.

According to the NCF, the old textbooks should give way to books with a child-centred pedagogy. Textbooks should certainly be accessible to the young readers for whom they are intended. However, Thapar fears that the emphasis on pedagogy may erode the disciplinary orientation of the subject. Textbooks should certainly be child-friendly but it is equally necessary that the schoolteacher should be made child-friendly. It is not enough to encourage participative discussions between teachers and students in class. Thapar suggests that an extensive programme of familiarizing school teachers is necessary both with changes in the methods and concepts of the social sciences and with child-centred pedagogy. Without this, there will be no essential change in either the approach to the subject or the pedagogy.

K.N. Ganesh argues that although a child attains knowledge in the classroom, it must not be forgotten that the child also learns values, symbols and practices outside the school from the family and the society.[199] And such learning does not demand them to question such values or knowledge. Ganesh suggests that one should always go for a child-centered pedagogy which means giving primacy to children's experiences, voices and their active participation. Much of this is in the constructivist mould, where knowledge is constructed and not fed to the students as

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[198] Thapar, Romila (2005), "National Curriculum Framework & the Social Sciences", Debating Education, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, (September to October)

[199] Ganesh, K.N. (2005), "National Curriculum Framework 2005: A Note", Debating Education, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, (September to October)

a finished product. Rather it is holistic, integrative and processual. In fact, the NFGTSS does emphasize on this aspect of child education. The NFGTSS, referring to Classes I and II, mentions:

> "For these primary grades, the natural and the social environments will be explained as integral parts of languages and mathematics. Children should be engaged in activities to understand the natural and social environments through illustrations from the physical, biological, social, and cultural spheres. The language used should be gender-sensitive. Teaching methods should be in a participative and discussion-oriented mode. For example, story telling, painting, dance, song, and music can all be part of the teaching-learning process. A Teachers' Handbook should be prepared with examples of activities that promote the development of concepts and teach sensitivity towards environmental concerns."[200]

Ganesh adds that to this the element of critical pedagogy is introduced, which provides an opportunity to reflect critically on issues in terms of their political, economic, social and moral aspects. It entails multiple views on social issues and a commitment to democratic forms of interaction, which is considered important in the multiple contexts in which our classrooms function. It also facilitates collective decision making through open discussion and by encouraging and recognizing multiple views. However, he argues that the solution does not appear to be the rejection of product for process i.e. serving the child knowledge as an end product to be consumed and replicated, but the negotiation of product itself as a part of the process. The child has to construct knowledge by actively interacting with the social products themselves, by understanding them as they are, and then able to transform them creatively. This process involves an understanding not only of perceived objects and events, but also of developing a methodology for critical evaluation of their own understanding, by which they learn to accept or reject their own constructed knowledge in favour of a better form of understanding. The development of understanding in this form is always a social process, essentially interactive and dialogical in nature where the child is continuously interrogating pre-existing knowledge forms as they exist in society or with the teacher.

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[200] National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (2006), "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*, p. 17

Poonam Batra brings to light the fact that although the NCF has brought in a fresh lease of life for the Indian education system, it has failed to engage with a very crucial link which is the agency of the teacher.[201] Batra refers to one of the key problems of the Indian education system pointed out by the NCF – the burden on children. The burden arises from incoherent curriculum structure and the inability of the children to relate to their local surroundings.

The burden also arises from inadequate teachers who are not successful in connecting to the children and respond to their needs. According to Batra, the most daunting challenge before the NCF is to bridge the gap between possibilities and reality through the combined efforts of the Centre, the States and the various other agencies which comprise the education system. Central to all such attempts must be the empowerment of the teacher. However, we find that the NFGTSS is aware of such a challenge. The NFGTSS states:

> "The linkages between adequate infrastructure and the teaching of social studies is not often commented upon because instruction in the subject requires no obvious space like the way in which a laboratory is required for the teaching of science. However, the effective teaching of social science is crucially linked to the efficient functioning of the school library and of teachers who are trained to use the resources that the library provides towards the creation of challenging projects and activities. This shift away from rote learning to comprehension through the implementation of projects can only take place if the teacher is able to assess the child's understanding through other means rather than just the completion of the project."[202]

Thapar suggests that many universities now have refresher courses for teachers in under-graduate colleges[203]. Similar courses, with minor adjustments, could be organised for schoolteachers. This is where further reading around the textbook can be discussed. Courses by the Open University

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[201] Batra, Poonam (2005), "Voice and Agency of Teachers, Missing Link in National Curriculum Framework 2005", *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 1

[202] National Focus Group on Teaching of Social Sciences (2006), "Position Paper", *National Council of Educational Research and Training*, p. 21

[203] Thapar, Romila (2005), "National Curriculum Framework & the Social Sciences", Debating Education, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 33, No. 9/10, (September to October)

on various subjects could be yet another source of orienting teachers to new knowledge. Again, the creation of an educational channel on TV for both students and teachers could be of help.

According to Shalini Advani, the 2005 NCF is a departure from the other curriculum frameworks of the past in certain respects.[204] She argues that the NCF 2005 does not harp on a national consensus on education. However, according to her, this time the focus is not on simplistic training of Indians for the making of an ideal citizen. Rather, the focus is on constructivist approach to learning, which borrows elements from local learning and promotes the building of a critical and self reflective citizen.[205]

A review of the 'History' and 'Social Science' textbooks of Classes VI, VII and VIII show that these textbooks have been drafted much better than the ones under the NCFSE 2000. Below are a few interesting observations of mine about the history textbooks:

1. These textbooks are very informative and yet not over-loaded with content.

2. A major element which makes these textbooks very attractive to the reader is the excellent colour combination. Several bright and light colours have been used in such a way that these textbooks seem very attractive and they convince you to read on.

3. The language of these textbooks are again very interactive. It is almost like a narrative – like a story being told to a child. This aspect of textbooks makes these textbooks more gripping and interesting. Again, in various parts of the Class VI 'History' textbooks, before introducing any topic, there is a direct association of the topic to a map or a river. For example, before introducing the Ganga river, the learner has to locate the river Ganga on the map which is situated on the left of the page.[206] This means that the learner not only gets to know about the river but also gets to understand where the river is situated on India's map without memorizing.

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[204] Advani, Shalini (2009), *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English and the Indian Modern*, Oxford University Press, p. 77

[205] Advani, Shalini (2009), *Schooling the National Imagination: Education, English and the Indian Modern*, Oxford University Press

[206] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2006), *Our Pasts –I, Textbook in History for Class VI*, National Council for Educational Research and Training

4. Another very interesting way of introducing a chapter can be found in the 'History' textbook for Class VI. At the beginning of every chapter, there is a brief narrative of a particular child. For example, Chapter 1 which talks about how we know about the past, starts with "Rasheeda's question: Rasheeda sat reading the newspaper. Suddenly, her eyes fell on a small headline: "One Hundred Years Ago." How, she wondered, could anyone know what happened so many years ago?"[207]

Another such example would be at the beginning of Chapter 2 which deals with migration and movement of the earliest people. The chapter begins with the story of Tushar travelling in a train and, "As he watched trees and houses fly past, his uncle tapped his shoulder and said: 'Do you know that trains were first used about 150 years ago, and that people began using buses a few decades later?"[208] Such ways of making the chapter interesting does not only make the child interested in reading the texts but also gets them to think critically rather than simply making attempts at rote learning.

5. As per the recommendations of the NFGTSS, these textbooks should be gender inclusive and unbiased towards any particular region or community. Thus, we see that the stories of these children at the beginning of the chapters are stories of both girls and boys. The most interesting thing is that photographs and names of children from all over the country as well as the North East have been included.

6. The 'Social and Political Life' textbook for Class VII states that children learn best through an experiential understanding of concepts[209]. It mentions that, "This poses a contradiction when the effort is to write a 'national' textbook, because a national text can neither sufficiently represent all the various aspects of the various locals, nor fix the socio-cultural background of the child for whom the book is intended. Therefore, the case

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[207] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2006), *Our Pasts –1. Textbook in History for Class VI*, National Council for Educational Research and Training, p. 1

[208] Ibid., pg. 11

[209] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2007), *Social and Political Life – Textbook for Class VII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training

studies and narratives used in SPL are a mix of rural and urban examples in which the assumed learner is not easily discernible."[210]

7. A very significant inclusion of the history textbooks which has been rarely seen before is that in the Class VIII 'History' textbooks, there is a whole chapter dedicated on tribal rebellions and Birsa Munda.

8. In the 'Social and Political Life' textbook for Class VI, diversity has been explained in a very simple yet interesting way. It is stated that, "Three children of your age have drawn the figures above. Use the empty box to draw your human figure...your drawing is quite different from the other three...We not only don't look exactly like each other but also differ in terms of the language we speak, our cultural backgrounds, the rituals we observe and, of course the way we draw."[211]

9. In the 'Social and Political Life' textbook for Class VI, various methods have been used to make the textbook very interesting. The authors have used in-text questions and exercises, end-text questions, use of narratives and use of posters creating social awareness and use of pictures. In the 'Social and Political Life' textbook for Class VII, it is mentioned that an attempt has been made to use real situations to teach concepts to children.[212] These textbooks use materials that draw their sources from familial and social issues which make it easier for the learner to understand concepts. The pedagogical approach of these textbooks has been made to move away from mere definitions of concepts to case studies and narratives which allow for a better understanding of concepts and issues.

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[210] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2007), 'Introductory note for teachers', *Social and Political Life – Textbook for Class VII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. vii

[211] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2006), *Social and Political Life – Textbook for Class VI*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. 3

[212] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2007), *Social and Political Life – Textbook for Class VII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training

10. Krishna Kumar, in one of his works, tells the reader that an agent's role is a symbol of recognition of personal autonomy[213]. In Indian textbooks and stories, the personality of the child is not recognized[214]. According to him, the child does not have the freedom to experiment and explore. One has to model oneself after the iconic figure of adults. This is proved by the overarching presence of adult dominated stories featured in text books. He argues that another aspect is that such agents are mostly male, and there is a positive association between male agents and out of home spaces. However, in the History and 'Social and Political Life' textbooks, one finds that the child is the protagonist and it is not the male child only who is in prominence. Both male and the female children have been given equal space.

11. In the 'Social and Political Life' textbooks for Class VIII, a conscious and commendable attempt has been made to form an understanding of the term 'marginalisation' in the Indian context[215]. The textbook explains stereotyping of Adivasis in particular ways. It is mentioned that Adivasis today are no more hunters, gatherers and nomads which is the image of Adivasis in society's common perceptions, books, movies and functions. The textbook states that, "Adivasis have been increasingly forced – through economic changes, forced policies and political force applied by the State and private industry – to migrate to lives as workers in plantations, at construction sites, in industries and as domestic workers. For the first time in history, they do not control or have much direct access to the forest territories."[216] Although the textbooks talk about the displacement and economic development of the Adivasi population, they seem to project an idea that although sections of the Adivasi population migrated to the urban areas for employment, they all were manual labourers. These textbooks seem to omit or overlook the fact that a certain percentage of the Adivasi population have made it to levels of higher education

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[213] Kumar, Krishna, (1989), *Social Character of Learning*, New Delhi: Sage Publications

[214] Ibid.

[215] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2008), *Social and Political Life – Textbook for Class VIII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training

[216] Ibid., p. 85

and public employment. All of them are not simply manual labourers or workers at factories.

12. The other marginalized community which the Class VIII 'Social and Political Life' textbook discusses is the Muslim community in India. The textbook states that, "Some not all – Muslims may wear a *burqa*, sport a long beard, wear a *fez*, and these become ways to identify all Muslims. Because of this, they tend to be identified differently and some people think that they are not like the 'rest of us'. Often this becomes an excuse to treat them unfairly, and discriminate against them...This social marginalization of Muslims in some instances has led to them migrating from places where they have lived, often leading to the ghettoisation of the community."[217] This textbook mentions about the plight of Muslims in India. However, the textbook seems to address the marginalization issue harping on the protective measures of the Indian state and the Fundamental Rights guaranteed to the citizens of India by our Constitution.

It is important to note that not only are the problematic elements which were present in the previous NCFSE textbooks omitted, the NCF takes a step ahead in the direction of creating a much better curriculum which can be an answer to the problems associated with curriculum and textbook writing. An analysis of the 'History' and 'Social and Political Life' textbooks show that these texts have been written according to the recommendations of the NFGTSS and have also considered the general changes which are predominantly mentioned all over the NCF 2005. In the textbooks, we see the attempt at annihilating any kind of biases like gender or region. There is also not only a slight mention but proper attention given to the life and problems of the tribal population and their relationship to the forests in India. Moreover, the very interesting nature of how these texts have been written and the impressively innovative manner in which these texts have been made interesting and innovative will definitely help the learner to shift away from methods of rote learning to an understanding of the texts which will not only give the learner knowledge, but also encourage critical thinking among him or her.

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[217] Uppal, Shveta (ed.) (2008), *Social and Political Life – Textbook for Class VIII*, National Council of Educational Research and Training, p. 89

Considering the merits of the NCF 2005, a general look at the textbooks produced under the NCF 2005 shows that a deliberate attempt has been made to improve the school curriculum for fit in the disadvantaged and subaltern voices that never got a place in the curriculum earlier. The INC is a centrist party and its ideology is one which aims at inclusion of various dissenting voices. The reflection of the INC can be seen in the NCF 2005 where marginalized voices have been included, problems relating to caste, gender, religion and regionalism have been addressed. I would like to argue here that the NCF 2005 is an attempt on the behalf of the state to create a passive citizenship and contain dissent. The state cannot allow any kind of rebellion against it and thus it uses education to create a 'safety valve', like the British had created to give birth to the INC in 1885 to counter the pressure of dissenting Indians, to project an imagery of an ideal and representative curriculum. By giving representation to dissenting voices, the state instills a sense of loyalty among the citizens who in turn give consent to its decisions.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have argued that the State uses education as a mechanism to propagate its ideologies among the masses. For my work, I have more specifically compared the History and Civics textbooks under the NCFSE 2000 and the NCF 2005, and have found that the state, be it the NDA government, the UPA government or the British government, has used education to propagate its own ideology for its benefits. In case of the British, it was the introduction of western education with which they aimed to civilize Indian masses for their own benefits. In the case of NDA government, we see that the History and Civics textbooks were written in accordance with the right wing Hindutva ideology. These textbooks aimed at glorifying the Hindu past and denigrating the other religions and regions which were non – Hindu. The NCF 2005 was a reflection of the ideology of the UPA government which aimed to create passive citizenship by containing dissenting voices.

I have already argued that re-writing of history textbooks in itself is not problematic. Rather, it is a very significant exercise which leaves us with various understandings of the past. The work of a historian is to critique a dominant established framework and re-write history on the basis of the critique. However, every historian has a different understanding of the past and so historians give us various explanations and a very rich understanding of the past. Moreover, for writers of history textbooks, it becomes increasingly difficult to decide what to include and what not to. This selection of elements to be included in textbooks is a very significant task. What textbook writers usually do is that they include important and relevant elements in the textbooks. However, the problem arises when such selection or re-writing of history is derived from political gains or particular ideologies.

During the British era, we see that on the one hand, there were the orientalist histories which aimed to bring back the glorious ancient past of India. They saw themselves as link between the ancient Indian golden period and the present education of Indians. On the other hand, the liberal histories started attacking the orientalist notions of History. The liberal histories argued in favour of the advanced education and the sciences of the west. They looked down upon Indian education and believed that the only way to improve the unchangeable Indian society was to impart western education to them.

We have already seen that they were initially very selective in imparting English education. They wanted to build an English educated elite class who would be very different from the others. Western education aimed at attacking the very basis of Indian society in the sense that the freedom imbibed in it was very much against the familial values of Indian society. Western education gave rise to an elite class of English educated Indians who found a common link between themselves with shared values and similar pattern of education. As mentioned before, Gandhi used this commonality between the English educated elite to make them turn against the British Empire. Overall, one finds that the British used education for their own benefits. They were not in favour of Indian traditional education as they considered Indian texts to be unscientific and passive. Moreover, they saw education as a tool for social control over the Indian masses. Again, they needed Indians to run the vast British Empire. Thus, they started imparting English education in the Indian colony.

The BJP led NDA government used education as a tool to propagate its own ideology and interests. With the help of History and Civics textbooks, they attempted to glorify the Hindu past and train citizens for purposes of nation building. During this phase, education went under a phase of saffronisation where non-Hindus were seen as the 'other'. Such conceptualizing of antagonism towards the 'other' and the glorification of the Hindu cultural past stems from the right wing Hindutva ideology of the NDA government. The problem with the Civics textbooks of this period is that they have been highly undemocratic in the manner of disseminating knowledge on the concepts of democracy and citizenship. There does not seem to be any sort of inclusion of dissenting or suppressed voices. A reading of theses textbooks clearly shows that there is a gender bias. The attempt at gender equality is a very superficial one as women are simply seen as markers of development. Women feature in the public sphere in terms of their biological and reproductive orientations in terms of fertility rates and sex ratio. However, the dignity of a pure and good woman is very significant in these textbooks as they maintain the structures of the Indian family, community and nation. All that the learner learns is from the viewpoint of the mainstream actors.

We see a drastic change in the curriculum with the coming of the UPA government. The NCF 2005 was framed under the UPA government. The UPA government's aim was to contain the dissenting voices. To avoid the possibility of revolt, the UPA government's ideology reflected in

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the NCF 2005 which aimed at the inclusion and representation of the dissenting voices. It is through this procedure that the state could create passive citizenship which would ultimately give its consent to the state's decisions. However, in terms of pedagogy, one has to admit that the NCF 2005 is a step ahead than any of the past attempts at improving the education curriculum. The NCF 2005 not only aims to clear out the problematic elements in the NCFSE 2000 document but also moves ahead in a much better fashion in the way of attempting to create an improved curriculum. The basic changes that the NCF 2005 document attempts to make are the following ones.

First and foremost, education should not be limited to textbooks. There have to be techniques and resources which allow students to learn beyond textbooks. Second, education should be localized in the sense that the student must be able to relate his knowledge with the outside world. Third, education should not be biased in favour of any religion, region, caste or gender. And fourth, textbooks should not be overloaded with content. The history and civics textbooks published as per the recommendations of the NCF 2005 show that most of these recommendations have been included in the best way possible.

Undoubtedly, these textbooks have been made very interesting with bright colour combinations and narratives. They are not overloaded with content. Rather, such an interesting read would definitely encourage understanding and critical thinking. Various methods and techniques have been used to make these textbooks very interesting such as the frequent use of local knowledge, diagrams and exercises in the understanding of concepts. Overall, we see that equal representation has been given to both genders. Most importantly, we find that child protagonists have been used to demonstrate and explain concepts and issues. This was not a common practice earlier. In the earlier textbooks, the ideal protagonist was a male adult who was seen as the idol for young boys. Moreover, these textbooks have addressed the problems of caste, gender inequality and marginalized groups to adhere to the larger ideology of the UPA government to create passive citizenship.

Although the NCF 2005 seems promising, particularly from the pedagogical viewpoint, there are various problems with the NCF 2005:

1. Although concerns of gender and caste have been included in the NCF 2005 document and in the textbooks produced post 2005, these concerns still plague the education sector today even more in the rural areas. Even with the growth of schools supported by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and the added incentives of the Midday meal schemes, caste and gender still pose to be two major barriers for the successful implementation of the ideal of universal education.

2. Successive governments in India have promised to spend at least six percent of India's GDP on education. However, none of them have kept their promise. India's bleak educational status is a result of the lack of political will, among other factors.

3. For the proper and successful implementation of the NCF 2005, schools must have the adequate facilities and resources like good libraries, clean environment, play ground, and other necessary arrangements. The NCF 2005 cannot stand on its own. It needs teachers to do a good job in making education much more interesting. Along with the changed textbooks, there has to be new methods of teacher training which will familiarize teachers with the new methods of learning. Again, one must remember that teachers are equally enmeshed in the society and they will have their own imbibed biases. Therefore, teacher training should also include a course which will educate the teachers to annihilate their social biases.

4. The public-private divide in education is a major factor for the contestations between English and vernacular education, a problematic aspect of education which is not the focus of the NCF 2005. It is common knowledge that every parent wants to send their children to private schools because of their comparatively better quality, efficiency and teaching of English. On the other hand, are government run schools which are not the first choice for parents any more. However, good private schools have become increasingly expensive and therefore, only the rich can afford access to these private schools. Thus, an automatic inequality of education starts developing with the increased inequality of the rich and the poor.

5. The NCF 2005 addresses and acknowledges the problems related to the conception of the study of the Social Sciences. It states that the Social Sciences should not be seen in any way inferior to the Natural and Physical Sciences. The NCF gives normative arguments in favour of the Social Sciences. However, the common conception that the Social

Sciences are not job oriented still holds weight today. It is difficult to be convinced that normative arguments will in any way change the common conceptions of society.

All said and done, it must also be remembered that this ideal of education cannot be fulfilled without the contribution of the teacher and the family. Even though the textbooks try to connect themselves with the local surroundings of the learner, the teacher must be equipped enough to give live examples, which the child can relate to, while teaching a particular subject. Moreover, since the NCF wants textbooks to be a platform for further thinking and enquiry, the schools must be able to provide the necessary equipments and space for the children to learn outside the periphery of textbooks. Again, parents must take active interest in their children's education. A regular meeting of parents and teachers or sometimes group learning of parents, teachers and students could help break the traditional hegemonic relationship of teacher and student and make learning much more fun.

As I have argued in my thesis, education has been used as a mechanism by the state to further its own interests and mobilizing the masses in conformity to its ideology. I have shown that be it the British government, the NDA government or the UPA government, every ruling power or coalition has its own interests and they use education as a tool to further their own interests. For education to be truly democratic, unbiased and universal, it has to free itself from the chains of political ideologies, social and economic forces. Education has to be autonomous and free from all patterns of constraints. At the end of my thesis, I am reminded of Rabindranath Tagore who believed that the aesthetic development of the senses was as important as the intellectual with a prominence given to music, literature, art, dance and drama as part of the everyday school curriculum. He prescribed learning amongst nature and not in classrooms which he considered to be like factories because he believed that knowledge could be gained from life and nature.

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