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# Radical Changes In NCERT Textbooks - Poverty, Inequality, Democracy Among Topics Removed

## Why In The News?

- Over The Last Six Years, **NCERT Has Made Three Rounds Of Major Changes In Its Textbooks** - Mainly History, Political Science, And Sociology - For Students In Classes 6-12.
- **Food, Poverty, Inequality, Democracy** Etc Among Topics No Longer Part Of NCERT Textbooks.

## What Has NCERT Said About It?

- NCERT Says That The Cuts, Which Were **First Announced In May 2022**, Were Made To **Ensure A "Speedy Recovery"** In Learning After The Coronavirus Pandemic.
- "Difficulty Level, Overlapping Content, And Content Irrelevant In The Present Context" Are Some Of The Reasons Listed By NCERT For Dropping The Chapters From The Curriculum.



## Key Takeaways:

- High School Students Will Have **Radically Different Textbooks** Soon, With **Several Key Subjects Dropped** From Government-issue Reading Material That Has Sparked Concern About Their Academic Proficiency.

- The National Council Of Educational Research And Training (NCERT) Deciding To Cut Chapters Under Its "**Rationalization**" Move Could Hit Over **134 Million Students In The Age Group Of 11-18.**
- **Class 6 Students Will No Longer Learn About Food** And Where It Comes From. They Also Don't Have Chapters Now On The **Key Elements Of Democracy** And On **India's Climate And Wildlife.**
- **Students In Class 7** Will Not Learn About The **Struggle For Equality.** The Chapter Also Had Information On The Famous Struggles For Equality, Such As The **Women's Movement And Tawa Matsya Sangh,** Which Fights For The Rights Of Displaced Forest Dwellers In Madhya Pradesh.
- Two Of The Topics Which Seem To Have Been Hit The Hardest Across Classes Are **Democracy And Mughal Rule In India,** Chapters On Which Have Been Dropped From **Classes 6, 9, 10, 11, And 12th.**
- Chapters On **Poverty, Peace, Development, States Of Matter** Are Among Those That Are No Longer A Part Of **NCERT's Class 11 Textbooks.** For **Class 12 Students - Gujarat Riots, Understanding Partition, Cold War And Reproduction In Organisms** Are Some Of The Chapters Which Have Been Dropped.
- Earlier This Year, **More Than 1,800 Scientists And Educators** Had Written An Open Letter **Against The Theory Of Evolution Being Dropped From The Class 10 Science Textbook.** The Government, Though, Has Rejected All Criticism As Propaganda.





## Revision Of Textbooks By NDA Govt Since 2014:

- The **First Round, In 2017**, Was Termed A **“Review”** Rather Than A Revision.
- The Review Resulted In **1,334 Changes Across 182 Books**.
- New References To **Schemes Introduced By The Narendra Modi Government**, Increased Content On **Ancient Indian Knowledge And Practices**.
- A **Focus On Nationalist Icons** Who Had Been Overlooked In The Country’s Collective Memory, According To The BJP And Right-wing Advocates.
- Just A Year Later, **In 2018**, At The Request Of Then Education Minister Prakash Javadekar, The NCERT Initiated A Second Round Of Revisions, Known As **“Textbook Rationalization”**, To Reduce The **“Syllabus Burden”** On Students.
- Ultimately, The **Council Achieved A 20% Reduction**, Primarily In Social Science Textbooks, While Keeping Cuts In Mathematics And Sciences To The Minimum.
- This Exercise Led To The **Deletion Of Several Chapters**.
- Among The Chapters Deleted From History Textbooks Was One **On Clothing And How Social Movements Influenced How We Dressed**.
- Another On The History Of Cricket In India And Its Connection To The Politics Of Caste, Region And Community.
- Less Than Three Years Later, The NCERT Announced A **Third Round Of Textbook Rationalization**.
- The Official Reason For This Latest Exercise Was To Reduce The Curriculum Load Further, And To **Help Students Recover From Learning Disruptions Caused By The Covid-19 Pandemic**.
- In June 2022, The NCERT Made Public A List Of Changes And Deletions In The Reprinted Textbooks That Came Into The Market Recently.



## Controversies Around NCERT Textbooks Earlier?

- NCERT Textbooks Are **No Stranger To Controversies** As They Have, Over The Years, Become The **Government's Medium For Political Communication And A Battleground Of Competing Ideologies.**
- New Textbooks Drafted In **2002-03**, When The First NDA Government (Of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee) Was In Power, Were **Criticised For Portraying The Muslim Rulers Of India As Savage Invaders.**
- The **Medieval Period As A Gloomy Era Of Islamic Domination** That Cast A Dark Shadow Over The Brilliance Of Preceding Hindu Empires. These **Textbooks Were Scrapped Immediately After The UPA-I Government Came To Power In 2004.**
- The **UPA Government** Made Its Own Changes To School Textbooks. In 2012, Cartoons That Were Deemed Derogatory To Jawaharlal Nehru And B R Ambedkar Were Removed From Political Science Textbooks.

## Why Parties In Power Do So?

- School Textbooks Have Always Been Seen As Playing A Crucial Role In Shaping National Narratives, And As A Tool For Cultivating A **Desired National Identity.**
- NCERT Textbooks Are Read By **More Than 5 Crore Students In 18 States Around The Country**, Who Are Seen By Political Parties As A Large Captive Audience With Impressionable Minds.
- It's Not Just School Students Either - Candidates Preparing For Competitive Exams Such As The **Civil Services Examination, SSC, JEE, And NEET, Also Rely On These Textbooks.**



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