

## **Convention Against Distortion of School Textbooks**

All India Save Education Committee, Karnataka

June 8<sup>th</sup> 2022, Bangalore

**Messages from eminent personalities:**

**Prof. Romila Thapar** (Renowned Historian, Professor JNU, was Chairperson of the NCERT Textbooks Committee)

### **Message in support of good quality text-books**

**A good textbook is crucial to the foundation of a good education. It does two things.**

Firstly, it provides information on a subject. Information on a subject like history is widespread, so professionally trained historians have to decide on what is to be discussed in a textbook on History. The decision on what to include cannot be taken by politicians and administrators – it has to be taken by specialists in the subject, in this case by professionally trained historians.

A textbook does not write about what public opinion or political ideology wants to propagate. It has to be what the professionals in the subject wish to state. The choice of themes in a subject must reflect what scholars in that subject think are important. The history of the Dravidian movement is historically as important to the history of south India as is the history of the Arya Samaj to north India. The history of the Sultanates in north India and the Deccan as well as the Mughals cannot be ignored, as this was a period of great cultural development in India. Textbooks in the sciences are not interfered with and are left to the scientists to decide what is important, so why are textbooks in the social sciences interfered with by persons who do not have specialized knowledge. Textbooks in the social sciences like history must also be the responsibility of the specialists in the subject.

Secondly, the purpose of a textbook in History is to make a student think about the past and about history and ask questions related to how, what, why and where, events happened. The answers given in the textbook and statements on history must be based on proven evidence and the statements that follow must be based on logical and rational thinking. History is not fiction it has to be based on proven facts.

**Prof. Aditya Mukherjee** (Historian, Retired professor JNU)

It is shocking what is happening in Karnataka, one of the most progressive states with high levels of education and cultural achievement and a great syncretic tradition. It is that heritage which is reflected in the resistance that one is witnessing in Karnataka to the efforts to distort history and even invent it in order to weaponise it in a manner that it will destroy not only our secular democracy but even will threaten the very survival of our nation state.

Let Karnataka lead the country in resisting this destructive efforts by the communal collaborators of the British, so that the nation imagined by the leaders of our freedom struggle, the 'idea of India' imagined by them, survives and flourishes.

Prof Aditya Mukherjee

**Prof Ashok Shettar** (Historian & Archeologist, Retired professor Karnatak University, Dharwad)

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Renowned historians **Prof Sumit Sarkar** and **Prof Tanika Sarkar**

We were horrified to read about the changes that have been incorporated in the Karnataka school level Social Science syllabi and textbooks. There is no regard for facts that are based on solid research by scholars and the boundary between myths and historical evidence has been eroded. The enormous contributions of people who had struggled for social justice in our country have been erased. The ideals of a number of iconic revolutionaries is replaced with messages from past leaders of the current ruling forces. Schoolchildren will no longer know about the past as it was and their social, cultural and moral values will be given a strong right wing twist. This is a grave threat not only for the young generations of Karnataka but it may become the template for Social Science Studies for the entire country.

The work that the All India Save Education Committee is doing is invaluable in this context. We admire their determination to struggle for meaningful and truthful knowledge and we wish them all success.

Sumit Sarkar

Tanika Sarkar.