

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
INHERENT JURISDICTION

SUO MOTO WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO.1/2026

IN RE: SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOK FOR GRADE - 8
(PART-2) PUBLISHED BY NCERT AND ANCILLARY
ISSUES

O R D E R

I.A. No. 261029/2026

1. The instant application seeks clarification of paragraph 5 of our order dated 22.05.2026, wherein this Court has recorded the statement of the learned Solicitor General of India to the following effect:

“However, we may hasten to add that according to learned Solicitor General, the curriculum prepared by the applicants was not brought before the Committee at all levels, and as such, it cannot be termed as a collective decision.”

2. It is clarified that the aforesaid is merely a statement recorded by this Court and does not constitute the observations or the order of this Court.

3. With the above clarification, the aforesaid application is disposed of.

Main Matter

4. These suo motu proceedings originated from a report published on 24.02.2026 in a leading English daily, ‘The Indian Express’. The report concerned the release of the Social Science Textbook for Grade 8 (Part 2), titled “Exploring Society: India and Beyond”, First Edition, published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Chapter 4 of the said textbook was titled “The Role of the

Judiciary in our Society”, which contained a sub-topic explicitly styled as “Corruption in the Judiciary”.

5. A *prima facie* examination of the Chapter, read with the response of the Director, NCERT, disclosed an attempt to undermine the institutional authority and dignity of the Judiciary, particularly as it contained no corresponding reference to the constitutional role discharged and the reformative measures undertaken by the Supreme Court, the High Courts and the District Courts across the Country. In this backdrop, this Court took suo motu cognizance of the issue *vide* its order dated 26.02.2026, observing that allowing the Impugned Chapter to remain in circulation and be taught to students at such an impressionable age was bound to erode public faith in the judicial institution.
6. Accordingly, while issuing notices to the Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and to Professor (Dr.) Dinesh Prasad Saklani, Director, NCERT, this Court also directed the seizure and withdrawal of all copies of the book from circulation, and imposed a ban on any further publication or digital dissemination of the book. The Director, NCERT was directed to disclose the composition of the National Syllabus and Teaching Learning Material Committee (NSTC) and the details of the Textbook Development Team (TDT) responsible for drafting Chapter 4.
7. However, while passing the aforesaid order, it was clarified that the intervention was not intended to stifle legitimate criticism of the Judiciary. Dissent, deliberation and rigorous discourse were recognised as the vital components of a living democracy. The exercise of jurisdiction was occasioned not by an aversion to scrutiny, but by the need to safeguard the pedagogical integrity of material meant for young and impressionable minds.

8. In compliance with the aforesaid directions, Professor (Dr.) Dinesh Prasad Saklani, Director, NCERT, filed an affidavit tendering an unconditional and unqualified apology, on his own behalf and on behalf of NCERT. It was also brought on record that the Government of India had, in the meantime, directed the recall of 82,440 copies of the textbook already in circulation. A separate affidavit was filed by Mr. Sanjay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, tendering an unconditional apology and informing that necessary systemic corrective steps had been set into motion.
9. Other averments made in the affidavit have now become irrelevant in light of the subsequent events.
10. The Government of India later on constituted a three-member Committee by an order dated 16.03.2026 issued by the Ministry of Education, Department of School Education and Literacy. The Committee comprised Hon'ble Ms. Justice Indu Malhotra (Former Judge of this Court), Shri K.K. Venugopal, Senior Advocate and former Attorney General for India, and Professor Prakash Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University. The Committee's mandate was to associate and collaborate with the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, to finalise the curricula for Class VIII and other grades on legal studies.
11. Simultaneously, by notification dated 02.04.2026, the NSTC was also reconstituted into a twenty-member High-Powered Committee. Shri M.C. Pant, former Chancellor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, was appointed its Chairperson and Professor Manjul Bhargava of Princeton University was appointed its Co-Chairperson.
12. Subsequently, during the course of hearing, learned Solicitor General also drew the attention of this Court to certain other objectionable content, including cartoons, appearing in other

NCERT publications, which was directed to be placed before the said Expert Committee for review.

13. The Committee headed by Hon'ble Ms. Justice Indu Malhotra (Retired), Shri K.K. Venugopal, Senior Advocate and former Attorney General for India, and Professor Prakash Singh has commendably completed the exercise entrusted to it. In collaboration with the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, and the reconstituted NSTC, the Committee has reviewed Chapter 4 and the other material brought to its notice, and has furnished its report, together with a revised and balanced text on the role and functioning of the Judiciary, which has been placed on record.
14. We are informed that the revised chapter, upon due approval by the Committee, has been circulated to students and is presently in classroom use. We have perused the said report and the revised chapter. We find that the revised text presents an objective, factually accurate and balanced account of the Judiciary, setting out its constitutional role and the safeguards of independence and accountability that inhere in it, without either glorifying or unfairly disparaging the institution.
15. Having regard to the unconditional apologies tendered by the Director, NCERT and the Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy; the remedial measures thereafter undertaken, including the recall of the offending publication, the reconstitution of the NSTC and the satisfactory completion of the review by the Expert Committee resulting in a revised and balanced text already in use, this Court is of the view that the object underlying these suo motu proceedings stands substantially achieved. No useful purpose would be served in keeping this matter pending any further.
16. The show-cause notices issued *vide* order dated 26.02.2026 to the Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy,

and to the Director, NCERT are accordingly discharged. The Union of India, NCERT and the concerned authorities shall continue to remain bound by the assurances held out before this Court regarding the content and vetting of educational material relating to public institutions, including the Judiciary, in future editions and curricula.

17. We place on record our appreciation for the diligent and constructive manner in which Hon'ble Ms. Justice Indu Malhotra (Retired), Shri K.K. Venugopal, Senior Advocate and former Attorney General for India, and Professor Prakash Singh have discharged the task entrusted to them. The effort of the reconstituted NSTC, under the chairpersonship of Shri M.C. Pant and co-chairpersonship of Professor Manjul Bhargava, in re-examining the curriculum within a limited time-frame, is equally commended. The response of the Government of India, NCERT and the said Committees reflects a healthy institutional collaboration between the Judiciary and the Executive in matter touching the integrity of public education.
18. Before parting, we also consider it necessary to reiterate what was said at the inception of these proceedings. The Judiciary, as an institution, is not, and cannot be, averse to criticism. Fair, informed and constructive critique of judicial functioning is a legitimate and necessary feature of a vibrant constitutional democracy, contributing to institutional accountability and self-correction. What is required, however, is that such criticism be voiced through the appropriate forum and in a fair, rational mechanism, and not find its way, without verification, into a school curriculum meant for impressionable minds. The distinction lies not between criticism and silence, but between responsible discourse and uninformed assertion.
19. In view of the foregoing discussion, this suo motu writ petition is disposed of and closed. Pending applications, if

any, shall stand disposed of in the above terms. Ordered accordingly.

.....CJI.
(SURYA KANT)

.....J.
(JOYMALYA BAGCHI)

.....J.
(V. MOHANA)

NEW DELHI;
SEPTEMBER 01, 2026

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

SUO MOTO WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) No(s).1/2026

IN RE: SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOK FOR GRADE - 8 (PART-2)
PUBLISHED BY NCERT AND ANCILLARY ISSUES

IA No. 105901/2026 - APPLICATION FOR MODIFICATION OF PARTY
DETAILS / CHALLENGED JUDGEMENT DETAILS, IA No. 100214/2026 -
APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS, IA No. 83501/2026 -
INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 105899/2026 -
INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 105382/2026 -
INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 105245/2026 -
INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 105249/2026 - MODIFICATION, IA
No.105383/2026 - MODIFICATION OF COURT ORDER, IA No. 83503/2026 -
PERMISSION TO APPEAR AND ARGUE IN PERSON, IA No.261029/2026 -
PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES

Date : 01-09-2026 This matter was called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE V. MOHANA

By Courts Motion, AOR

for NCERT

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UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

1. I.A. No. 261029/2026 and Suo Moto Writ Petition (CIVIL) No.1/2026 are disposed of in terms of the signed order.
2. All pending applications, if any, also stand disposed of.

(ARJUN BISHT)
ASTT. REGISTRAR-cum-PS

(PREETHI DILEEP KUMAR)
DY. REGISTRAR

(signed order is placed on the file)