

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Reforms in Content and Design of School Text Books

- The Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports (Chair: Dr. Vinay P. Sahasrabuddhe) submitted its report on the Reforms in Content and Design of School Text Books on November 30, 2021. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
- **Quality of textbooks:** Textbooks are used as teaching material by teachers and as a source of self-learning by students. Therefore, the development of quality textbooks becomes important. The Committee recommended that while creating content for textbooks, inputs by experts from multiple disciplines should be sought. Further, mandatory standards for content, graphics and layout, and pedagogical approaches should be developed. The Committee noted the need to have more child-friendly textbooks. It recommended the use of pictures, graphics, and audio-visual material.
- The Committee recommended that National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) textbooks should be published in all the languages mentioned in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. Further, efforts should be made to develop textbooks in local languages (those not a part of the eighth schedule).
- **Updating syllabus:** The Committee recommended the Ministry of Education and NCERT to set up an internal committee to examine suggestions received from teachers, students, and institutions for updating syllabus of NCERT textbooks. Further, it recommended the Ministry to explore the possibility to develop a core class-wise common syllabus for various subjects for implementation by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CICSE), and State education boards.
- **Representation of women in textbooks:** Women are underrepresented in school textbooks and are depicted in traditional and voluntary roles. The Committee recommended that NCERT should undertake efforts to (i) make textbooks gender inclusive, (ii) portray women in emerging professions, and (iii) adequately represent role of women in the Indian freedom movement.
- **Depiction of history:** The Committee noted that many historical figures and freedom fighters in history textbooks have been portrayed in an incorrect manner as offenders. Further, it noted that there is unequal representation of various periods and dynasties in history textbooks. The Committee recommended: (i) updating history textbooks to include certain details (such as post 1947 history and world history), (ii) reviewing depiction of freedom fighters from various regions and communities, and (iii) adoption of new technologies for better pedagogy of history. Further, it recommended that NCERT should relook at the guidelines of writing history textbooks. All books, especially history, books (other than those published by government agencies) used for supplementary reading should be consistent with the content and structure of NCERT textbooks and a mechanism should be developed to monitor the same.
- **Information on drug and internet addiction:** The Committee noted that drug addiction is cutting across class divide and has adverse effects on the socio-economic structure of the country. It recommended that textbooks should: (i) highlight the adverse effects of drug addiction, and (ii) contain separate elements spreading awareness against internet addiction and other aspects harmful to the society.
- **Reducing number of textbooks:** The initiative of the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research known as Ekamik Pathya Pustak (2018-19) created a single book for several subjects for class one students in order to lighten the school bag. Such an initiative is in line with the School Bag Policy by Ministry of Education, that suggested to have long periods of one or two subjects to reduce the number of books students carry. The Committee recommended that other states should also follow a similar approach.

**DISCLAIMER:** This document is being furnished to you for your information. You may choose to reproduce or redistribute this report for non-commercial purposes in part or in full to any other person with due acknowledgement of PRS Legislative Research ("PRS"). The opinions expressed herein are entirely those of the author(s). PRS makes every effort to use reliable and comprehensive information, but PRS does not represent that the contents of the report are accurate or complete. PRS is an independent, not-for-profit group. This document has been prepared without regard to the objectives or opinions of those who may receive it.