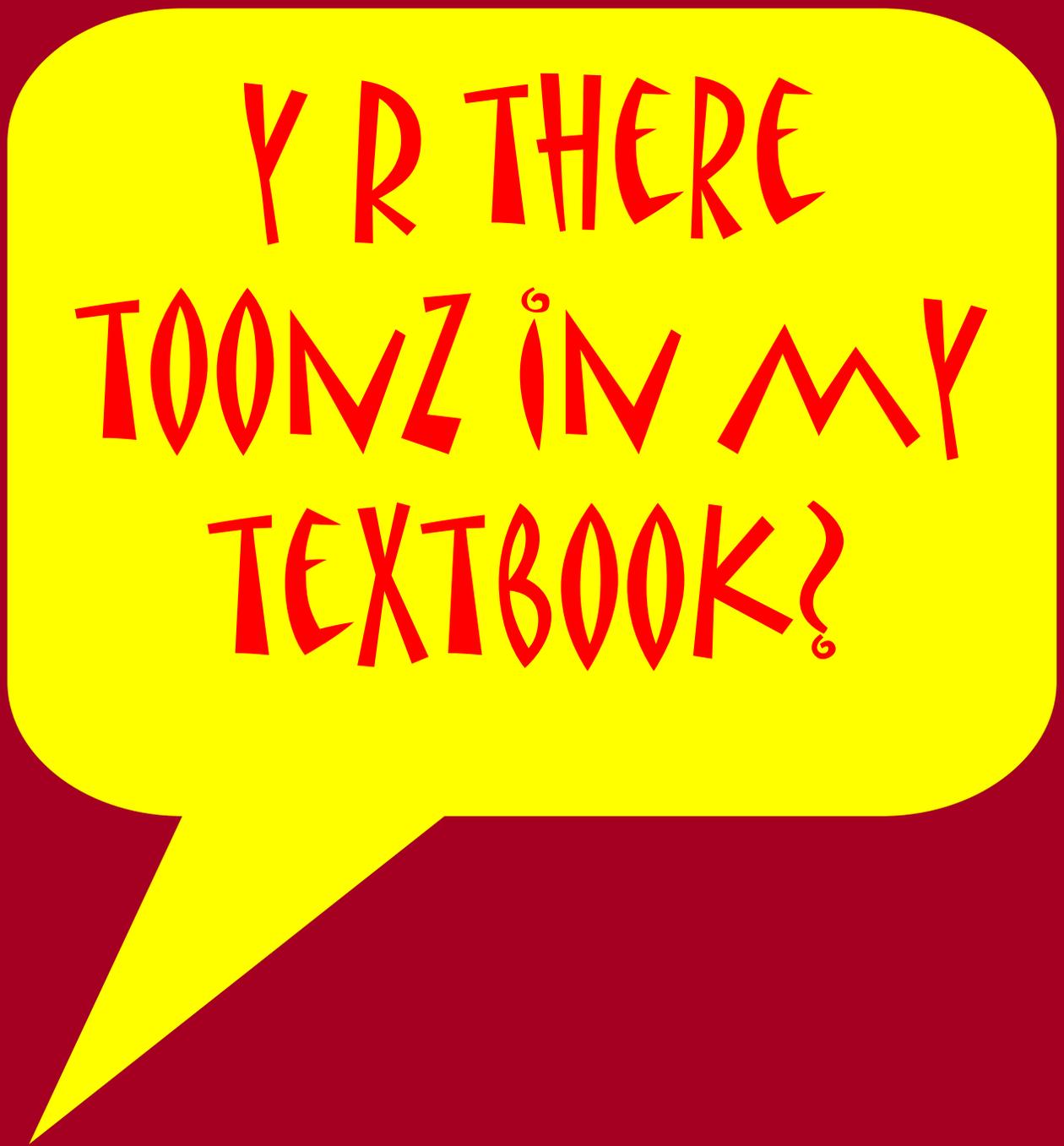


TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCE IN SCHOOLS

NCERT'S NEW TEXTBOOK INITIATIVE

A book by Alex M George and Amman Madan

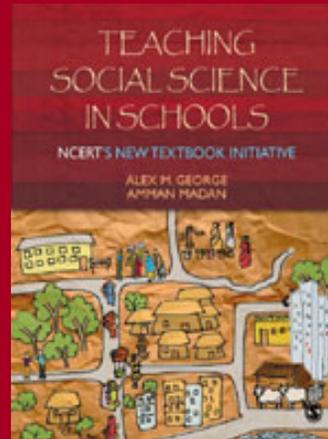
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Y R THERE
TOONZ IN MY
TEXTBOOK?

Since 2005, the NCERT has been publishing
a new generation of social science textbooks





Illustrates how the new textbooks can be used effectively

Explains the rationale for the new approach

Questions to Encourage Thinking

The question ‘What is democracy?’ appears open-ended. But it is really not so because the textbook has given a definition (‘democracy is a system of government in which...’), has explained it in one paragraph, and we have asked the student to write the ‘official answer’. We are not encouraging him to think.

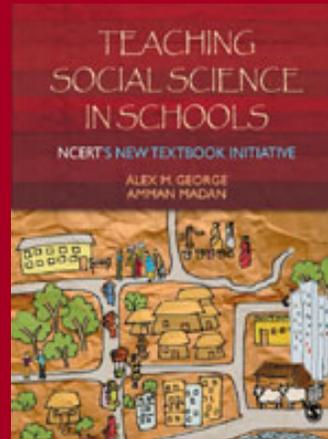
Instead, the new textbook adopts an open approach. It asks the student ‘Consider the following facts about a country and decide if you would call it a democracy. Give reasons to support your decision.’

Such questions have no ‘official answers’ that the student can ‘mug up’. Various students may give different answers. The question forces each student to weigh the facts, apply his understanding of ‘what is democracy?’, and arrive at a conclusion. In this way, the new textbook encourages open and critical thinking.

Offers guidelines for interactive classroom sessions

Pictures

Let the students enjoy the cartoons and photographs. Ask them to describe the images. Just as you 'read' text, 'read' the images. Do not skip images, they often speak of the situations in the text. Rarely will you find images of people that would not 'say' anything but gives only visual relief to the teacher and the student.



Takes us through the challenges of textbook preparation

Gives jargon-free replies in FAQ format



11 Textbooks are changed every few years because of conflicts between political parties and their ideologies. Are the new textbooks any different?

The new textbooks are different in that they try to refashion the way teachers and students interact in the classroom. In the context you mention, the most debated is the history textbook; so, let us see how it has evolved.

All historians—whether nationalist, Marxist, or Hindutva—have their own interpretations of historical events. Each group can find examples and information to re-create or



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Teachers

Students

Educationists





Answering questions such as

What problems will teachers face?

Why not give direct definitions for children to learn?

Have such textbooks been used elsewhere in the country?

What role should parents play?

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The authors have pledged their royalties to Adharshila Learning Centre,
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