

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGSSUO MOTO WRIT PETITION(CIVIL) No(s). 1/2026IN RE: SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOK FOR GRADE - 8
(PART-2) PUBLISHED BY NCERT AND ANCILLARY ISSUES Petitioner(s)

Date : 11-03-2026 This petition was called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIPUL M. PANCHOLI

For Petitioner(s) : By Courts Motion, AOR

For Respondent(s) : Ms. Akansha, AOR
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Mr. Krishna Rastogi, Adv.
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Mr. Saurabh Tripathi, Adv.
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Mr. Sanjiv Sen, Sr. Adv.
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Mr. Siddhant Sharma, AOR
Mr. Prafull Bhardwaj, Adv.

Mr. Gaurav Kumar, Adv.
Mr. Naman Sherstra, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following

O R D E R

1. On 26.02.2026, this Court, after reading an article dated 24.02.2026 published in The Indian Express newspaper regarding the release of the Social Science Textbook for Grade 8 (Part 2) titled, "*Exploring Society: India and Beyond*," First Edition (Textbook), published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in February 2026, took *suo motu* cognizance of the offending contents of Chapter 4 of the Textbook titled, "*The Role of the Judiciary in our Society*," particularly the sub-topic expounding "*Corruption in the Judiciary*." This Court was of the opinion that the contents of the said chapter were *prima-facie* intended towards maligning the Indian Judiciary, and consequently certain *interim* directions, as contained in paragraphs 15 to 21 of the order dated 26.02.2026 were issued.

2. In purported compliance thereof, Prof. (Dr.) Dinesh Prasad

Saklani, Director, NCERT has filed an affidavit, tendering an unconditional and unqualified apology, on his own behalf and on behalf of NCERT, for including the offending contents in Chapter 4 of the Textbook. He has further disclosed in the affidavit that the offending chapter was drafted by the Textbook Development Team (TDT) under the chairmanship of Prof. Michel Danino, who is reported to be a Visiting Professor of IIT, Gandhinagar. The TDT also consists of Ms. Suparna Diwakar and Mr. Alok Prasanna Kumar, who were associated with Prof. Danino for drafting the said chapter.

3. As per the prescribed procedure, the draft curriculum was required to be deliberated amongst the members of the National Syllabus and Teaching Learning Material Committee (NSTC) comprising 19 persons, details whereof are given in paragraph 6 of the affidavit. In paragraph 7, however, it is explained that the draft chapter was never placed before the NSTC and was instead circulated "only amongst the few members digitally". It seems that the Government of India, Ministry of Education took cognizance of the offending contents after the publication of the article in the Indian Express newspaper, and issued directions to recall 82,440 copies of the Textbook which had been published/circulated in the meantime. It is, thus, stated in the affidavit that all necessary and urgent steps have been taken to implement the *interim* orders of this Court.

4. However, we find paragraph 15 of the same affidavit to be quite concerning. Despite this Court being seized of the matter,

paragraph 15 states that in terms of the directions issued by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Chapter 4 of the Textbook has been "duly rewritten". It is further stated that "the revised chapter shall be incorporated in the forthcoming academic session 2026-2027 and shall be used for classroom transactions in schools across all States and Union Territories in accordance with the applicable curriculum and academic framework."

5. This Court has not been apprised, through the affidavit or otherwise, the details of domain experts who have 'rewritten' the said chapter. Furthermore, this Court has not been informed as to who has approved the "rewritten" chapter for incorporation in the curriculum of the academic session 2026-2027. Suffice it to mention that such hasty actions, initiated in quick succession, are likely to complicate/distort the aim of including objective, transparent, honest, and dispassionate information regarding the Judiciary or any other public institution, for that matter.

6. Mr. Sanjay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India has also filed a short affidavit tendering an unconditional and unqualified apology. He has further stated that the Ministry has already initiated systemic steps to ensure that such an eventuality does not recur and shall continue to take further steps in that direction. According to him, he has been advised not to give details of such corrective steps/actions taken at this stage.

7. We have heard briefly Mr. Tushar Mehta, learned Solicitor General of India and Mr. K.M. Nataraj, learned Additional Solicitor General of India. Prof. (Dr.) Dinesh Prasad Saklani and Mr. Sanjay Kumar are also present in Court.

8. At the outset, we have no reason to doubt that Prof. Michel Danino and his associates, Ms. Suparna Diwakar and Mr. Alok Prasanna Kumar, do not have reasonable informed knowledge about the Indian Judiciary and/or they deliberately and knowingly have misrepresented the facts in order to project a negative image of the Indian Judiciary to students of Class 8, who are at an impressionable age. We see no reason as to why these persons should continue to be associated, in any manner whatsoever, with the preparation of the curricula or the finalization of textbooks for our future generations. Consequently, we direct the Government of India, the State Governments, the Union Territories, as well as all public universities and institutions receiving funds from the Central or State Governments, to disassociate from these three members of the TDT forthwith. This order, however, shall be subject to these members of the TDT approaching this Court for modification, along with an explanation, if any, that they wish to tender.

9. Without making any comments targeting specific members, it seems to us that the Government of India should revisit the composition of the NSTC and take an appropriate decision regarding the individuals to whom the offending chapter was shared digitally, prior to publication/circulation. It is advisable that the NSTC

comprises various domain experts. Furthermore, we must state that we find it slightly disappointing that not a single eminent jurist has been included in the NSTC, especially when the NCERT desires to teach young students about the Judiciary and the law. We, however, leave the reconstitution of the NSTC entirely to the discretion of the Competent Authority.

10. Owing to the perturbing stand taken by the Director, NCERT in paragraph 15 of his affidavit, regarding "rewriting" of the offending chapter, we direct that if at all, Chapter 4 of the Textbook has been rewritten, the same shall not be published until it is approved by a Committee comprising domain experts. To this end, we direct the Government of India to constitute such a Committee of domain experts, preferably including a former senior Judge, an eminent academician, and a renowned practitioner in law.

11. We hasten to reiterate paragraph 9 of our order dated 26.02.2026 to clarify that the *interim* directions issued on 26.02.2026 or in today's order are not intended to prevent or stifle healthy, objective, and legitimate criticism of the functioning of the Judiciary. If the Judiciary, like any other institution, suffers from any kind of deficiencies and such deficiencies are highlighted by an expert committee, it will open avenues for present stakeholders to take correctional measures and may even inspire our future judges and practitioners to do the same. It shall be appreciated if the Committee of domain experts, to be constituted by the Government of India within one week, also associates/collaborates with the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal

for the purpose of finalizing the curricula of Class 8 as well as higher grades, in tandem with NCERT, on the subject of legal studies.

12. Finally, it has come to our attention that after the order dated 26.02.2026 was passed, certain elements on social media have acted irresponsibly, while referring to the contents of the said order. We, accordingly, direct the Government of India to identify such sites/accounts as well as the persons running those sites/accounts and to furnish their full details to enable us to take suitable action. The law must take its own course.

13. Post this matter for further consideration on 06.04.2026.

(NITIN TALREJA)
ASTT. REGISTRAR-cum-PS

(PREETHI T.C.)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR