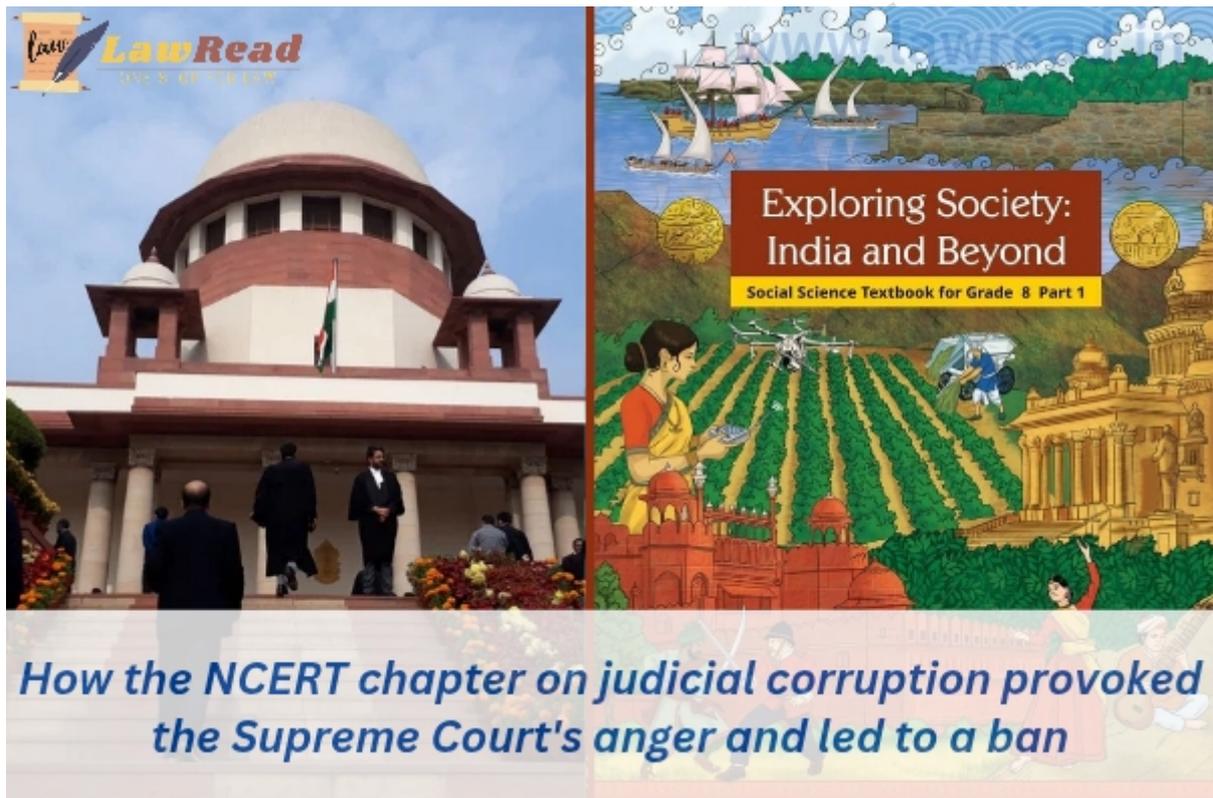


News

How the NCERT chapter on judicial corruption provoked the Supreme Court's anger and led to a ban



The Supreme Court is outraged over a section titled 'corruption in judiciary' in a recently published NCERT Social Science textbook. The court, characterizing it as a deeply entrenched, has prohibited not just the sharing of its content but also the book itself.

A minor segment discussing “corruption in the judiciary” in the new Social Sciences textbook by NCERT has sparked a huge controversy. The Supreme Court, in a fit of rage, has prohibited not only the sharing of the material but also mandated an outright ban on the release and dissemination of the Class 8 textbook that was implemented as part of the new National Education Policy (NEP).

But what caused the anger? The Supreme Court has expressed displeasure regarding the NCERT's portrayal of the judiciary to children aged 13-14 as one that is riddled with corruption and grappling with a substantial case backlog. The NCERT took swift action by

retracting the newly published textbook and halting its sales.

Nevertheless, the Supreme Court acted more swiftly by starting a suo motu case regarding the issue and labeling the action a “deep-rooted conspiracy”. That was not the conclusion of it. The Secretary of School Education, the Ministry of Education, and the NCERT director were also issued a show-cause notice.

The entire controversy is elucidated in 10 points.

Row of NCERT judiciary chapter

A chapter named 'The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society' in the Class 8 NCERT Social Sciences textbook, published on February 24, is at the center of the controversy. It encompasses mentions of corruption, a substantial accumulation of cases, and a lack of sufficient judges.

Senior lawyer Kapil Sibal brought the matter to the attention of the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Surya Kant, in a fit of rage, immediately began a suo motu case and asserted that the court would not permit anyone to "defame the institution".

This development follows the Centre's disclosure that the CJI's office received approximately 7,500 complaints against judges of the Supreme and High Courts from 2016 to 2025.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's pointed comments, the NCERT retracted the textbook and initiated a recovery of the 38 copies sold from a total print run of 2.25 lakh. Subsequently, the NCERT apologized, stating that the "error" was "unintentional" and that the section would be "rewritten".

On Thursday, the Supreme Court issued a severe reprimand to the government and NCERT. It mandated the confiscation of all physical copies and imposed a total prohibition on the book's publication and digital distribution. “Ensure that all versions of the book, whether hard copy or soft copy, and regardless of whether they are located in retail outlets or schools, are removed from public access,” the CJI said. In two weeks, a compliance report has been requested.

The court was incomplete. It also aimed to gather information about the members of the National Syllabi Board who authored the chapter on the judiciary and proposed that an investigation might be initiated. "Having a deeper probe would be desirable for us. It is necessary to identify the person responsible... People must be sacked! CJI Kant stated, “We will not close the case.”

Additionally, a notice was issued under the Contempt of Courts Act to both the School Education Department and NCERT director Dr. Dinesh Prasad Saklani. The court clarified, however, that its directives were not intended to suppress "legitimate criticism" of the judiciary.

Regarding the NCERT's clarification, the court stated that the wording in the book did not appear to be a "bonafide error". "It appears to us that there is a deliberate attempt to weaken institutional authority and degrade the dignity of the judiciary," it stated.

Initially, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, expressed apologies to the court. He guaranteed to the court that the two officials who drafted the chapter would never collaborate with UGC or any ministry.

In the meantime, senior attorney Abhishek Manu Singhvi suggested that the action could have been intentional. "The selectivity, my lord." "Corruption exists in other areas as well," Singhvi stated. Kapil Sibal, who was also in court, added his voice to the discussion, asking, "What about politicians and leaders?"

"The case will be heard again after four weeks.