APPENDIX
Appendix

Analysis of Political Science Textbooks of Classes VI-X

Social and Political Life- I- Class VI

The book, Social and Political Life -I for class VI, starts with the vision that, basically, gives knowledge about political institutions where is insufficient, as it only promotes rote learning. The focus in this book is on developing an understanding of the concepts given. Respecting learners’ experiences and involving their past experiences in the teaching-learning process is considered essential. Peer engagement, to develop reflective thinking and understanding is, also, an objective of the book.

The book has four sections: diversity, government, local government and administration, and livelihood. Each section has a minimum of two chapters, according to the theme of the unit.

The first lesson, ‘Understanding Diversity’, starts with a note which says that it is important to provide proper representation of women, not only in content, but in language, as well. (But, this note is not there in the English medium books. Does it imply that English is a gender free language? It, certainly, requires further enquiry). It shows that the book is adequately sensitive with regards, to the notion of equality, and, in that sense, it represents a human rights perspective. But, including such an understanding, in just one lesson, is insufficient, as it appears to be only a formality. It is important, that this perspective on gender equality, be included in a much wider form in the text book. A single chapter does not provide enough support to a human rights perspective.

The presentation of diversity, in the beginning of the chapter, is very effective. Here, three pictures have been shown and one blank box has been given. Students are asked to draw whatever they want to in that box. Then, there is a small story about Samir one and Samir two. The story is good, but it is, also, important to realize that such representation of diversity in a country such as India, creates more issues, than solutions. The story is far too long for the age level of the students. Even the researcher had problems in understanding and relating to the concept. The story has a positive idea, but the difference between the life style of the poor and the rich has been strengthened. There is a possibility of, further, strengthening the preconceived notions about the poor and the rich in the story, which could cause of more differences in the understanding of unity in diversity.

Another important issue appears, on page no 8, needs to be discussed. An activity asks students to list, at least, three different ways in which people, in India, perform the given tasks
such as different ways of praying, different ways in which people get married, different ways in which people dress up and so on. An example has been given on the basis of religion, region and so on. This is a good activity to make the learners write, but it can lead learners to feel that they are different. They may relate this to differences from caste, class, gender, religion and so on, which would create divisions, instead of unity. Although such examples help to understand diversity, yet they may, also, propagate differences on the basis of caste, class and gender, which must be avoided. A human rights perspective is, always, in favor of being equal, to being different. The argument against this is that, we need to celebrate diversity. But, we, also, need to take care of the extent to which can celebrate this diversity.

The entire chapter talks about diversity, in some way or other, and the last two paragraphs talk about unity in diversity. It could have been done in a different way, to give it a more human rights based perspective. For example, the title of the lesson could have been different and it could have dealt with the content in a way that promoted harmony and unity in diversity. This is a very crucial perspective, which needs to be taken into consideration.

On the same lines, chapter two, ‘Diversity and Discrimination’, focuses on the issues and challenges that exist because of diversity. In this regard, the content given is very compact, with information. The content is dealt with in relation to the previous chapter. The chapter does not introduce anything new. In the first chapter, the children learn about ‘Diversity’. In this chapter they learn about ‘Diversity and Discrimination’. Thus, there is a proper association with the previous chapter, to help them understand the new concepts. The concepts have been presented pretty well. We can see how the meaning of ‘difference’ is defined in content presentation. For instance, “There are eight major religions in the world. Every single one of them is practiced in India. We have more than 1600 languages that are people’s mother tongue and there are more than a hundred dance forms”. (class vi-p.13) We can see that this is helpful in understanding the meaning of ‘Difference’.

But, the chapter, also, deals with concepts, such as ‘prejudice’, while referring to the rural and urban people. The chapter defines ‘Prejudice’ as a tendency to judge other people negatively or see them as inferior. But, the textbook does not provide a proper note to the teachers to emphasis that prejudices (wrong thinking) are not always right. How can one assume that all teachers are wise and rational, in this context? There is a possibility that the teachers might take it in the wrong sense. He/she may erroneously believe that rural people are dirty, ignorant and superstitious and urban people are spoilt, lazy, and cannot be trusted.

The whole chapter is addressed through a concepts note, which includes adequate examples. The textbook, moderately, explains that inequality exists among communities, such as Muslims, SC/ST because they do not have the resources or money to meet their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. That is why there is inequality amongst these communities in
Moving ahead, the concept of ‘Discrimination’ has been described as, “Some people may experience both kinds of discrimination. They are poor and they belong to groups whose culture is not valued”. It refers to historical facts to create, among children, sensitiveness and awareness towards Dalit groups, who have been marginalized and discriminated from the mainstream, by the upper caste because of being born in an untouchable family. It talks about how Dalits were being treated unequally by certain dominant castes and class groups in society. The Dalit children had to sit separately from upper caste children. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and his brother were treated unequal and with a discriminatory attitude, by a station master. For a better understanding and clarity, the NCERT textbook has given pictures, which reflect this condition.

This particular chapter has used terms such as ‘Dalit’ to represent a section of society. But, it is inappropriate according to the dignity of human beings and human rights. The Indian constitution recognizes every person as equal. It means that every individual in the country, irrespective of caste, class, gender, religion and region are recognized as equal. But, the use of the derogatory term ‘Dalit’ in the textbook does not serve the purpose. The Indian constitution does not allow these type of terms to refer to any community or caste.

The pictures presented here are appealing, and, substantially, related to the text. Illustrations and pictures are given on each page, which seems logical. The pictures supplement the content. The construction of gender is investigated in this chapter. Schools are the center, where the gender construct gets embedded, through teaching. In schools, boys are told, right from the beginning that they are boys and that they should not weep or cry. A photo, has been given, which reflects how children are laughing and cracking jokes, when a boy weeps. For instance, in the textbook, an illustration has been given: “As babies or children when boys fall and hurt themselves, their parents and other family member often console them by saying ‘Don’t cry’. You are a boy. Boys are brave, they don’t cry.”

The focus of unity, diversity and discrimination shifts to the understanding of the government, in the next chapter titled, ‘What is Government.’? The chapter starts very innovatively. There are some headlines related to the Government and an activity is given, where the learners are asked to list out the activities that the government is expected to do. The activity could have been made better by asking the learners to look at newspapers and write some headlines related to the Government and discuss those headlines in class in order to consolidate a range of activities, undertaken by the government. Page 27 explains why a nation needs a government. It is well discussed. The next page, also, discusses what a government does. It appears more theoretical and does not provide space to understand democracy practically.
‘Practically’ here means to engage learners to enable them to understand the current situations, problems and issues related to the government. This is completely missing from the chapter. These aspects could have added to a human rights perspective, along with providing a balanced understanding of the government.

Some examples are, also, subject to revision, such as while discussing the laws and government, an example is used to explain the enforcement of laws, by the government. For instance, there is a law that says all persons driving a motor vehicle must have a license. Any person caught driving a vehicle, without a license, can either be jailed or fined a large sum of money. Instead of this example, some more appropriate examples could have been taken. Examples of child harassment and child rights could have been used. It would have served a double purpose, of not only making them understand the concept of laws, but would have created awareness about their own rights. Thus, examples need to be chosen, according to the age of the learners.

Further, the levels of government are described and some situations given. Learners have to label the situations as belonging either to the local level, the state level, or the central level. The three maps provided (pictorial representation of the three levels of government) are comprehensible.

After that, the decision making power of the government, in the form of laws and their enforcement, has been discussed. The little space in- between, where the learners are asked to think of any law or about things that the government does are beneficial, as they give the learners some scope to recapitulate and critically analyze. However, the section, ‘Types of Government’ seemed inadequate. Only two kinds of governments—democratic and monarchical—are discussed. The other kinds of governments such as oligarchy, commonwealth and so on, could have been touched upon. The democratic government of India is described in detail. Exemplifying monarchy by taking the names of Egypt, Nepal, Libya and so on, could have been done in a better way. The issue of universal adult franchise is adequately addressed. The women’s struggle movement has, also, been described. What remains to be discussed is about the people who make the government.

From a human rights perspective, the chapter does not, adequately, address the comparison between a monarchy and a democracy. The learners are not given a choice; they are fed with the positive side of democracy.

The next chapter, ‘Key elements of a democratic government’, also strengthens the idea given in the previous chapter. The chapter starts with a story in South Africa, under the apartheid rule. The learners are led to the issue of people’s participation in the functioning of the government.
Besides voting, the other ways of participating in the processes of a government are discussed such as rallies, strikes and so on. However, the aspect that freedom comes with responsibility could have been mentioned in passing. It must be emphasised that rallies, strikes and so on involve voluntary participation. Any inconvenience to the masses, is not justifiable. The violent ways that a democratic government uses to break a strike, at times, should, also, have been mentioned.

“Not all sections of people can actually participate.” This line is vague. It can demotivate people to participate and raise their voices against injustice. The responsibility of a citizen “to be alert and interested” is mentioned, which is appreciable.

After that, conflicts are taken into account. The conflict between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the ‘Cavery’ river is shown, with a little description. “Quite flows the Cauvery despite being at the center of a heated conflict between two states for the last few years.” This issue has been discussed adequately.

Page 36 talks about the participation of people in a democracy, through elections, very effectively, by noting that, “through voting in elections people elect leaders who represent them.” But, it is also important to discuss the actual scenario of the election, for instance, how common people are not interested in politics and only become active on the day of the election. In a nutshell, the election situation in India needs to be touched upon. It would enable the learners to create links about it in further classes.

Further, sentences, such as “In August 2005, when a particular government increased the money people had to pay for electricity, people expressed their disapproval very sharply” are very problematic. Why is there a tendency to defend the government which is the culprit many a times? What is the agenda behind this tendency? We all know, which party was ruling, then why do text books play hide and seek with such issues? Should the reality not be shown? Otherwise, one government might allow doing the same to another government. This, I feel, would be very unfair, from a human rights perspective.

Page 40 talks about gender inequality, “society does not value the girls and boy child equally and this is unjust. In this context, the government steps in to promote justice by providing special provisions that can enable girls to overcome injustice that they are subjected to. Thus, it is possible that fees for girls might be waived or lowered in government schools or colleges.” Sentences like these are very unclear. In the above sentence, the issue of gender inequality is being raised, but not dealt with properly in the content discussed after that.

Both chapters 3 and 4, keep the democratic government on a pedestal, whereas the name of the unit is ‘Government’, which means ‘rule’, which can be any form of government.
chapters present a comprehensive analysis of a democratic government and its functioning. However, what the learners can do, and how they can participate, has not been discussed.

The unit, ‘Local government and administration’, consists of three chapters called ‘Panchayati Raj’, ‘Rural Administration’, and ‘Urban Administration.’

The chapter, ‘Panchayati Raj’, starts with a scene from a gram sabha meeting, where everyone is rushing to reach the gram sabha, because the ‘Gram Sabha’ is holding its first meeting, after the elections. Everyone wanted to know what the new panchayat thought about the development of the village. The representation of the Gram Panchayat is quite good and explains how a Gram panchayat works. This is important, because, in a democracy, one must know the role of the Gram Panchayat. The only thing which needs to be questioned is the context. For example, how clearly will the urban students be able to relate to it. But, the argument that can be given is, that we do not experience everything which we read, but that does not mean that we should not know about such things.

Page 43, talk about the problem of water in ‘Hardas’ village. It ends with some suggestions and gives details about the development of a watershed. Another problem raised was finalizing the list of BPL families. It is appreciable that the functions of the Gram Panchayat have been discussed with relevant, simple examples for the learners’ age group.

What has been missing, so far, is the election process of the panchayat members. Election is the spirit of democracy and democratic institutions. It is necessary to discuss the process of this election and, then, shift to the functions of the gram panchayat.

The entire chapter only discusses some functions of the Gram panchayat with just the two examples quoted above. Other organizational areas are completely missing.

The chapter does not deal with a rights based approach to enable students to understand the function of the Gram Panchayat. The chapter should add that people have some rights, in relation to the Gram Panchayat.

Rural administration has been discussed in chapter 6 and shows the need of Rural Administration with reference to water, electricity, and land records. The chapter deals with two basic functions of rural administration, i.e. police work and maintenance of land records.

In the beginning, a scene has been shown, where two villagers are fighting, because one has encroached upon another’s land. The matter does not get resolved at the personal level and Mohan (the poor one) goes to the police. How difficult it was for Mohan to get his FIR registered, has been shown. Though the spirit of the story is to show the work of rural administration, it becomes the story of Mohan. It does not represent the police well, as it
shows that the police refused to write his FIR. Is this the function of the police, with regard to public? A better story could have been discussed, in which a more positive functioning of the rural administration can be shown, as the given story may give learners a unique impression about the police. They might, easily, think that the police are unhelpful. There is, thus, a need for a very selective and careful selection of stories. The objective should be to develop the learner’s faith in democratic processes.

Certain other things could have been discussed, regarding the jurisdiction of the police. The chapter says that every police station has an area under it and one has to go to that particular police station, in case of any mis-hap. But, sometimes, it happens that people, who live near the border face problems, as both police stations may refuse to write their complaints. Many such cases have been reported in the newspapers and over news channels.

Regarding the maintenance of land records, the functions of ‘Kanungo’ and ‘patwari’ have been discussed. They keep land records and make them available, whenever required by either a person or the government.

Under this section, the Hindu Succession Amendment Act, 2005, has been discussed, where women have an equal share in parental property. There is a picture, in the chapter, which represents this. Here, it is important to highlight that only laws cannot help to provide equal rights. There is a need for social acceptance, as well. There are still (mostly) women who do not aware of their rights. In some cases, their socialization does not even allow them to think that they have a right on their parental property, and if they do they, voluntarily group up, leave that property, because they have been conditioned to believe that they have no right over their paternal property. Such realities are missing from the chapter. Inclusion of all this could have given this chapter a more human rights perspective.

Overall, the chapter does not, appropriately, deal with rural administration. Only two things have been discussed, in this regard: the police and maintenance of land records. It presents a very narrow view of rural administration. If not the details, at least, some more functions could have been discussed, such as developing facilities, school education and so on. Many other concerns, such as roads, lights, cleanliness and protection from disease, have not been touched upon.

Though the chapter effectively deals with a human rights perspective, some issues are completely missing, such as the problems faced by women in villages, and male domination in social, political and economic structure. Other issues, related to caste, have, also, been neglected.

Similarly, in the next chapter, urban administration has been discussed. Like the pervious chapter, this chapter, too, has talked about urban administration and begins by showing a city
with crowded markets, many buses and cars, water and electricity, and traffic control. Who is responsible for running all this? Who takes decisions and who does this work? This chapter tries to answer these questions.

The writing style makes this chapter very interesting and student friendly. It starts from a street, where children are playing cricket and, suddenly the ball hits the street light and the light breaks. All of them go back home and tell the entire story to the mother of one of the children. The mother tells them to go to ‘Yasmin Khala’, (she had worked in the municipal corporation). She explains that the lights, parks, electricity, water, cleaning of the street and so on, are under the purview of the MCD. She tells them how the municipality budget is prepared and how a counselor gets money.

The above explanation and description, about the functioning of the municipality, is good, but the composition of a municipality could have been discussed, as well. It could have pointed out that we should not destroy national property. This message could have been, easily, given through the street example.

The ‘Gangabai’ example is very appropriate. She fights for the cleanliness in her locality. But, one question needs to be asked here. Why does one have to fight for everything? Where is the spirit of democracy, then? In the previous chapter as well, Mohan has extensively struggle just to file a complaint, at the police station. Such examples weaken the spirit and faith in democracy. One should fight for his/her rights, but, all the examples in the text books are on the same lines, which is a matter of concern.

Again, the main and very important work of the municipal corporation, ‘education’, has been ignored. Example of cleanliness and other issues, within the school, have not been included, which are important as learners can relate these to their lives.

At the end of the chapter, three levels of panchayat have been described, very briefly, but only names of the three levels of panchayat, have been given and nothing else. It should have been elaborated upon. Here, it could be argued about how much content should be given to a sixth class student and how they would write about it in the examinations. But, it can also be counter argued that teaching in classes and text book writing is not done only from the examination point of view. Content wise, the chapter does not appear to have much strength, but it did raise some issues from a human rights perspective.

Further, the textbook consists of two more chapters regarding rural and urban livelihood. The chapter dealing with livelihood in the rural area, starts with a picture, in which people are doing different kind of work. With reference to this picture, the students have been asked to discuss the work the people are doing in the picture on page 67, to help students understand rural livelihood.
The entire chapter has been based on some short case studies: ‘Tulsi’, ‘Shekhar’, ‘Aruna’ and ‘Paarivelan.’ In the beginning, a discussion starts about Kalpattu village, where different kinds of occupations have been discussed. It includes teaching, shops, farming, hired farmers and so on.

The first case study is of ‘Tulsi’, who works in the ‘Ramalingam’s field, for almost 8 hours, every day. She is a hired farmer. They help in different chores that take place in the field. The main concern here is employment. ‘Tulsi’ said that she did this work only for 7 to 8 months in a year, the rest of the time she did some other work, such as making ‘Beeda’ and so on. Her husband, also, works, as a laborer, in Ramalingam’s field. Tulsi’s story highlights many issues of rural livelihood. For instance, they do not get work throughout the year and they get very few wages for the hard work they do. If someone borrows money from the landlord, they are unable to pay back and, hence, have to work for the landlord, for their entire lives. ‘Tulsi’ is, also, struggling with the same situation. She had borrowed money from ‘Ramlingam’, when her daughter fell ill. Discussing such stories will definitely sensitize learners about the issues related to rural life.

In her story, some other issues have also been highlighted, such as bringing water and wood from far away. This work is assigned only to women. Gender inequality has, thus, been shown in the story.

‘Shekar’ is a farmer and has a very small piece of land. But, the production of his land is not sufficient for him and his family. He has, also borrowed money to buy seeds and fertilizers. He promised the agent that he would sell his rice only to them at a cheaper rate, than the actual rate in the market. That is how he has to work outside to feed his family. ‘Shekhar’ has a cow too, and sells her milk to a diary. The chapter shows deep concerns, with simple examples, regarding economic inequalities in rural areas.

The chapter has talked about the livelihood of the coastal areas in the story of ‘Aruna’ and ‘Paarivelan’. Here, an example of a poor family has been taken. They do not even have their own boat or net and they are dependent on others. It has been shown how different people buy fish for different purposes. Some buy it for their homes and some for the shops they have in the cities. Here, too, fishermen are unemployed, when the monsoon comes and the fish breed.

The only concerns, which need to be highlighted, is why have the examples been taken mostly from poor families? The rich or middle class examples that have been taken, show them as exploiters. This is an incorrect representation of village life.

Some government initiatives should have been included. The chapter is only above laborers which may give a biased or an incomplete picture of village life and its livelihood.
Like the previous chapter, the chapter, ‘Urban Livelihood’, starts with a picture of a city, where people have been shown doing different kinds of work for their livelihood. The chapter starts with the story of someone coming to her aunt’s house in the city and going to visit the market. While going to the market, she observes many people doing different work such as the barber, the vegetable seller, cobbler and so on. In the market, she observes many shops, big and small. A story of a ‘Rikshawala’ has been given in the chapter, which shows of the basic needs of human beings, being violated. This story shows the struggle of a person, who earns his bread and butter for his family, in his native village.

There is a law that one cannot work on the road side and cannot become a street vendor, such as a vegetable seller. But, we have to look at this, as a source of their livelihood and thus, their fundamental rights to earn a living. The text book does favour this, but more stress should have been given. People, living on the road side, is a bitter reality, which has not been mentioned here. Their living on the roads is directly related to their income. Whose failure is this, needs to be questioned in the text book. Is only stating enough? The chapter has talked about middle class people who own shops and homes.

In the service section, the private sectors have, mostly, been discussed, such as call centers and so on. How call centers fulfill the present need has been discussed, but not their future impact. People speak working English in call centers, which leads to the implication, that schools want their students to just speak good English, rather than possess any knowledge. Many good, talented students start work after 12 class and stop their regular studies, which is neither favorable for them or the nation. Call centers attract young minds and, after a certain period of time, they force them to leave their jobs, as these call centers need fresh minds. If we argue that this sector is good, then the question on the government school system, is why do they not train students in English? Such issues are important for discussion, which have been ignored. The chapter merely appears to present what has been being observed in cities. But, how this will help in developing the critical thinking in learners, which is one of the most important objectives of social science from a human rights perspective, has been ignored.

Social and Political Life II- Class VII

The vision of the book is to make learners aware of the current social, political and economic issues. The objective is to develop the learners’ ability to, critically, understand and analyse social and political issues, in keeping with the tenets of the Indian constitution. It would help learners to assimilate the importance of the values enshrined in the constitution. Over all, it would help learners to understand the notion of equality, in Indian Democracy. Efforts have
been made to make the learners understand gender discrimination, market and other related social issues, rationally.

The title of the first chapter is, ‘Equality’, which has been used as an umbrella term. It is well known that the concept of equality, enshrined in the constitution of India, has been achieved practicality only in a limited way. On the first page there the story of Kanta has been given, where Kanta and her boss are standing in a queue, in order to exercise their vote in the elections. Here, due to universal adult franchise, both Kanata and her boss are equal But, at home, the entire situation is the opposite. The right to a clean environment and better hygienic conditions are not guaranteed by the constitution and one is considered directly proportional to one’s economic status. At the end of Kanta’s story, she is shown standing in a queue, in the OPD of a government hospital, to consult a doctor for her daughter.

Besides, matrimonial advertisements have been shown on page 7, breaking the myth that educated persons have no caste bias. The use of jargons in these advertisements are ambiguous for the children to understand. The quotation from ‘Juthan’, the autobiography of Om Prakash Valmiki, elaborates upon the discrimination Mr. Valmiki faced, from his teachers and peers, during his school days. But, what is missing is the caste based discrimination, which, still exists. Thus, a question should have been framed here asking students, if they had ever faced such situations or had seen it happening around them?

On page 9, three pictures of the film ‘Deewar’ (1978) show a boy polishing shoes, and refusing to take the money thrown at him. Here, the concept of a respectful life has been implied. But, another dimension of child labour could have been added to these pictures simultaneously, to reflect children’s human rights. Does this picture not promote child labour? On page 10, a picture has been shown, in which different people have been portrayed as scaffolding the parliament, but the flavor of unity in diversity has not been added to the same. The next paragraph says that, in India, the Right to Equality has been implemented in two ways: firstly by law, such as equality and, secondly, by government programmes, such as the mid- day meal scheme. But, universalization of the mid- day meal scheme happened only after the supreme court’s intervention. But, the quality of the mid- day meal has not been mentioned. On page 12, B.R. Ambedkar has been quoted (in a box), saying that self-respect is important for every human being.

At the end of the chapter, issues related to other nations have been mentioned. The civil rights movement in the USA which brought the Afro- American people some rights, has been discussed here. However, the entire chapter is silent on economic inequality.

The second chapter, suddenly, introduces the learners to the state government, which is quite unexpected. The chapter title, ‘State Government’ and the content, which deals with issues of
health services, are not related to each other. Health services are taken care of by the respective state governments, but the title ‘state government’ gives the impression that the chapter is about the functioning of the three organs of the state government: state legislature, state executive and state judiciary.

Page 20 of the chapter contains a plethora of information, regarding the state of the health services in India. However, considering the age group of the students to whom this information has been provided, it appears too tough. Moreover, the way in which the content has been narrated does not appear to be interesting for students.

Through the case of Hakim Sheikh, the chapter explains the right to health care, as a part of the fundamental right to life, enshrined in the constitution. However, the chapter is silent on the right of an individual to approach courts in enforcing their rights, in case of any violation.

The chapter provides the model of Kerala and Costa Rica, as a solution for the current state of poor health care services in the country. It fails to acknowledge the present condition of the health care service in Kerala. Further instead of comparing the conditions in Costa Rica, unknown to students of 7th standard, it would have been better to compare it to the progress achieved by Kerala in the health and education sector, as this has been widely appreciated as the Kerala model of development, for other states.

It is pertinent to note that the picture provided in the chapter has no relevance to the issues dealt with. It would have been better, if the pictures had been related to health care and thus, been easy for students to understand.

The first exercise provided in this chapter cannot be comprehended by the students, as they are required to answer a question, for which no discussion has been provided.

‘How the State Government Works’, which is the third chapter, is in continuation of the second chapter and talks about how the state government works. But, there is a striking dichotomy between the title of the chapter and the content. Though the chapter heading is ‘How the State Government works’, the chapter gives more importance to the way in which a legislature is elected and to the proceedings of the legislative assembly. There is a difference between the process by which the government is elected and the way in which a government works.

The pictorial description of a story, given in the first part of the chapter, is a repetition of the first chapter. It has tried to discuss the state government, through health issues. There is no second opinion that, in a country like India, where the majority of the population is poor and not in a position to avail of basic health facilities, the attempt to explain how the state
government works, through health issues, seems inadequate. The authors need to rework this part.

On page 32, it has been stated that “A political party, whose MLA’s have more than half the number of constituencies in a state, can be said to be in a majority.” This statement has failed to take note of the prevailing political conditions in the country, where most of the states are governed by coalition parties. Therefore, it would have been better, if the chapter had taken care of the present coalition politics, wherein governments are formed, not by a single political party, but by a coalition of different parties, either during pre-election or post-election.

The chapter has tried to give an impression that, during the discussion in the assembly only MLA’s can express their opinions on the subject, under discussion. However, such a notion is totally incorrect. During discussion, only selected members of the various political parties are entitled to express their views, within the timeslot allotted to them. Further, the book says that any decision taken by the chief minister and the ministers has to be approved by the legislature. This is against the basic principles of one state, where powers are distributed between the 3 organs of the government. These pillars of the state are independent of each other. Statements, such as ‘the decisions are taken by the ministers need to be approved by the legislature’, are subject to analysis.

Overall, the attempt, in this chapter, to explain the working of the state government has totally misfired, because of the excessive information and the failure of the authors to give proper examples to explain the various workings of the government.

The next chapter, ‘Growing up as Boys and Girls’, provides a completely, different perspective, from the last few chapters. It has tried to represent the gender biases that we observe in our surroundings every day, in all fields, such as social, cultural and economic. Some specific behavior, in which boys and girls are enculturated, have been discussed and they are expected to behave accordingly. Some questions, in the beginning of the chapter have been raised, such as, is the growing up of boys and girls the same across the societies or different, how do responsibilities at an early age prepare them for their future role as men and women, why is work done by women considered less important and more valuable than men’s work and so on. The chapter has tried to explain the possible answers to these questions, which are quite important. As long as the equality of women and men is society’s concern, such questions give it a human rights perspective.

Very sensitive and concerned issues have been raised on page 45, under the heading, ‘Growing up in Samoa Islands’. Issues such as out of school children, doing household work i.e. taking care of younger ones, bringing water and so on have been raised. Till the age of
14, children (both boys and girls) do work at home and after that age they do work outside as well, such as fishing and so on. But, work outside is given more to the boys and girls only help them to complete that work.

Further, the chapter gives the example of Madhya Pradesh in the 1960’s and shows how different the life of a boy and a girl are and how their schooling is different. The fear of the girls, while crossing the road, has been highlighted; in girls’ schools the playground is surrounded by rooms, so that girls can play without any fear and without external intervention.

These examples have been taken to show that boys and girls grow differently, in different socio-cultural settings. But, examples from the urban area have not been included. The example taken from Madhya Pradesh, in 1960, is quite old. Huge changes have taken place since 1960, thus, the example is a little out dated. Some examples that show how women have got education and changed the scenario, and, challenging the existing biased practices, should be presented in the text book.

A story, ‘My mother does not work’, has tried to prove that women do lots of work at home, therefore, one cannot say that they are not working. The story tries to establish, that women working at home, should be given due importance. But, one should keep in mind that if we start over appreciating the women’s working at home, they would not be motivated to work outside. The need has been to show both how men and women can work at both places. Showing that men cannot work at home, and proving this with examples, strengthens the pre-conceived notions that men cannot work at home. We need to avoid such examples.

Along with the given story, something else could have been shown, such as men working at home, to prove that men are equally compatible to do house work. It should have raised the issues of gender bias, in a male dominated society.

The chapter has raised other concerns in the life of domestic workers, such as dignity and a respectful life. People, mostly women and children, do lots of work as domestic workers, on minimal wages. The wages they earn are in, sufficient and house owners do not treat them with respect. There is silent anger in such workers, as they have no other option, but to accept such behavior, in order to feed their families.

Those women, who work outside, have to work at home, as well, which is a double burden. The chapter has talked about how ‘Anganwadi’ has given space to women for their development and space to work outside.

At the end of the chapter, a picture of a woman has been given, showing her holding many things, indicating that women have to do so much work, without being acknowledged for it.
The chapter, again, seems to only highlight such problems, through pessimistic examples. Some optimistic examples such as that of ‘Kalpana Chawala’ could have been included, to motivate girl students.

Chapter Five, ‘Women Change the World’, is in continuation of the last chapter. In the last chapter, it has been shown how work, done by women and men, is not considered equal. This chapter deals more with how some occupations are considered for men and some for women. The chapter deals with how women’s struggle for equality and education have played a major role in this development. How education is the back bone of all change and development that has taken place, has been discussed also.

An activity has been given on page 55, which tries to motivate students to think critically. In this activity, there are some black squares, in which students are supposed to draw pictures of a farmer, mill worker, nurse, scientist, a pilot and a teacher. It is assumed that most of the students will draw a female nurse and teacher; other options may have both genders. Certain relevant questions have been asked in this regard such as why is a female portrayed as a nurse and a teacher? Why are there fewer pictures of females? This is a very good process to engage learners with the lesson.

The chapter has talked about how biased and stereotypical thinking does not allow girls to do work, which a boy is allowed to do. Raising such questions gives the content a more human rights perspective.

A green colored paragraph, on page 57, gives the true story of Laxmi Lakra, from Jharkhand, who has broken the stereotype the women are not able to run a train. She joined the northern railways as an engine driver, and stated that she liked the challenges of doing work regarded as difficult for women.

Certain biases prevail in our society for men as well, such as ‘men do not cry’. These biases have been associated with women, as they may indicate that ‘women cry.’ Consequently, certain things are seen as different for boys and girls.

The heading, ‘Learning for change’, is very motivating, implying that education is a must for change. To prove this, a story of ‘Rassundari’ has been given, on page 59. The story relates how ‘Rassundari’ learned to read and write in an era, when women were not entitled to education. The story is motivating for women, showing that if one has will power, one can do anything.

The story of, ‘Padita Ramabai’, has been discussed on page 59. ‘Ramabai’ had never been to school, but worked a lot for women’s education. This is, again, an optimistic example, which motivates women’s education.
Another motivating story is about ‘RokeyaSakhawatHossain’ and her dreams about ‘Ladyland’. She dreamt about a land, where women did research to control rain, drone sky cars and so on. In an age, where women are given only household work, Rokeya’s dream is motivating for women. Later, she started a school for girls in Kolkata, and, to this day, the school is functioning.

Inclusion of such stories helps to develop a positive and optimistic attitude and can help to overcome the challenges of our contemporary time. These stories are highly inspirational and raise endless questions for the present, as well as the past.

The present scenario has been presented on page 61, showing some data of school going children (boys and girls) in the years 1961 and 2003. It shows that, even now, the number of educated women is far less than men, and this difference is almost 20%. The difference gets wider, if we base it on the caste system. In total, the number of girl drop outs is higher in SC/STs, and, is much higher among the Indian Muslim population. Thus, relevant issues have been raised in the book.

Various causes, to make things more authentic, have been discussed. These include distance to the school, lack of basic facilities, opposition of family members, poverty and so on.

Further, the chapter has talked about how women’s movements, developed a platform for women’s development, and their struggle to raise their voice for their rights.

In this regard, campaigning has been shown as a very powerful tool, as, can it help to constitute certain laws, such as, the law against physical and mental violence, (2006), sexual harassment at the work place (1997) and the law against dowry (1980). This is quite motivating, but there is a picture showing a woman sitting on the stairs of the Supreme Court, surrounded by files, showing that only laws will not be able to stop crime against women, as awareness is more important.

Overall, the chapter is based on a human rights perspective and has good, motivating content, regarding the establishment of gender equality.

Chapter six, ‘Understanding Media’, tries to establish a link between communication and technology and business tycoons. It, also, tries to develop an understanding of the role of the media. Communication has played a major role to develop a universal society, where boundaries have blurred and made people come closer. The chapter talks of how media has helped to develop an understanding regarding equality, and brotherhood, as these are our fundamental rights. It discusses the negative and positive aspects of the media.
Countless people, in India, are living below the poverty line. This situation does not prevail just in India, but across the world, too. These people are unaware of the different means of communication. The chapter does not talk about how these people can, also, make use of the media and is, also, silent about how a huge gap exists between the accessibility and non-accessibility of the media.

In the past, pigeons were used as a means of communication. If an announcement had to be made, then drums were, beaten on to draw the attention of people, collect them and then make the announcements. Later, radio became a means of communication, and later toward by television. Today, we have several means of communication, through which one can get information, not only of the earth, but, also, of the universe. This is how media has developed over time. But, this chapter does not talk about the past means of communication. Therefore, students will be unaware of the history of communication. There is, thus, a need to bridge the gap between the way media was used in the past and how it is being used in the present, in this chapter.

A man is a social being and society provides him space to know many things. Within the social structure, he tries to solve the problems he faces. That is how human beings have been associated with society, for centuries. In villages, people sit on the “Chopal”, and other people are made aware about various incidents that have taken place in the village. There are many other means of communication. They may not be official, but they do play a major role in society. However, all these means of communication have not been included in the chapter.

The chapter has pictures showing a person working on a laptop, a well-dressed person talking on the phone, playing a guitar, the PVR mall, a person working with a camera, a news channel, a family watching TV and so on. These pictures depict the social and economic life of the upper and middle class. Poor people have not been, included, clearly representing a middle class tendency, by ignoring the reality of poor communities. It has nowhere been shown that poor people are sitting in a shelter, watching TV with their families. According to a human rights perspective, this represents a sense of inequality.

We all are surrounded by advertisements. We watch them on TV, hear them over the radio, observe them on the road and read them in newspapers and magazines. Chapter seven, ‘Understanding Advertising’, helps learners to understand advertisements, the brand and value of things available in the market, and the social values of the brand. How human emotions are used in advertisements has, also, been discussed, in the chapter.

How advertisements are made has been discussed. The chapter has tried to develop a relationship between democracy and advertisements, where rich people have been shown as being associated with advertisements.
The government advertisement, given at the end, makes students aware of governmental policies. The chapter has focused on rich people, because a poor person does not go to a big mall and does not travel in costly cars. Therefore, the notion of advertisements has been limited to only the rich society, which is unfair.

It is a fact that what we see, may be different in reality. The chapter, rarely, deals with this understanding advertisement. What has been shown in the advertisement may be different from what can be seen in reality. There is an absence of critical understanding about advertisements, but, it is essential to know the reality behind the projection of such advertisements.

Advertisements affect a child’s mind. Children want to have things shown in the advertisements, without realising about their effects. Every now and then, children do make demands on their parents to buy things, which they have watched on TV, which is not a good practice. The implication of this can be seen in schools, where students, from different socio economic backgrounds, come and share things. Imagine the plight of a poor child in such a school, whose parents do not have enough money to fulfill his/her wishes. Negativity will develop in such a child. The chapter should have incorporated what we should learn from advertisements and what we should not.

It is a fact that advertisements have influenced our society in different ways. It is a time, when a farmer chooses seeds on the basis of different advertisements. What kind of clothes one will wear are decided by prominent brands. The kind of spices used in the kitchen, the pressure cooker brand, the brand of oil, the brand of flour, are all decided by advertisements. Even education is decided by advertisements. In short, our smallest and biggest needs are being decided by advertisements, and is impacting a change in our daily lives. How advertisements influence social life, should have been discussed.

The economic point of view of advertisements is evident, as they are out of reach of the poor who can not avail of the product advertised. This would lead society towards inequality, and is unfavorable for the development of any nation. This kind of social inequality is missing in the text book, which is conducive to a human rights perspective.

The next chapter, ‘The Market Around Us’, suddenly, shifts focus from diversity, to the market around us. It deals with understanding the market and helps learners to understand how goods are sold, how they reach the buyer, who these buyers are, who the sellers are and what sort of problems they face.

The first two pages of the chapter are full of colorful pictures of different types of markets around us. The chapter, in short, talks about weekly markets, shops in the neighborhood and shopping complexes and malls. A weekly market is shown, where only the poor section of
society go. This is not true. There are weekly markets where rich people go shopping, as well. Who does the purchasing and where is not important. What is important is how the book is representing these markets and for whom.

The importance of neighborhood shops has been shown, because of their 24 x 7 availability. It shows that service class people buy things from such shops and pay the bills in the beginning of the month, as they get their salaries at that time.

Shopping complex and malls are only for the rich people, as they sell only branded products, from clothes to furniture.

These three examples, clearly, show that our society has huge economic inequalities. Many people do not go to these three markets. Instead, life depends on begging for clothes, food and everything else.

The chapter helps learners to understand how the things they buy from shops and from weekly markets, reach those shops. It explains that the middle men are the traders. The wholesale trader first buys goods in large quantities and these are, then, sold to other traders. These wholesale markets are available in most cities; for example in Delhi they are at Azadpur, Daryaganj, Keshopur and so on.

The chapter has talked about markets which are invisible, for instance, we can buy a car from a car showroom, but there are many other people working in the production of a car. The chapter has touched upon internet shopping, as well.

The chapter seems to give only certain information. There is no critical thinking involved. At some places, a few questions have been asked, most are quite straight forward and are not reflective. A humane perspective of the market, for instance how the market influences people’s lives, is completely missing in the chapter.

Very interestingly, chapter eight, ‘A Shirt in the Market’, narrates the story of a shirt. It talks about the journey involved in the making of a shirt, beautifully. In this story, the chapter makes the students understand that, in this process, equal benefits are not available to all the people involved, in the making of a shirt. This difference is so high, that it leads to division between the poor and rich in society.

A cotton farmer, from Kurnool, has been discussed in the chapter. The kind of exploitation she faces after 6 months of hard work hardly earns her Rs 3000, because she has made a deal with the ‘Sahukar’, that she will sell her cotton only to him.

The Erode market of Tamil Nadu has been discussed. Cloth made by the village weavers is brought here for sale. Around the market, there are offices of cloth merchants, who buy this
cloth. Other traders, from many south Indian towns, come and purchase cloth in this market. It tries to explain that, initially, clothes get collected in a super market and, then, get distributed in small markets and, finally, go to shops and so on. It shows how this market exploits a person, working in the fields.

However, the dependence on the merchants, for both the raw material and markets, means that the merchants have a lot of power. They give orders, as to what has to be made and they pay a very low price for the manufacture of the cloth. The arrangement between the weavers and merchants is an example where the merchant supplies the raw material and receives the finished product. This system is prevalent in the weaving industry, in most regions of India.

Before the shirts enter the market, they are sent to the garment factory, where the buttoning, threading of the shirt is done. But, the dichotomy is that people working in such places can be asked to leave their jobs at any time without asking for any reason. Thus, uncertainty of their jobs is a fear these workers live with all the time. Finally, it has been shown, how a shirt, with an actual value is 600, is sold in the market for Rs 1200. Thus, the highest profit, in this process, goes to the business man.

It is clear that the rich and powerful earn the maximum from the market. These are people who have money and own factories, large shops, large land holdings and so on. The poor section of society has to depend on the rich and the powerful for various things. The farmers have to depend on loans, raw material and marketing of their goods and, most often, workers at the garment factories for employment. Because of this dependency, the poor are exploited. The chapter suggests, that forming cooperatives of producers and ensuring that laws are followed strictly, can bring about some change.

The chapter talks about inequality in the market, which does not give it a human rights based perspective. It raises several question with regard to the state and its’ polices.

Chapter 10, ‘Struggle for Equality’, again shifts to social equality. The title of the chapter indicates that different types of equality, enshrined in the constitution of India, has not been implemented. This is the last chapter of the book and, therefore, a relationship with previous chapters has been drawn. Throughout this chapter, the struggle for equality is the core of the content. It should have been clearly mentioned here that such struggles must be within the orbit of the law and no one should transgress their family limits to attain equality. Apropos the construction of ‘Tawa dam’ in Madhya Pradesh and the subsequent reservoir, where the displaced, local people started to fish for their subsistence. But, they faced cut throat competition from contractors, who hired mercenaries, to bully the local people. In response to this, the local people formed the ‘Tawa Matsya Sangh’ (Tawa fisheries federation). Here, the displacement of people, due to the construction of the dam, is a major curtailment of the local
people’s human rights and should have been given due coverage. In a box, there are a few questions related to the ‘Tawa’ project, but could have included other questions, such as if the government knew about the displaced people’s condition why did it take such actions. This means that elected governments are, sometimes, insensitive to the demands of deprived people. However, the issue of providing electricity and potable water, by constructing a dam by the government, for the urban area, has been overplayed.

On page 120, there is a poem in the Hindi medium book, ‘Janane Ka haq’ (right to information), which advocates the right to information. But, again, nothing has been mentioned which gives children information regarding the right to information. In the end, there is a sub-heading, ‘Constitution of India: a Living Document’. Paradoxically, nothing related to the sub-heading has been mentioned in the subsequent paragraph. The whole chapter is based on the struggle for equality, but nothing regarding Naxalism has been mentioned, although violation of human rights has reached its zenith in the Naxal affected areas. But, this chapter seems to have, intentionally, ignored this.

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**Social and Political Life- III- Class VIII**

This book focuses on the rule of law and social justice. The vision of the book is to make the learners know and understand law, the rule of law, and why only laws are not sufficient. Thus, people have to struggle for their rights. The Indian constitution, secularism, parliament, judiciary, marginalized community and so on have been extensively discussed, in the book. The book provides a holistic understanding about the political processes and social issues, with relevant examples.

Chapter one, ‘The Indian Constitution’, provides an understanding about the constitution. It explains the rules and regulations of the government system of different nations, with the examples of football, cricket and hockey matches. It tries to discuss the constitution with reference to democracy, communism and capitalism. Though, it is quite tough to understand such difficult concepts, yet the chapter effectively deals with it.

Further, the chapter explains how the constitution restricts monarchy. These concepts have been made clearer with the help of a comic story, to develop interest in the learners. The chapter has, also, talked about the citizens’ fundamental rights, but there is no mention of human rights. This is important because, whenever we talk about rights, “human” rights come before citizens rights. But, this aspect has been ignored. The chapter explains the importance of the constitution, with the help of elaborate pictures, to facilitate a better understanding for
the learners. It, also, refers to ideals of the constitution. But, what it mean by this, has not been discussed.

Further, the chapter talks about the characteristics of the constitution. Firstly, federalism has been discussed. But, division of power has been discussed only between the center and the state. A very important part of the Panchayti Raj system (73\textsuperscript{rd} amendment), has been completely ignored. After this, the chapter talks about the Parliamentary system. Here, it tries to explain the parliamentary system, with the example of the equality between men and women. It is always important to talk about the third sex, whenever we talk about the notion of gender equality. According to a human rights perspective, the system needs to acknowledge eunuchs, as human beings, and should acknowledge their existence as the third gender.

Voting has been discussed with some pictures, in which casting of votes has been shown. But, very unfortunately, these pictures only include men. Why has the book not chosen a picture in which women are shown casting their votes? This is a matter of serious concern, according to a human rights perspective, to provide an egalitarian perspective, which is lacking in the book.

Further, the book talks about the fundamental rights given in our constitution. Here, the researcher felt that there was a need to regularly update the books. As the right to education, which is now a fundamental right, has not been discussed here, even though the book was published before 2009. But, this fundamental right is quite significant, and, therefore, revising school books, periodically, is necessary. If a few changes are made, this chapter can be very relevant for students, in developing an understanding about our constitution and its importance.

The chapter, ‘Understanding Secularism’, discusses another value of the Constitution, i.e. ‘secularism’. In the beginning, a comparison has been shown between the religions of the western nations and the religions in India. Only three religions have been mentioned but, we have more religions than just Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. The book should have discussed many more religions in India, than just these three. One should remember ‘Kanchalallaiah’ and his pain regarding the dominant religion. The idea is not to merely criticize any religion, but is a matter of accepting and rejecting the identity of certain people, in the nation.

Page 22 states an example to distinguish between a helmet and ‘Pagdi’, with reference to religion. It is important to think how students would be able to make sense out of it. Religion, itself, is a complex phenomenon. Such examples will not help lead students in the right
direction, regarding law and religion. Considering secularism is very important for the nation, one needs to revisit such examples. This could lead to another debate, of why are women not supposed to wear a helmet, while driving. Is there any specific reason behind this or has it been mentioned just like that? These are very serious concerns which need to be dealt with effectively and carefully, though better examples, to explain this concept.

The chapter provides a comparative perspective between America and India, with reference to secularism. It has talked about the need to look at secularism, in a more progressive manner. The chapter talks about the strengths of secularism in India.

Further, the need for a parliament in a democracy has been discussed in the next chapter ‘Why do we need a Parliament’? Human rights have been seen in a political science discourse. But, not how Human Rights have been perceived from a different perspective. It is important to have political science, geography, history and other perspectives in social science, but it is, also, quite important to incorporate a human rights perspective, as, social science, by and large, deals with human beings.

The title of the chapter, “Why Do we Need Parliament”, is appropriate because the word “we” represents all Indians, without any discrimination. It gives the feeling of an egalitarian understanding of our society. The parliament represents all castes, classes and gender, which is appropriate from a human rights perspective.

In the beginning of the chapter, a note has been given to the teacher, saying that the teacher should take special care about the concept of parliamentary democracy, the functions of democracy, and the functions of parliament. But it does not talk about how rights and, especially, human rights have their importance in a parliamentary democracy. Thus, the basic message about democracy is incomplete. In many places, gender inequality has been discussed, which is quite important for sensitizing students.

The chapter talks about the struggle for independence, but does not include many people who belong to a different class, community and so on. It, somehow, does not appropriately talk about women’s contribution in this regard.

On page 31, a picture of an old man has been shown, sitting near a poster. The poster explains how to cast a vote, using the voting machine. There could have been a picture of a woman, instead of the old man. It would have given an opportunity to the learners to realize that old women, also, have the right to vote. The given picture may strengthen the status quo in some parts of our society, which, surely, is against a human rights perspective.
Certain sentences, in the chapter, show male domination, for instance: “pratayek nirvachan ksheytra se ek vayakti ko sansad bheja jayga”, “bharat ka Pradhan mantri.” Though a woman can be member of parliament and a Prime minister, such lines do not indicate gender sensitivity and need to be avoided.

If one looks at the content of the chapter, several problems emerge. The chapter should have focused on what is parliament, how it works and how it gets affected by different factors, social, political or economic. But, it does not talk about this. It has sub headings such as, “electing national government”. Under this, it has talked about the number of seats in parliament. It should have come under the sub-heading of constituting or structuring parliament. Only using an attractive heading or subheading will not solve the purpose. The need is to discuss things objectively, or even subjectively; to provide an appropriate understanding to the learner, instead of giving the learner a vague understanding. In this chapter, the functions of ‘Lok sabha’ and ‘Rajya sabha’ have been discussed, very ambiguously.

When these books began to be used in schools, many women were holding very responsible positions in the Lok sabha, Rajya Sabha and in the opposition, as well. But, nothing has been mentioned with regard to this. Discussing this will provide better opportunities for learners to understand women’s participation in governance. This kind of inclusion will, also, take care of a human rights perspective.

Women’s reservation, in parliament, has not been discussed, which is necessary. The question is, why has this been ignored?

The functional dimension of parliament has been ignored. It has been accepted that parliament should take decisions, which are in favor of developing human beings, but certain things associated with this, such as Right to Food, Women’s reservation bill and ‘Lokpal’ are still bushed under the carpet and parliament appears very passive in this regard.

Human rights do not have a strong legal support. In such a situation, it becomes very important that the ethical and moral aspects, which work largely within human rights, must be discussed, which has been ignored in the chapter.

The next chapter, ‘Understanding Laws’, talks about laws to develop an egalitarian society. There is a lack of correlation between the two chapters, in this unit. Neither does the last
chapter (why do we need a parliament) nor does this chapter talk clearly about the law-making process.

The chapter explains an incident where a government employee breaks the rules and, then, has to save himself. This particular example can be understood in two ways. First, it may appear that all government employees do not follow rules and exploit the public. Secondly, how one can save oneself, even after committing a crime. Sharing such things are important, but must be discussed positively. Such examples put a question mark on the human dignity of government employees and to an entire system of a particular field of work. This is inappropriate according to a human rights perspective. Thus, while choosing examples for the text book, it is crucial to consider the importance of different dimensions, such as language, space, regions and so on.

In the beginning of the chapter, the rule of law has been explained, with certain examples taken from the British period, such as the ‘Rolate Act’ and other Acts, which rejected the equality of people before the law. Quoting such examples proves the unfairness of British rule. What can be included here is whether the entire situation has changed or has it remained the same. We know that the difference between both the poor and rich, in India, is huge. In such a situation, it is important to discuss the rule of law, particularly in the context of economic inequality. To what extent are rights and laws available to all people, without discrimination, needs to be looked at.

To some extent, the importance of human rights can be discussed in the chapter, especially, where it talks about the exploitation of the rights of Indians in ‘Jaliawala’ and the ‘Rolate Act’. These two incidents could be a good foundation to make learners understand human rights and their importance.

The chapter says that people can join strikes and other kinds of protests against unconstitutional laws that are not in favor of human beings. But, the reality is something else. The government has suppressed many such movements. Why has such a reality not been presented, along with the constitutional provision? Inclusion of such incidents would enable the learners to update themselves about the existing reality. They will be able to question the system, wherever they feel they should.

Some easy and relevant examples could have been given to explain the rule of law, which we can relate to our daily lives, such as the traffic signals need to be followed, one should always wear a helmet, irrespective of one’s religion (as it can save our lives) and one must obey
rules. Such easily understandable examples, can be directly related with the right to life, which is again a human right. But, these examples are missing.

The chapter updates learners about the fact that one can go to court, if any fundamental right has been exploited/violated. It is a good idea to talk about these provisions. But, some examples could have been added to this, to represent the struggle to get justice. How poor people are not able to even think of justice, because of their economic status should have been discussed. Why is justice only approachable to rich people? It could have been discussed that Indian democracy is a democracy of lawyers, as one need to know a lot before going to court and an ordinary human being cannot afford it. To promote analytical thinking in learners, some critical points could have been given here, such as why discussed people are unable to get justice. What are the reasons behind this? Such points could have been mentioned in the text books.

The chapter has talked about “Gharelu Hinsa kanoon” (Domestic Violence Act), which is appreciable. The students will be able to know that discrimination is not only outside the house, but exists in the house, as well. One would be able to see very common ways of exploitation of women, at home. Students can, then, reflect upon the situation of women in families and be able to raise critical questions regarding this. Certain other incidences are quite appreciable from a human rights perspective, including, Rosa Parks incident, the right of blacks in USA and so on.

Over all, the last chapter talks more about technicalities, but not about the application of the rights one has. Even NCF 2005, has talked about practical knowledge associated with the learners’ daily life experiences. But, from this perspective, the chapter is quite weak.

The chapter, ‘Judiciary’, starts with a picture of an old lady sitting on the stairs of the Supreme Court, with piles of files lying nearby. This picture leaves a lasting impression on the reader. But, the question is, to what extent will it be able to make the students of class VIII reflect. The description of the picture should be given to allow students to understand and feel the deep pain of the lady which the writer is, sarcastically, trying to portray.

The chapter begins with the very first line, which says that “no teacher can beat a student.” It talks about the students’ rights, which makes it closer to a human rights perspective.

The chapter states that if fundamental rights are violated, then the law could be upheld. This is a half-truth, because the vice versa is, also, true. I believe a book should show both sides of the coin, i.e. both aspects should be covered. If such an important and basic book, followed
blindly by teachers and students all over India, fails to speak the truth then how can one trust textbooks?

The chapter talks about the “Separation of power”, but does this really happen? Can a judge be impartial to a politician, is the real question we need to ask. I think students’ need to know the reality and not mere meaningless statements, which have no applicability.

It says that the court is for the people and also states that the 7 Northeastern states have one common high court at Guwahati. What is that supposed to indicate? Shouldn’t a court be accessible to common people? And if yes, then how can people of those 7 states access it easily, especially if they are poor? If we talk about equality, then how can a person, who is poor, be asked to go all the way to Guwahati high court? Doesn’t that mean that poor people are deprived justice? Such a critical perspective needs to be discussed.

‘Understanding our Criminal Justice System’ is the title of chapter six. The chapter talks about PIL, but very briefly. I think it should have been discussed more, so that students would be able to understand the facilities provided by the Supreme Court. A mere 2-3 lines on facilities provided or rights provided is insufficient. It is essential to explain in depth, so that when they go back to society they make people aware, which is the essential motive of education.

The critical aspect is ignored which, I think, is incorrect. Discussion of only the mid-day meal is insufficient, the incident about the mid-day meal exploitation should have been given, to enable students to be aware about the food they eat in school.

The chapter diverts, somewhat, from its title as it remains engaged with just one kind of criminal law. I think if more laws had been listed, then the chapter would have been more relevant. Explaining a story is insufficient to develop criticality in learners. Also, the difference between criminal and civil law needs to be discussed.

The discussion on the laws about marginalized communities has been shifted to chapter seven, ‘Understanding Marginalization’. Caste based discrimination is very common and a huge problem, in India. It is, also, a serious concern for human rights. The constitution makes arrangements to preserve the culture of all the marginalized sections, but the situation needs to improve. This chapter, specifically, talks about marginalized people, which makes it closer to a human rights perspective. In the beginning of the chapter, the term ‘marginalized’ has been explained. Further, an introduction has been given of a tribal family, along with the causes for their migration. After that, the chapter familiarizes the students with their language, religion, way of living and so on. The basic idea behind this might be to reconstruct the image of the tribals for students’, so that a biased and discriminated understanding can be challenged. Here, it tries to touch upon the understanding of an egalitarian society, which
does not discriminate on the bases of caste, class, gender, religion and region and so on. The other idea behind this could be understanding unity in diversity. Thus, it is a good effort by NCERT text books. Such examples will facilitate better understanding and will help learners develop a positive attitude about such issues.

But, on the other hand, there is a possibility that students, who belong to the marginalized communities, may feel inferior and may develop a negative attitude about themselves. This attitude could be developed in non-marginalized students as well and cause alienation, which will hinder interaction amongst students.

Further, the contribution of tribals, in development, has not been discussed. This could have been explained, with some examples. The chapter has only shown a one sided picture of tribal life, for instance they live a very poor and troubled life and do everything to earn a living. But, there are many tribes working in good jobs. This aspect could have been discussed, for tribles students to take positively and develop confidence to think that whatever they are getting is not merely of the people’s empathy or the government’s mercy, but, their right.

The chapter has discussed some provisions made by the constitution, for marginalized people, to preserve their culture and way of living. This is a good effort to familiarize students about the steps taken for tribal development. But, what they have lost for the sake of development has not been discussed, which represents a one sided perspective.

The chapter can be appreciated for discussing the figures and data related to education. It would enable students to understand the educational situation in India. It says that Muslim women have played a major role in the independence movement. Such explanation performs a dual task. First, it acknowledges women’s contribution to the struggle for independence, and second, the role of marginalized communities in this struggle, which has been ignored, for years.

Chapter Eight, ‘Confronting Marginalization’, is in continuation of the previous chapter and discusses the policies and provisions made for the protection of the rights of marginalized people. The chapter has talked about the rights of marginalized people, with reference to fundamental rights and, in general, about the implementation of these rights and provisions, with reference to reservation and its existence.

It presents a picture of ‘Kabeer’ and explains his story. A poem by the famous poet, ‘Soyarbai’ has, also, been included in the chapter. This poem says that religion and caste are made by humans and how these human constructs create problems, in society. These human constructs are against the spirit of a human rights perspective. Including Kabeer’s saying that a person is known through his work and not by his caste and class, is appreciable.
An interesting story has been given, of a Dalit person’s struggle for his rights and how he takes help from the law. The chapter explains the two ways, through which marginalized people draw their rights. The, first, is by insisting on their fundamental rights by forcing the government to recognize the injustice done to them. Secondly, they have insisted that the government enforce these laws. The protection of rights of the marginalized sections makes this chapter sensitive enough to be based on a human rights perspective.

Reservation has been discussed, with reference to the deprivation faced by the marginalized people, for centuries. But, in some places, the chapter seems to be biased. For instance it says, on page 97, that “for admission into colleges, especially to institutes of professional education, the government defines a set cut off marks list. This means that not all Dalit and tribal candidates can qualify for admission, but only those who have done reasonably well. This ‘reasonably’ means the cut off marks. But, if no Dalit gets the cut off marks then no Dalit will be admitted. Such provisions create a lot of ambiguities and problems. Thus, there is a need to be clear about certain rules, to avoid this discrepancy. The text book, however, does not deal with the content in this spirit.

The story of the village of ‘Jakmalgur’ is, really, a curse on humanity, where the Dalit community washes the feet of all the priests, and then bathe in the same water. This is a ritual which takes place when the local deity is honored. This story shows that untouchability and caste system still dominate in India. If we leave out some of the metropolitan cities, this system, still, prevails in almost all of India, in some way or the other.

The chapter has talked about, ‘The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (prevention of Atrocities) Act’, 1989. This Act was framed in 1986, in response to the demands made by Dalits, against their exploitation. It shows that the provision in the constitution does not help people. The division of upper and lower castes exits, even after 65 years of independence. When one has to fight for everything, then why do we need a democracy? Why not any other form of government? This is a very relevant question. What happens to the people who are not educated? An example has been given of Jakmaigur, where Ratnam has done engineering. But, not everyone in India, is educated. Such points should have been mentioned in the text book.

Further, the chapter talks about manual scavengers. Though this has been prohibited by the established rule of law, yet, still lakhs of people work as scavengers. On one hand, the Constitution has declared it illegal, and, on the other hand, the government, itself, recruits people in this field. For instance, it prevails in the Andhra Pradesh Municipal Corporation and railways. Discussing such things gives the content a human rights based perspective.
The rights of the scheduled tribes have, also, been discussed. But, the government, itself, violates the constitutional provisions, it allows non-tribal encroachers in the form of timber merchants, paper mills and so on to continue the exploitation of people and resources. The chapter questions such unclear and ambiguous systems, which is really appreciable, as it makes the learners aware of the actual realities of life.

Public facilities have been discussed in chapter nine. For the most part, the effort is commendable, as it has tried to bring into focus that the basic right to life is guaranteed under Article 21 of the constitution of India, which encourages equality to all Indian citizens.

The sub heading, ‘Public facilities’ and ‘The Government’s Role’, states the sense of public facilities, people’s rights to get them and the government’s role in ensuring this very well. There is a sharp contrast between the government’s role in the welfare of the masses and contrary to this, the private companies’ role in providing public facilities, which tend to economically benefit them more. It gives students the perspective, in a global scenario. Yet, I think it would have been more appealing if an example had been drawn from somewhere near our homes, from somewhere in India.

It explores the sources of the government funds for public facilities. It makes students question the reason for paying taxes and why the government increases the rate of water and other essential commodities. These discussions would set an example for the students on how to conduct themselves in the outside world.

The dialogue between Run and Kumar, on Page 111, is typical of this age group. With the help of a teacher in the class, arguments like these can be carried further to shape the learners’ knowledge properly.

‘Law and social justice’ is the last chapter of the book and deals with the laws made for the workers, consumers and producers, so as to attain a just society, where there is no exploitation of the workers nor profits made by the producers. A very good table has been given on page 122, which deals with the laws made, why each of them is necessary and whose interests they protect. All these have been done. But, more specific detailing, such as in the case of ‘minimum wage’ should have been specified. If the figures could have been given as to how much is it in the present time, it would have helped understand the concept in a better way. The case study of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984), has been very well presented and the details of the breach of safety laws has been presented, later, in the chapter.
The difference between an India worker’s wages and the working environment and an American worker is noteworthy. The chapter talks about laws regarding workers and their work environment and, also, talks about workers getting lawful wages. All this tends to take into account the official figure; but what if there is a discrepancy, even in those wages that are shown on paper?

There are cases where companies and contractors make workers sign on an amount greater than they actually get. There are no official records, therefore a worker cannot claim such oppression, as he, generally, has no proof. I think students need to be made aware of these issues.

Overall, in the last two chapters, the language used is appropriate for the students of standard VIII. The presentation, the pictorial representation and thought provoking questions are to be complimented.

**Democratic Politics- I -Class IX**

The vision of the book is to make learners aware of democracy from multiple dimensions. It takes the learners on a journey of democracy where it, especially, talks about the democratic processes, with reference to the Constitution, electoral politics, functioning of the institutions and Fundamental Rights. The book appears to develop a positive attitude towards democracy and its processes.

In the light of this vision, the first chapter of the book is, ‘Democracy in the contemporary world.’ This chapter begins with different stories on the making and un- making of democracy, in different parts of the world. These stories are meant to give a sense of what it means to experience democracy and its absence. The chapter, firstly, presents the pattern of the spread of democracy, but, towards the end of the chapter, we take a look at the absence of democracy, in different countries. The working of some international organizations has been presented, which raises the relevant question about whether we are moving towards democracy, at the global level.

The story of Chile has been given, where president Allende was killed, because he was working for the workers and their rights and the rich ones, in that nation, were not ready to accept it. He worked for the poor, landless farmers and poor workers. The landlords, the rich and the Church opposed his method and supported the 1973 military coup. After this, all rights of the citizens were taken back and those fighting for democracy, were killed. The
chapter, silently, raises many issues, such as the violence against citizens, oppression, killing, and refusing basic, living rights.

The chapter discusses the struggle for the restoration of democracy, in 1988. This particular true story raises many questions for non-democratic nations and provides a strong rationale, as to why democracy is needed in the world.

The same struggle has been shown in Poland, where no one other than the government had the right to form trade unions. Finally, in 1989, the people were successful in establishing a democratic government.

On the basis of these two stories, two features of democracy have been given: first, only the leaders elected by the people should rule the nation and second, people should have the freedom to express their views, freedom to organize and freedom to protest. Here, the book again, forgets to talk, clearly, about the right to food, which is important.

A comprehension-based activity, in the form of a task, has been given on page 7, where the students are expected to write the correct features under the name of the government. The activity carries different features and a list of the kinds of government. This activity has been given in the book, in the right place, because two stories have just been discussed in the same regard. To make it more contextual, some discussion could have been done with reference to the Indian context, which is missing.

Page numbers 8 and 9 carry a world map, which shows the trend of the development of democracy, across the world from 1950 to 2000. But, one important thing to highlight here is that only the Second World War has been shown as the cause of the spread of democracy, which is not true. The internal struggle of nations has not been acknowledged. The details regarding the granting of universal adult franchise, given on page 11, is revealing. France has been given the credit for starting this struggle.

Page no 12 is on Ghana’s struggle, but described very superficially: “After independence, Nkrumah became the first Prime Minister and then the President of Ghana. He was a friend of Jawaharlal Nehru and an inspiration for democracy in Africa. But, unlike Nehru, he got himself elected presented for life.” These lines are quite unclear. What had Nehru done? Did he have the right to be the Prime Minister for life and had he refused? What do these lines mean? The textbook should avoid biased statements or statementd that lack evidence. It is feared that these books will become a source of information for the future, which might authenticate these lines, without proof. This is not accurate from a human rights perspective. Some other examples have been given to discuss the struggle for democracy in Pakistan and Myanmar.
Democracy, at the global level, has been discussed on page no. 14. A discussion between the students and the teachers has been shown, regarding democracy at the global level. Some basic points for discussion include: the expanding democracy, American hegemony, Iraq issue, possibility of a global government, and so on. Some very relevant points have been raised in this discussion, regarding the global government. The discussion talks about “how can we talk about democracy at the global level? Is there any world government? Who is the President of that world? If there is no government, can it be labeled as either democratic or non-democratic?

These questions lead the discussion to talking about the international organizations such as the UN and so on. It has been concluded that though there is no international government, yet the discussion of democracy is important, at the global level. The function of the Security Council is to maintain peace. If something unjust happens, then the UN Security council takes action. But who decides the justice or injustice is not clear. Is it America that decides? The book needs to clarify this.

There are many other things, which, clearly, criticize the claim of the UNO and its associated agencies. The voting rights, given to each nation, is decided by the monitorial contribution of that nation, to the agency. Those who can pay more can buy more votes. Is this democratic? Such questions need to be asked and learners should be made aware of this. It is very undemocratic that, only 10 countries have more than fifty percent of the total number of votes in the IMF. How can one even think of taking decisions in favor of those nations who, actually, need financial assistance?

It is revealing that the chairperson of the World Bank has always been an American citizen and his decisions have been in favor of his own country. But, even after all this, is it true that we are in the process of being more democratic? This question is valid and needs to be answered.

The hegemony of the USA has been clearly shown on pages 18 and 19, under the heading ‘Democracy Promotion’. The Iraq example has been taken to explain this hegemony. How forcefully the USA tried to establish democracy there! It raises several questions: is this the right way, to promote democracy? Does external help work in every case to establish democracy. What is the sustainability of a democracy established by external force? These questions, surely, need answers.

Overall, the chapter is fairly humanistic and raises many issues but, in some places, certain clarifications and criticality is required.

To strengthen the understanding about democracy, the next chapter, ‘What is Democracy? Why Democracy?’, has been included in the book. The chapter explains and elaborates upon
the meaning of democracy, with minimum features. It tries to explain why democracy is the best available form of governance.

This understanding is important to understand contextual meanings, because the context defines the meanings and, even if it does not, it, at least, plays a major role in defining it.

In this process, the basic difference between a democratic and a non-democratic government is, ‘the election by the people’. But, if we accept this definition correctly, we have to accept all such governments which conduct elections but, are actually, not democratic. In the present times, all governments want to be called democratic. Thus, a clear understanding of democracy is needed.

On page no. 26, certain points have been given regarding democracy, which are critical and reflective such as, ‘all the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy’, ‘man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible’, and ‘man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary’ and so on.

The elections have been discussed as the core of democracy. But, it is important to highlight that only elections are not the core of a democracy. Other things, such as the rights, liberty, equality, also, contributes to a democratic government. Elections happen in many states, but they are not, necessarily, democratic.

With Pakistan, as an example, the chapter has tried to explain that actual democracy is that in which the final decision-making power must rest with those elected by the people, which is missing in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the people elect their representatives to the national and provincial assemblies, but those elected representatives are not really the rulers, as they cannot take the final decision. The power to take the final decision rests with the army officials. Therefore, the Pakistan government cannot be called a democratic government. Here, a comparative perspective with India could have been given for a better understanding of the democratic and non-democratic processes.

The next feature of democracy has been called, ‘Free and Fair Electoral competition.’ The argument which has been developed here is that only an election is insufficient, it should be free and fair. China and Mexico have been taken as examples to show the unfair practice of an election. Some incidences from India could have been added to show this. But such examples have not been taken. Why should students not know the reality of elections, in India? Arguments can be given that they will come to know from other sources, such as television but, why not through textbooks? With such examples, students will be able to evaluate the level of Indian democracy.
The chapter explains that one person, one vote and one value is the core of fair elections, where everyone has equal rights to elect the government. But, unfortunately, Saudi Arabia does not allow women to vote; in Fiji, the value of the vote is more for a Fijian, than an Indian Fijian. Such discriminatory processes are, still, prevailing in the world. Sharing such information gives the content a human rights based perspective.

In some places, the chapter is, completely, in contrast to the first chapter, like a cartoon on page 32 criticizes Saddam Hussein but, in the first chapter, the USA has been criticized for, forcefully, establishing democracy in Iraq. Such contradictions need to be tackled.

The rule of law and respect for rights is the fourth feature of democracy in the book. The examples include: China banning Google and Yahoo being better. But, some other examples could have been better to explain the rights and the rule of law, such as the right to food in India. There are many issues, in India, that challenge its democratic spirit. But, such examples are missing.

Further, the chapter discusses, ‘Why Democracy?’ The argument given is that democracy is essential, because in this form of governance, the people select their own representatives in comparison to other forms of governance. This importance has been shown, through a discussion between the teacher and the students. Such an interaction shows a kind of democratic classroom, based on a human rights perspective.

Certain arguments have been given against democracy, such as instability, because of the leaders changing, political competition being the code rather than morality, elected members not knowing the best interests of the people. It leads to bad decisions and corruption, for it is based on electoral competition. It has, also, been argued that democracy does not claim to provide solutions for all the problems, but it believes that the people should take their decisions on their own. The major argument presented is that we do not have a better option to democracy. Other than that, the arguments given in favor of democracy have a human rights perspective seen as a democratic government is a better government, because it is a more accountable form of government and, thus, it improves the quality of decision-making; it provides a method to deal with differences and conflicts; enhances the degree of dignity of the citizens and allows people to correct their mistakes, if they choose wrong representatives.

The argument on page no. 33 (in favor of democracy) has been given in comparison to Pakistan. It says that more than three crores of people died in China in 1958-61 famine. The Chinese government could not handle this, but the Indian government managed to, because of its democratic form of government. But, recently, in India wheat was wasted, but could not be given to the people dying of hunger. How can we, then, justify such democratic processes with reference to the processes, of the government of other nations?
It is important to state, here, that democracy, say in India, is active only during election time and, after that, our democracy becomes a democracy run by a dictator, where people are ignored in decision making. The argument that the chapter gives is that decision-making happens after the involvement of the concerned people in democracy, which is a utopia. A meeting with the elected MLA and councilor is difficult; forget about the right to participate in decision-making.

It is essential that a democracy should be seen, not only in political terms, but as a way of living. Though the chapter tries to argue this, improvement is required with reference to the issues raised in the analysis.

“The Constitutional design,” is the title of the third chapter. With reference to the last chapter, this chapter deals with the making, need, relevance and importance of the Constitution for any democratic nation which comprises of rules for both, the people and the government, as in a democracy, states cannot take any decision on their own. Their decision is bound by certain rules. These rules, for the people and the government, are called the Constitution. The chapter helps to understand how the constitution is framed. One recent instance, of designing the Constitution of a democratic state, is that of South Africa. The present chapter begins to discuss this by looking at what happened there and how South Africa went about this task.

This discussion starts with a sign board which says, “Natives, Indian, and colored if you enter these premises at night, you will be listed as missing. Armed guards shoot at sight, Savage dogs devour the corpse.” This clearly shows the kind of discrimination that existed in South Africa. The dignity of a human being had been rejected there. These, and such other discriminatory practices, made Nelson Mandela say, “I have to fight against the white domination and I have fought against the black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.” His views were not accepted and he was charged for treason by the white South African government, which put him in prison for 28 years. The chapter starts very well and sensitizes students about the need for the Constitution in South Africa.

The rejection of human respect and dignity was clearly present in South Africa. Raising issues such as discrimination based on race, gives the content a human rights based perspective. Discrimination was rampant, as there were separate schools, libraries, workplaces, colleges, buses for the white people. The whites considered the blacks inferior to them which was unfair to their human dignity. These issues and problems brought the people together to demand a democratic constitution. Continuous debates and discussions for two years, resulted in the Constitution in South Africa.
Again, the words of Mandela are given on page 42, ‘historical enemies succeeded in negotiating a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy. . . . . . . . . that they cherish that faith in human beings is the cornerstone of our country’ represent the understanding of a human rights perspective. Such lines give direct motivation to the learner to work towards equality. Also, the preamble of the constitution shows faith in human life and dignity.

Further, the chapter talks about why we need a constitution, with reference to South Africa. It has been discussed that the most important thing was to develop trust between the blacks and whites, so that the minorities did not suffer. Thus, whatsoever agreement was made between the whites and blacks, the only way to build and maintain trust in such a situation was to write down some rules of the game that everyone would abide by and these rules form the South African Constitution. The needs of a constitution are many: it develops a degree of trust and coordination that is necessary for different kinds of people to live together, it specifies how the government will be constituted; it limits the powers of a government and informs the citizens about their rights; and it express the aspirations of the people to create a good society. These needs of a constitution are surely based on the needs of human beings and a just society, where all can live together within peace and harmony, for a respectful life.

The struggle for framing the Constitution appears to have been smooth. But is it true? To what extent did the Constitution succeed to achieve the goals in Africa, could have been discussed in brief, so that the chapter did not appear so full of theories. Some examples could have been included for a better understanding of the need for a constitution.

Page 49 begins with discussing the framing of the Indian Constitution. It starts with the diverse situation of contemporary times, such as partition, death, inclusion of princely states and so on. It is true that our struggle was not only with the foreign rulers but, also, aimed at rejuvenating our country and transforming our society and politics. The drafts of the Constitution were made by Motilal Nehru and the Congress. Those who had worked in legislation during the British era contributed to formulate the draft of the Indian Constitution. Many existing things were coopted to fit in well with the needs of the time. But, this idea did not work well. The judiciary changed but not the police and the ranks. Thus, a kind of dualism always existed, and still exists, thereby creating problems for India.

It has been accepted, in the chapter, that it is important that the Constitution must be accepted by different social groups and political parties. The chapter says that the Indian Constitution has not faced much criticism, but this is not true. In the last 60 years, different social and political groups have raised many questions about the Constitution. Through amendments, the changes have been done. But, some examples that raise questions about the Constitution should have been given. The over-dominant contribution of the Congress has been shown in a positive light, in the chapter.
Equality, Rights, respect for all human beings, serving the nation, freedom from suppression, harmony and so on have been given as the guiding values of the Constitution. Almost 2000 changes were done in the framework, prepared by the committee, chaired by Dr. Ambedkar. What were those changes? Were those changes based on consensus or were they made unfairly? Were those changes made through democratic procedures? That’s why Dr. Ambedkar said, in his last speech in the Constituent Assembly, that ‘on the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life, we will have inequality. In politics, we will be recognizing the principle of one man, one vote, one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man, one value.’ These words show the pain and fear Dr. Ambedkar felt about the Constitution. We can all witness, that what he said in 1947, is real today. Caste-based issues have become more frequent, religion-based issues still exist, and the economic gap is widening. Why has such a critical perspective not been included in the text book? This raises doubts regarding the content of the chapter.

Further, the chapter explains the meaning of important words of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, such as ‘we’, ‘sovereign’, ‘socialist’, ‘secular’, ‘democratic’, ‘justice’, ‘liberty’, ‘equality’, and ‘fraternity’ as mentioned in the Preamble. But, their practical aspect has been ignored. The chapter must evaluate these values in terms of applicability, so that the students can develop a critical perspective, rather than just worshipping the Constitution as something which cannot be questioned and criticized or a separate chapter must be included to achieve this task.

Chapter 4, ‘Electoral Politics’, presents the situation of the elections, in India and other associated concepts, such as whose representatives get elected in a democracy, why are elections needed in a democracy, what makes an election democratic and so on.

The chapter starts with an example from Haryana, that talks about how people have changed the government from the Congress to Lokdal and, then, back to Congress. Such statements prove biased understanding. After these statements, some questions have been asked and one of the statements is, “the Governor invited Devi Lal to become the Chief Minister because he was impressed with his speeches.” Such statements are misleading for the students. This is not justified.

Further, the chapter discusses the need of elections as, in elections, the voters have a choice. They can choose who will make laws for them and they can also choose the party, whose policies will guide the government and law-making.
Certain points have been mentioned regarding elections. How elections can be made democratic which seems to be based on a human rights perspective, such as, one person, one vote, one value. People can contest elections and can share their views of working. This election choice should be held at fixed intervals. There should be open elections, based on political competition. But, one thing is certain, only an election does not make up a democracy.

The chapter favors open competition for elections in a democracy and says that without competition, elections cannot be fair. But, competition creates problems. Politics of fake propaganda, money, casteism, regionalism and so on completely ruin the spirit of elections. But, the chapter argues that, if people do not like a government and if the government does not work in favor of the masses, in the next elections, they may reject that party, just as if one shopkeeper does not deal well with you, you will go to the next shop. It is very strange that a shop has been compared to a nation. Such examples destroy the importance of the concept itself. Is running a nation, similar to running a shop? Such examples are not appropriate and do not justify elections, in a democracy.

It is important to have elections, but the text book should be sensitive enough to take appropriate examples to discuss such crucial issues.

In contrast, there are two pictures given on page 60, which show the different situations before and after the elections: how after the elections, political parties do not work for the people. The popular image of a politician, seen as bad, is encouraged. We know that some leaders have really worked hard for the development of the nation, so how can we give such a universal statement for political parties and leaders? If leaders have not done anything, then how will we be able to see the difference between the present and the past? One should think very critically, before adding such pictures in textbooks. We cannot generalize a concept in this way.

Further, the chapter talks about the electoral constituencies. It has been explained how different constituencies are made on the basis of the population. To make the system more democratic and egalitarian, some reserved constituencies have, also, been made. Reservation is done according to the population of the people, of those particular communities, in a particular area. Thus, the reserved seats for SCs and STs do not take away the legitimate share of any other social group.

But, an important point is that the information of the nomination form should be publically displayed, so that better selection of candidate can be done. But, unfortunately, we do not have such a system in India and such an understanding has, also, not been presented in the book.
Further, campaigning for the elections has been discussed and some restrictions have been mentioned; no bribe, not threatening the voters, no appeal for voting on the basis of caste, religion; restrictions on using the government resources and spending a decided amount in the elections. But, we all know that these guidelines are only on paper. It is an open secret that no party follows these rules. Hardly, any party follows this code of conduct. The kinds of problem which exist, in this regard, must be discussed in the chapter to give it a human rights based perspective.

No functional knowledge has been given in the chapter regarding rights and duties for elections, which is a serious lapse. If one wants to register dissent, regarding elections, how can he/she do that since such information has not been shared.

The book says that even after all these undemocratic problems, Indian elections are democratic, but how democratic are they, is the question. Because democracy has made everything dependent on paper work. If paper work is right, then there is hardly any possibility to punish the convicted. Such a situation is very problematic, where we know everything but cannot do anything. Is this democracy? Such criticism is missing in the textbook.

The chapter says that poor people vote more than the rich, on the basis of the given data, which is the opposite in European countries. But why has this not been mentioned? Many poor people do vote, just because they get a bottle of alcohol and some money before the voting day. Why and in what conditions do people vote has not been discussed. These are certain facts which should be revealed. Only numbers do not state anything, the quality of numbers, also, matters. But this is missing in the textbook.

Over all, the chapter presents a complete picture about the Indian elections, its nature and procedures. Certain crucial things need to be added to enhance the quality of the chapter. Certain criticalities (as have been given earlier in the analysis) need to be addressed to give it a human rights based perspective.

After discussing the elections in India, the book shifts its focus on the working of the different institutions in the next chapter, ‘Working of Institutions’. This chapter, broadly, discusses the functioning of the legislature, executive and judiciary, in brief, and talks about the functioning of the National Government, also known as the Central Government.

The chapter starts with an office memorandum regarding OBC reservation. How has it reached the present position? Lots of protests and counter-protests have happened in this regard. Some of them were violent, too. Some people felt that their opportunities would decrease. Some of them thought that this would promote casteism. Some others thought that it would provide equal opportunities to the socially and educationally backward people.
Who resolves these issues in such a situation? It is the judiciary. This issue was, also, dealt with by the Supreme Court of India and the decision was given in favor of this bill, with some amendments.

Further, the chapter explores the need of political institutions in a democracy. These institutions make the process more democratic, because a lot of discussion takes place before any decision is taken, which is not prevalent in a dictatorship. The decisions might get a little delayed, but, are not taken by any one person. Such processes, clearly, show the need and importance of democratic institutions.

The need for a Parliament has been shown, with reference to a supreme body, which makes laws for the nation, amends them and decides where the capital would be used. The chapter talks about the houses and explains how the House of the People has more power than the House of the States. A valid question asked is that when the House of the People can take a decision, then what is the need for the other house? A sufficient answer has not been provided in the chapter, except for saying that it can delay the process on all issues, other than financial ones.

The political and permanent Executive has been discussed and justification given as to why the political Executive has more power, than the permanent Executive, as the political executive is elected by the people, yet the reality is that people holding positions in the political Executive are unaware of the depth of the position for which they have been elected. In such situations, how can they take important decisions? This lack of knowledge could be the cause of serious non-democratic decisions. Such things are important for discussion, but have been ignored.

The Prime Minister, as an institution, has been discussed as the leader of the majority party. However this is not true. The present government has proved that it is not necessary to be the leader of the party to become the Prime Minister. In such a situation, the entire political scenario changes. The election of the President has, also, been briefly discussed, showing his/her role ceremonial. The chapter states that the President does not have any power and all the power is reserved with the Prime Minister.

The Judicial system has been discussed, very briefly. We have a unitary Judiciary system, where only one Supreme Court controls the entire Judiciary and it is the highest appealing body in the nation. Here, some important information has been left out, such as judicial activism. When does it take place? Why do we look towards the Judiciary for everything, in India? This attitude shows that people mistrust the Executive and legislature. What will happen if the Judiciary becomes more active? These are very crucial questions that need to be
addressed, because we are losing our trust in the government, which has been elected only by us only. What will happen to the elected government, if everything is done by the Judiciary?

Chapter 6, ‘Democratic Rights’, deals more with the perspective of rights. It says if we do not have rights, then what will happen? What kind of life will we have? Basically, Fundamental Rights have been explained in this chapter, with some real life incidents and the role that these rights have played, in recent years, in our lives.

The chapter begins with the title, ‘Life without Rights.’ In this regard, some real life examples have been given. First, the Prison of Guantanamo Bay has been discussed, where 600 people were secretly picked up by US forces and imprisoned. They were not allowed to go to court or any judicial agency. All their rights had been violated. USA even refused to listen to international agencies with regard to this.

Another example has been taken from Saudi Arabia, ruled by a hereditary king. The King selects the legislature, executive and judiciary. Media cannot say anything against the King. No religious freedom has been given to the citizens. Only Islam is preferred by the state and women are subjected to many public restrictions. How can one imagine the existence of the rights of human beings? In the same way, violation of Human Rights has been done by the elected government in Kosovo. These examples prove that not only in anarchy but, also, in a democratic government, Human Rights are violated. Why has no example been taken from India, such as the Gujarat tragedy? Such examples could have been included.

The rights have been explained, as a person’s claim to society and the state, where a person can live fearlessly. Such behavior is expected, which does not harm others and vice-versa. The importance of rights in a democracy has been highlighted in the chapter, with reference to maintaining peace, equality and creating an egalitarian society.

Further, the chapter talks about the Fundamental Rights given by the Indian Constitution, in which, all six Fundamental Rights have been discussed. The Right to Equality has been discussed to show that the rule of law is the bases of a democracy and, therefore, no discrimination should exist on the bases of caste, class, gender, religion. But, some special provisions can be made for marginalized groups to give them equal opportunities. Some examples have been taken to show the inhumane behavior that some of us do: at the tea stalls two kinds of cups were kept and, the barber refused to serve the Dalit students who were made to sit separately. These are some examples which exhort us to take action against this inequality in society. This entire section tries to develop sensitivity towards one’s rights.

The Right to Freedom has been explained, saying that one has freedom of speech, the freedom to hold meetings, promotions and demonstrations on any issue, to travel to any part of the country, to life and so on. But, unfortunately, how these rights have been rejected has
not been discussed, such as how can protests be declared as undemocratic by politicians and how can they be suppressed by the government? Justice lies only with the rich people because education has not, yet, reached a larger number of the socially and economically weaker sections. It is true that the Indian democracy is the democracy of lawyers. Thus, although rights are given, their applicability is subject to enquiry.

Under the Right against Exploitation, human trafficking, forced labour and child labour have been prohibited by the established rule of law. But, again, there is no discussion on why the Constitution has not made any provisions to ensure the removal of child labour. What will happen to children who have escaped from this inhumane business? What happens ultimately, is that they, again, become child laborers, because they want food and our Constitution does not provide the Right to Food. These critical issues could have been included in the chapter to give it more a human rights based perspective

The Right to Freedom of Religion has been discussed, basically, in two ways: first, the state does not have any religion and second, everyone has a right to choose and celebrate any religion, but it does not mean that they can do anything. Some restrictions prevail, including; sacrificing animals or human beings as offerings to supernatural forces. But, all this takes place openly and the government does not interfere. Then question is, what kind of security does a person have in any religion? These need to be discussed. There are some areas where a widow is forced to shave her head. Such examples could have been given to develop sensitivity in a learner. Does secularism mean maintaining only a relationship among human beings, but not between human beings and God?

The Cultural and Educational Rights have been explained by saying that any citizen, with a distinct language or culture, has the right to conserve it. Admission in any school cannot be prohibited on the basis of any religion or language. The Minorities have a right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. These rights have been supported, by saying that a democracy works on the principle of majority. Thus, it is important to give special attention to the minorities. But, an important question is, how can we secure these rights? In this regard, the Right to Constitutional Remedies has been discussed.

**Democratic Politics- II – Class X**

The book aims to help the learners to understand the political processes, in detail. In this regard, sharing of power has been, extensively discussed, along with the federal system of governance. Diversities in democracy, people’s movement and political parties have, also, been discussed to justify, the need for a democracy. Challenges and solutions have been discussed to evaluate democracy and its processes, in India. Thus, the main vision of the book
is to make learners aware and develop a positive attitude towards democracy and its processes. In this regard, ‘Power Sharing’, is the first chapter. The most important characteristics of the modern age is humanism and solutions, based on rationale thinking. This chapter tries to explain these with the help of relevant and practical examples. Democracy, liberty, social and political institutions, all have been seen from this lens.

It is really appreciable that there are diversities in the world and, to some extent, we do celebrate them. But, this diversity becomes a curse, when some people exploit others’ rights, and homogenizing begins. Gradually, these homogeneous groups become so strong and destroy all humanity. This leads to struggle for peace, at various levels, such as the state, society, at the national and international level. At some level, “Satta ki Sajhedari”, has been considered a solution for this. In short, the chapter talks about the importance of power sharing.

The first example, talks about the governments of Belgium and Sri Lanka (which has Indian Tamils) and tries to show how Belgium has given respect to all religions, whereas Sri Lanka has not. It is, certainly inappropriate to speak about any country like this and raises the question of how our textbooks perceive our history and politics. Then, why are Pakistani textbooks part of the criticism? Does this mean that India is trying to play the role of big brother, in Asia?

The chapter claims that, because Belgium has been given equal representation to those who speak Dutch and French, it has managed to resolve the tension between these groups. But, as Sri Lanka has not done this constitutionally, they failed to resolve tensions between the Sinhala and Tamilian communities. Such conclusions are incorrect because of several reasons. First, we are blaming other countries and their governing system (a biased perspective. Second, the Indian Constitution gives freedom to all religions, yet, it has failed to resolve religious conflicts and tensions. Third, it is not ethical to talk about another nation in school textbooks. Such things could have been given in the reference books. Such content, added in the National Curriculum, will create more tensions in the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. This imbalance in Sri Lanka may be due to some other reasons. Just putting the blame on their constitution is not the right way of presenting any nation in the National Curriculum. The story of Khalil’s Dilemma (Vikram and Beta) has been given on page no. 7 and seems to strengthen the idea, rejecting the Sri Lankan system of governance and its Constitution.

The above information, given on page no 2, is the only information. It, hardly, has any scope for understanding and reflection. Undoubtedly, students will develop a negative attitude towards Sri Lanka and a positive attitude towards Belgium. Is this the objective of the
chapter? If yes, then we, seriously, need to rethink and give it a more human rights based perspective.

It is, also, important to highlight here that the chapter starts with the understanding of power sharing but, mostly, talked about the division of power. Even terms, such as ‘division’ and ‘separation’ have been used interchangeably. One should be aware that these terms are very crucial to understand the political system and its functioning. This has been ignored.

Page 4 appreciates the political system of Belgium by starting, “the Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch and French speaking ministers shall be equal in the central government.” What do such lines mean? Does it mean that India should have such a system? The analysis is missing, which might lead students to develop a biased perspective. One needs to think of the socio-economic context as different. Other counties have lived a different history altogether. How can one, then, accept one political system for all nations? This is a matter of serious concern.

The Indian perspective is missing in the chapter. It is good to know the international perspective but, it is, also, essential to talk about the Indian context.

Forms of power sharing, on page 8, provide a very good and healthy perspective of democracy when it says, “one basic principle of democracy is that people are the source of all political power. In a democracy, people rule themselves through the institutions of self-governance.” It shows the strength of people in a democracy, which could motivate the learners to participate actively, in the democratic processes. In many other places, also, the chapter talks about the power of people in a democracy, presenting a human rights perspective because human beings have been treated with respect and dignity. In conclusion, I feel the chapter should not promote a biased perspective, with reference to other nations.

Federalism has been discussed in the second chapter to justify the need to share power. The chapter starts with a very positive attitude about how India runs its governance successfully, by sharing power not only at the central level and the state level but, also, at the local level, a new and third tier of Indian federalism. Page number 14 explains federalism very effectively but, again and again, it takes the example of Sri Lanka, thereby inviting criticism. A distinction between a unitary government and a federal government, with reference to the locus of power and democratic processes, has been mentioned, as well.

It is important to highlight here, that the chapter seems to show that state governments are completely independent from the center, but this is not the complete truth. With more responsibility, the central government controls the national security and, thus, has an upper hand over the states. Such issues have been ignored. But, a good thing is that the chapter
focuses on the fact that the democratic form of government is answerable to the people, showing faith in democracy and, thus, has a human rights perspective.

Page 16 presents, analytically, India as a federal form of government and explains why the federal system works in India, because of Indian diversity in terms of language, religion and so on.

Page 17 talks about the special status of some states, such as Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, and Chandigarh. Regarding Jammu and Kashmir, the book says that it has a special status and has its own constitution and many provisions of the Indian constitution are not applicable to this state. Is it not very important for a class 10 student to know why Kashmir has a special status? Such necessary information needs to be added in the book.

Page 19, clearly justifies the division of states, on the basis of language and argues that this helps in maintaining democracy, successfully. But, what one could askes, where is the spirit of actual democracy when we talk about the co-existence of all human beings unilaterally and not separately? When states are divided on the basis of languages, then how can one claim a successful, federal system? There are ambiguities in the chapter, which need to be resolved. Though language, in India, is a strong basis on which the states have been constituted, we have to choose some other way to resolve these issues. Such decisions, certainly, increase regional diversity, which are unfavorable for democracy. The chapter could have asked questions: what are the students’ view about language-based states and whether they can suggest any alternative to this?

It has been simply stated in the chapter that our experience says that the states, based on language, create harmony, but how? Such declarative statements are not good for school text books. What are the consequences of this, need to be analyzed and is missing in the chapter.

Further, the chapter deals with language policies and center-state relationships. But, this segment talks about the relationships, only in terms of power division which, again, would divert the students to think that only power is the basis of a federal democracy. We know that there are many other examples, where we can see the state and center collaboration and these collaborations are not based on division of power. This is the actual spirit of a federal democratic system, which has been ignored in the chapter. This segment does not let students understand the federal system from a human rights perspective, as the term ‘division of power’ consists of struggle.

The chapter ends with a very meaningful example about the democratic processes of Porto Alegre, in Brazil, where thousands of people, from all parts of the state, participate in the formation of the budget. It helps to include the needs of all the people in budget formation.
Finally, this budget is put before the municipality, which takes the final decision. This is the actual form of federal democracy.

Chapter 3 ‘Democracy and Diversity’, discusses the necessity of a federal system, for a nation of many diversities. The chapter explains how we can see a difference in our lives, on the basis of caste, class, religion, region, language and also, shows its faith in the democratic processes that overcome these diversities and differences. These lines create a kind of curiosity in us and we want to know more about such differences. Unfortunately, the chapter, mostly, includes examples from other countries. Though it is important to take examples from other nations, but some representative samples could have been taken from India to show the diversities in order that an Indian student can develop his understanding of these diversities. The examples to show diversity are from the Mexico Olympics, Bulgaria, Romania, Britain, Sri Lanka, USA but no examples have been taken from India. Knowing such diversities at the international level, is, a good idea but without context from our own nation, it will be difficult to develop a better understanding of diversity.

Pager 31 talks about an incident, where the Dalit groups decided to participate in the UN Conference Against Racism in Durban, in 2001. Some reactions by Amandeep Kaur, Oinam and Ashok, a Dalit activist, have been given. Very interestingly, it has been explained how sociologists and the Government refuse to accept certain crucial things, when they do not want to. The book asks us to discuss these reactions, with reasons, which is a good exercise.

On page 32, the lines, “it is fairly common for people belonging to the same religion to feel that they do not belong to the same community, because their caste or sect is very different” do not leave a good impression to the students. Such lines reinforce the existing thinking that we all are different, which is against a human rights perspective.

A paragraph, on page no 33 says, “ the social differences cut across one another. . . ” and further, puts all the blame on social diversities, for the problems that exist in India, but how politics influence such social diversities has not been discussed. The entire chapter tries to save guard politics from issues related to diversity. It is well known that politics, political parties, and their leaders make use of such diversities, for their own benefit instead of the nations benefit. Why has a one-sided perspective been shown?

A few lines of a poem given, are very relevant and thought-provoking. The poem says that it is good to destroy society, which has caste-based discrimination. But, one, also ,needs to keep in mind, that when such messages reach the students of class 10th, it might lead to some serious implications, because violence is no solution. The lines are quite impressive, but one should think about their implications, before including them in the textbook.
Another thing that is crucial to highlight is that, the entire chapter is dominated by views to show the differences existing in the world, but no example has been given where people work and live with a feeling of brotherhood, beyond these differences. It has, also, not indicated how we can have unity in diversity. The chapter focuses more on differences, rather than unity.

A few lines on page no. 34 under, ‘Range of Outcomes’ ,and a purple box on page no. 36 says “So, it happens all over the world, even in Europe. I thought it was only in countries like India that we have social divisions.” These lines have dual implications. First, it indicates that such discrimination exists all over the world and there is a need to work towards equality across the world; the other perspective legalizes these differences, which is surely not required, as there is a need to resolve these differences, rather than legitimizing them.

The diversities have been discussed in the next chapter, in terms of gender, religion and caste. The chapter starts with clarifying to the learners what they have learnt earlier, this is how earlier things have been associated with this interesting chapter, that deals with the three major aspects, influencing the Indian social and political system. Gender, Religion and Caste says that these have both a positive and negative implication for democracy.

It raises questions about the social system, with reference to gender stereotypes, which determine women’s role in society. A critical, comparative perspective has been given on how men think differently than women. But here, it is important, that the language used to showing such a comparison, is not disparaging. Though women are being exploited and we all need to work towards their equality, blaming them will not solve the purpose. Instead, it will create an opposition to harassing women further. It is, therefore, crucial that one works towards the equality of both men and women.

On page no. 41, some pictures, under the heading ‘Perfection of ideal women’, have been given. It is important to show the kind of role women have played and how their roles are, stereotypically, given to them. But, to develop a healthy perspective, some examples, which show women’s strength, should have been included, as examples of women personalities will motivate learners. It seems that the chapter, on one hand, talks about the oppression of women and on the other hand, it believes that a healthy perspective should be developed. Both things lead to some ambiguities.

Another very crucial point raised in the book is the reservation of women in Parliament (page no 44). It very, rightly, explains the lack of parliament will power and decision-making to date, to pass this bill. Does not this show the mentality of our male-dominated society?

Here, again, it is crucial to talk about certain successful women political leaders, in order to change such pre-conceived notions and allow learners to think about the achievements of
women and get motivated. Unfortunately, the chapter focuses on women’s political participation, within the limitation of becoming a Member of Parliament. It is an accepted truth that, in some places, women have no voting right. Such examples will strengthen the political participation of women, not only in relation to the elections but, also, in relation to their social, political and economic lives.

Further, the chapter discusses religion, communalism and politics. This particular segment in the beginning, talks about the role of Human Rights groups, which is appreciable. It states that politics and religion cannot be separated (Gandhi), (here religion refers to moral and ethical values).

The chapter argues that, because of the nation’s secular nature, the government should not favor any religion. But, there are examples which prove that, some times, the state has used secularism, for the sake of politics. Even religion has directly been used to create vote banks. Such things have not been documented, but do exist on a large scale and the text book should have questioned this.

On page no 47, the text talks about communalism, a current issue, but, how to present it, is, also, an important thing. The text book states that, “the problem begins when religion is seen as the basis…….This manner of using religion in politics is communal politics……….. This belief is fundamentally flawed. People ..........voice within the community.” these given lines in the book only raise problems. Nowhere has it talked about the strategies needed to deal with such critical issues. It has been shown that there is mistrust in the social system, rather than the political system. A fundamental question that can be asked here is why has no initiative been taken to resolve such problems? What do the textbook writers want to convey about such issues? There are clear examples where many religious communities work together, live together and help each other in all respects. Does this not mean that politics makes use of communities for their dirty politics? Why have such crucial and essential points been ignored? It appears that the book is trying to develop a safe guard for politics and political leaders, and is ignoring the reality that exists.

On page number 49, it, impressively states that secularism is not just an ideology of a few parties or persons. Such content reflects a human rights perspective, where secularism is being seen in a collective manner and strengthens unity among religions. In this particular segment, where an understanding of secularism and politics has been provided, the relationship both concepts should share, has not been, adequately, discussed.

Under the heading, ‘Caste and Politics’, it has been stated that, in India, profession is based on caste and families, normally, pursue parental work. This is only partially true, as due to the increase of urbanization in India, people have migrated from villages to cities, where they are
doing different kinds of work. This needs to be kept in mind, referring to such issues. Families used to determine the professions of their children long ago, but not now. The system where families decide family profession has weakened over a period of time, which needs to be discussed in the book.

Page 51 states that, “when parties choose candidates in election, they keep in mind the caste composition of the electorate and nominate candidates from different castes so as to muster necessary support to win elections.” What these lines imply to the students is that politics and elections, in India, take place on the basis of caste. It is, certainly, happening and is not right, but the book seems to justify this perspective, which is inappropriate.

The focus here is more about the role caste plays in politics, but the role politics plays in the caste system has not been discussed. In India, we know that politics works on the existence of caste, and politicians can keep using it the way they have been doing. One cannot generalize this, but it is true that it cannot be rejected or ignored.

‘Popular Struggles and Movements,’ is the title of the fifth chapter which helps the learner to understand how and what kinds of struggles have been initiated by various groups in India, to claim their rights.

The chapter starts with two examples: First, the peoples’ struggle, in Nepal, for democracy. Second- the Bolivian water war. In both examples, the people were successful, having achieved their goal in a democratic way, which gives the students positive strength to develop faith in democracy and its values. But, it could have other implications, such as if the majority is in favor of doing wrong, it will possible, as they are more in numbers and democracy could be understood in terms of ‘might is right’. Thus, one needs to be very careful, while quoting examples and even more careful, while teaching in class.

Further, the chapter says that in Nepal, people and the Mao party get their work done through arms. If the book favors such incidents (though change was important), the students may develop a different kind of attitude towards how democracy works and how one should act, if they want to take some decisions and this cannot be appreciated.

It is important to revisit this section from a human rights perspective, because struggle through arms, cannot be justified. It causes loss of life. Other ways of protection could have been discussed, such as hunger strikes. For this, the example of the Narmada River could have been given.
Further, the chapter talks about the role of some pressure groups in Nepal and Bolivia. Here, it is important to talk about some actual Human Rights Movements, because they, also, work as pressure groups. This aspect is missing in the chapter.

The focus shifts to political parties, in the next chapter. In the beginning, the chapter talks about the necessity of having political parties and their functions. The contribution has, also, been discussed, but not how political parties create problems, by using peoples’ sentiments and religious faith, to garner votes. Such realities need to be highlighted so that a healthy and balanced perspective can be developed, regarding the current political situation. The reality that sometimes political parties widen the difference, instead of bridging the gap, needs to be highlighted.

Page 78 raises a very important, current issue under the subtitle, ‘People Participation in Political Parties’, where it has been shown that political parties are at a critical juncture and people around the world, hardly, believe what political parties say, yet their membership has increased in our nation. In India, gradually, the number of participants in these political parties has increased. In 1967, this number was only 5 percent, but in 2004, this number increased to 12 percent. However, a major cause for concern has been that the number of voters are not increasing, but are either decreasing in some areas or remain constant. People are still not aware of the importance and the power of voting. They just do as if they are doing someone’s work. These realities need to be included in the text book.

With reference to the political parties’ programs and ideology, Congress has been over emphasized, which indicates the bias in the book. The 1975 emergency should be shown as a non-democratic decision by the concerned party, but has been ignored in the content.

Page 83 talks about the challenges political parties face. Certain very critical points have been raised such as a non-democratic environment in parties, family hegemony, money, anti-social elements, lack of alternatives and so on. These challenges are based on other issues which need to be discussed such as lack of education, poverty, corruption. Because of these problems, an ordinary person is unable to take part in politics. Forget about participating, they are not even able to freely vote for the right person.

Page 86 has a picture, in which all the political parties have been shown as ordinary persons and the election commission have been shown as ‘tanashah’ with a hunter in hand, trying to control the parties, but the parties are not listening to him. This example may give a wrong message that things in a democracy work forcefully. This example is unsuitable and a better example could have been taken to show faith in the democratic processes.
Chapters seven and eight, talk about the outcomes and challenges to a democracy. The outcomes of a democracy have been written to evaluate the democratic processes and their comparison with some non-democratic governments. It starts with lots of sensible questions about a democracy and its processes such as: what does a democracy do? What outcomes can we reasonably expect from a democracy? Also, does a democracy fulfill these expectations in real life? The chapter says that the above questions will be analyzed with reference to the quality of government, the economic well-being, inequality, social differences, conflict and, finally, freedom and dignity. Such a beginning motivates learners to read the chapter.

What is good about the chapter is that, not only does it try to provide a comparative understanding of a democratic and nondemocratic way of governance but, also, attempts to evaluate the processes of democracy itself. Page no 90 says, “we face a dilemma: democracy is seen to be good in principle, but felt to be not as good in its practice.” But does not explain further, why this does happen.

The chapter discusses the strengths of a democracy in comparison with non-democratic nations, with reference to accountability, responsiveness and legitimization, where it, honestly, presents data, which shows that nondemocratic governments are higher in the scale of economic development, but accountability towards the people is very low, in such governments.

Another thing which makes the content based on a human rights based perspective is that learners realize that the government has many ways, to gather information about people, but not how people can know about the government. Therefore, RTI has been discussed here very contextually. In short, the chapter seems to prove that the best outcome of a democracy is, that it is a democracy and this has been explained with reference to regular, free and fair elections; open public debates on major policies and legislation; and citizens’ rights to information about the government and its functioning.

The chapter could have touched upon the fact that India, being the largest democracy, allows everyone the right to speech, but no right to food. Thus, if one is deprived of a basic necessity like food, how will they be able to question the state.

The chapter seems to suggest that if development has not taken place in democratic countries, in comparison to nondemocratic nations, the reason is that a larger population is involved. This, however, is an incorrect rationale, as other reasons exist for this delay, such as corruption, lack of political will, biased political and economic decisions. Through this chapter, students will understand that whatever is given to the people is enough and they should live happily with just only that. One cannot discuss such issues only with reference to development Vs democracy.
The chapter emphasizes that in a democracy, the majority rules and they participate in decision making. It could have been discussed that, now, the situation has changed, and no party gets a direct public majority to form the government and, instead, the government could be formed by the political party, which has been rejected by the majority. That the entire spirit of democracy is diminishing, needs to be discussed, which is missing in the chapter.

The chapter ends with positive lines such as, “what is most distinctive about democracy is that its examination never gets over.”

Chapter 8, ‘Challenges to Democracy’, is more of a recapitulation and evaluates the students’ understanding of democracy given throughout the book. The chapter raises some fundamental questions of democratic politics, such as are the challenges being faced the democracy in our country and in the rest of the world? What can be done to reform democratic politics? The chapter claims that students will be able to discover other ways to reform democracy and its processes.

The chapter categorizes the challenges of a democracy in three basic categories: First, to establish democracy, in non-democratic nations, which are referred to as foundational challenges. Second, challenges which involve applying the basic principles of a democratic government across all the regions, different social groups and various institutions, which is referred to as challenge of expansion. Third, to strengthen the democratic processes, this is referred to as the deepening of democracy.

Certain examples have been given on page 103 and students have been asked to put these examples in the three given categories. This is a very good exercise to engage learners in understanding democratic challenges.

Further, the chapter discusses the political reforms, by explaining that, instead of having a list of reforms, some broad guidelines need to be developed, which would work, as a framework for these reforms. Some guidelines have been given and some of these are, clearly, related to a human rights perspective. First, to think that new laws will ban all undesirable, things is untrue. For this, it is necessary to change the people’s mindset; there is need for self-discipline and political will power. Second, any legal change must carefully look at what results it will have on politics. Sometimes, the results may be counterproductive; many states have banned people, who have more than two children from contesting the Panchayat elections. This has resulted in denial of democratic opportunity to the poor and women, which was not the intention. Third, democratic reforms need to be brought about, principally, through political practice. Therefore, the main focus of political reforms should be on ways to strengthen democratic practice. Forth, any proposal for political reforms should not only think
what is a good solution but, also, who will implement it and how. These suggestions will give the given content a human rights based perspective, because a sense of commitment and collaboration will prevail. A discussion has been presented between Rose and Madam Lyngdoh, which clearly indicate that political reforms are not very simple and removing all politicians is not the solution. From the discussion, it appears that laws can have little impact, unless people, themselves, do not resist the attempts to mislead and divide people in the name of caste and religion. This takes the students’ understanding beyond the legal perspective to a human rights perspective.