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Educational affiliations

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Attention: State Board Members &
Curriculum Commissioners
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Board Members and Commissioners:

As an American Hindu who was born and educated in the public schools and the universities of California and who is actively involved in educational issues, I am pleased to contribute to the current textbook evaluation and adoption proceedings.

I have had the opportunity to examine the coverage of India and Hinduism in the sixth grade social studies textbooks published by Holt, McDougal-Littell, Glencoe, Prentice-Hall, MacMillan MacGraw-Hill, and Harcourt.

The books have great graphical content and stress important skills as critical thinking and written expression as well as required content.

However, I am concerned that there is considerable misinformation and misleading information included in all of the textbooks. This information, much of which is not accepted by scholars, has a negative impact on all students, but particularly those of Indian Hindu heritage, others of minority ethnic groups and girls.

As in many cultures, the roles of girls and women in ancient Indian culture were different from, but not less important than that of boys and men. Some examples of the treatment of women in the textbooks are very misleading, referring to isolated instances. Marriage, like in many cultures, was after the completion of education and was not "at a young age" independently of the end of schooling. Coverage of "caste" is, in most of the textbooks, incorrect and/or misleading, as well as negative..

Likewise, the much of the information on India concerns the "Aryan invasion". Although the so-called "Aryan invasion" must be taught as it is included in the Content Standards, it is possible to include the findings from new research and encourage discussion on the inconsistencies in the earlier theory. The Content Standards need to be revised on this issue as soon as possible.

Please, for California students of all backgrounds and their families, carefully consider the various options you have in adopting the sixth grade social studies textbooks so that our students have the best education possible in an atmosphere in which diversity is properly understood and valued.

The educational organizations with which I am affiliated will be pleased to help in this regard.

Sincerely,

<Digitally signed when sent>
Beth Kulkarni