

7 NOV 2001

CBSE courses panel chief rejects history syllabus draft

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 6. The chairman of the senior secondary courses committee for history in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Dr. D. N. Jha, has rejected the draft history syllabus prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

In a letter sent to the CBSE on September 10 this year, Dr. Jha has said that the NCERT syllabus should not be adopted/adapted by the Board as it was "in no way an improvement on the existing syllabus which has been approved by the CBSE for 2002".

According to Dr. Jha, other members of the committee also had reservations about the draft syllabus, but were not as open as him in articulating their views. The draft syllabus, he said, was not well thought out and "many weird ideas have found place in it".

Some of the rubrics that Dr. Jha finds out of place in the ancient India syllabus, include 'Eternal India', 'Traditional history of India' and 'Germination of High Philosophy'. Also, he objects to the manner in which the syllabus ignores an entire period of Indian history by jumping straight from the Paramara-Chandela age to the advent of the Mughals.

"Those who drew up the syllabus

have no idea of the chronology of Indian history. Also, the entire syllabus framed by NCERT 'experts' is a good example of the communal perception of India's past. For example, nothing is said about the cultural and scientific developments during the medieval period," Dr. Jha has noted in his letter to the CBSE which, as per precedent, either prescribes or recommends NCERT syllabus/textbooks for use by schools.

Dodging questions on Dr. Jha's letter and refusing to reveal the contents of the report submitted by the courses committee, senior officials of the CBSE said they were still awaiting the final syllabus from the NCERT. Also, CBSE officials refused to comment on Dr. Jha's charge that the Board was under pressure to quickly clear the syllabus.

Though the CBSE is said to have forwarded the recommendation of the courses committee to NCERT, it is not known whether Dr. Jha's views have found mention in this communication. In fact, the CBSE is toeing the line that Dr. Jha had not attended most of the meetings of the courses committee, while the historian maintains that he had not heard from the Board ever since he made his position on the NCERT's history syllabus clear.

ED1
NCERT