

EDITORIALS - 6TH OCT 2026

1. The knock on the Supreme Court's door (GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial 'The knock on the Supreme Court's door' was published in **The Indian Express** on 6th Oct 2026, highlights threats to **voting rights** and **electoral accountability** arising from **electoral roll revision** and the Supreme Court's responsibility to address them.

Electoral Governance and Voting Rights

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** reportedly functions as a one-person authority despite its multi-member structure, weakening internal **checks and balances** during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.
- Justice Ujjal Bhuyan described large-scale **disenfranchisement** through SIR as unconstitutional, linking **universal adult franchise** and equal vote value to the freedom struggle's vision of equality.
- Former Supreme Court judge Rohinton Fali Nariman warned that SIR's **voter removals** imperil the **right to vote**, central to democracy.
- Shifting the **burden of proof** onto vulnerable voters and imposing successive procedural hurdles undermine the ECI's record of **inclusiveness**.

Judicial Scrutiny and Institutional Accountability

- The **Supreme Court's** repeated benefit of doubt to the ECI, despite exclusion concerns, puts its protection of **electoral participation** under scrutiny.
- The Court's disapproval of **Form 6** changes complicating new-voter registration and its questions about **internal decision-making** are welcome accountability measures.
- Pending cases concerning SIR procedures, appointments and functioning require sustained **judicial scrutiny** to preserve the ECI's constitutional standing under **Article 324**.

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Safeguards for Electoral Roll Accuracy

- **Balanced verification:** Verification must address wrongful inclusion without excluding eligible voters; the Election Commission of India's (ECI) Form 7 procedure provides a mechanism for objections and deletions.
- **Prior notice:** Deletions require an opportunity to respond; ECI safeguards prescribe personal notice and reasonable hearing for proposed removals, except confirmed deaths.
- **Accessible documentation:** Documentary disadvantage should not cause exclusion; ECI permits homeless persons' residence verification through repeated night visits by Booth Level Officers, without documentary residence proof.
- **Effective appeals:** Wrongful deletions need accessible remedies; ECI guidance provides appeals against Electoral Registration Officer decisions, while its voter-service portal offers appeal tracking.

- **Targeted scrutiny:** Unusual deletion patterns warrant additional checks; ECI safeguards require personal cross-verification where polling-station deletions exceed 2% or one person objects to more than five entries.
- **Transparent reporting:** Public disclosure enables scrutiny; ECI procedures require publication of claims and objections on electoral websites and designated notice boards before decisions are taken.
- **Technological safeguards:** Digital systems should support accountable human decisions; ECI's ERONET integrates registration, field verification and decision support, offering a basis for checking electronically flagged discrepancies.

2. From India to Global South, a Gujarat water-governance model (GS Paper III Environment)

This editorial '**From India to Global South, a Gujarat water-governance model**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 6th Oct 2026, highlights **lessons** from Gujarat's water governance reforms for scalable, sustainable **water security** across the Global South.

Governance and Institutional Reform

- India's ninth International Water Week prioritised **climate-resilient water management**, sustainable supply, efficiency and **used-water treatment** as environmental and economic resources.
- Gujarat's **2001–2014 reforms** informed national programmes after 2014: Swachh Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Namami Gange, Atal Bhujal Yojana and **Per Drop More Crop**.
- The case study, *From Gujarat to India: Water Lessons for the World*, covering **2001–2026**, identifies **institutional capacity**, political prioritisation, financing, implementation and community engagement as essential alongside engineering.
- The **Delhi Declaration (October 2018)** articulated the **4 Ps**: political leadership prioritising water; public and private financing covering capital and recurring costs; partnerships across governments, communities and knowledge institutions; people's participation in local decisions.

Integrated Resource Management and Community Ownership

- **Water resources** and **service delivery** require joint planning: anticipating urban, industrial and irrigation demand, especially in rapidly growing African cities, costs less than later retrofitting.
- **Water reuse** for non-potable purposes, including data centres and semiconductor fabrication, can support future demand; India's annual **treated-water sales revenue** could reach ₹73,000 crore by 2047 at current prices.
- **Pani Samitis**, reliable infrastructure and balanced internal resources and external support strengthen **community ownership** of water conservation, harvesting and recharge programmes.

- Gujarat's **Chintan Shivirs (2001–2014)** aligned actionable water policies with community expectations; national coordination continued through the **Departmental Summit on Water**, addressed by the Prime Minister in September 2026.

Scaling Water Security

- The world remains off track for **Sustainable Development Goal 6**, covering safe water, sanitation and sustainable resource management by 2030; estimated additional **annual investment** required is \$500 billion.
- **JJM's nationwide implementation** demonstrates delivery at scale; achieving global targets requires sustained **political leadership**, financing, institutions, infrastructure, data collection and maintenance, with Gujarat's lessons adapted to local contexts.

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Ecological Limits of Water Governance Models

- **Groundwater limits:** Supply expansion must account for aquifer depletion; the World Bank identifies intensive tubewell irrigation in Punjab as a cause of sharply falling groundwater levels.
- **Cropping incentives:** Conservation requires changing agricultural demand; Haryana's Mera Pani Meri Virasat scheme encourages diversification from paddy to alternative crops to address declining groundwater.
- **Ecological flows:** Human withdrawals must preserve river ecosystems; India's 2018 Ganga notification mandates minimum environmental flows, monitored by the Central Water Commission.
- **Regional suitability:** Water models require local adaptation; the Central Ground Water Board's National Aquifer Mapping and Management programme develops strategies using aquifer characteristics, resource availability and water quality.
- **Efficiency paradox:** Efficient irrigation need not reduce overall consumption; a 2008 Upper Rio Grande Basin study found that efficiency subsidies could increase depletion while reducing return flows.
- **Energy incentives:** Pumping incentives should reward conservation; Gujarat's Dhundi solar cooperative enables farmers to sell surplus electricity, creating an income alternative to additional groundwater extraction.
- **Distributional equity:** Allocation should protect essential needs before commercial uses; the National Water Policy, 2012 recognises drinking water, sanitation, livelihood requirements and minimum ecosystem needs.

3. The problem is not just what history textbooks teach, but also what they don't (GS Paper I Society)

This editorial '**The problem is not just what history textbooks teach, but also what they don't**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 6th Oct 2026, highlights how **selective narratives** and **omitted historical processes** weaken **critical inquiry** in history education.

Historical Understanding and Curricular Gaps

- **History education** should explain how technological, economic, social and intellectual changes shaped human lives; revisions favouring antagonistic group narratives weaken this **analytical purpose**.
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training's **Grade IX textbook, *Understanding Society: India and Beyond — Part 2***, promises analytical skills but presents **chronological events** with insufficient explanation of historical processes.
- Its independence chapter leaves **colonialism and nationalism** conceptually unexplained, omits literature, capitalism and **constitutional reforms**, including Ripon's local-governance initiative, Morley-Minto and Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, and fails to explain collective resistance across diverse communities.

Religious Framing and Historical Contradictions

- The cultural-history chapter presents **religious antagonism** as the context for Bhakti-Sufi interaction, contrasting Islam with diverse Indian traditions, yet acknowledges **monotheism** in the Upanishads.
- Linking women's restricted mobility and **veiling** to Islamic invasions relies on Abu Zayd's account; references in Bhasa's *Pratima* and Sudraka's *Mrichchhakatika* challenge claims of veiling's **pre-Islamic absence**.

Loss of Critical Inquiry

- Teachers can correct factual errors, but **glorified narratives** and religion-centred accounts displace history's **interrogative character**, making the selection and emphasis of content the deeper problem.
- Textbooks mention armies, steel, Vedic sacrifices, astronomy and Bankim Chandra's *Anandamath*, but omit **underlying processes**: provisioning, weapons supply, furnaces, fire maintenance, armillary-sphere operation and schooling that enabled **literacy**.

Beyond Editorial

Institutional Safeguards for Textbook Revision

- **Independent review**: Academic scrutiny should precede publication; the German-Polish Textbook Commission, established in 1972, jointly reviews curricula and teaching materials for scholarly accuracy and pedagogical responsibility.
- **Source transparency**: Historical claims should expose their evidence; NCERT's *Themes in Indian History* uses identified inscriptions and textual extracts, enabling students to examine how interpretations are constructed.
- **Public consultation**: Revisions should incorporate classroom experience; India released the draft National Curriculum Framework for School Education for public feedback in April 2023, providing a consultation precedent.

- **Documented changes:** Significant revisions need traceable explanations; NCERT publishes class-wise rationalised-content lists, providing a disclosure mechanism that can be strengthened through change-specific academic justifications.
- **Evidence-based plurality:** Credible competing perspectives should be distinguishable; PRIME's *Learning Each Other's Historical Narrative* presents Israeli and Palestinian accounts side by side, offering a comparative teaching model.
- **Age-appropriate design:** Complexity should match learners' development; the National Education Policy's 5+3+3+4 structure differentiates curricular and pedagogical approaches across foundational, preparatory, middle and secondary stages.
- **Periodic correction:** Publishers need transparent correction procedures; NCERT's 2025 journals policy assigns editorial boards responsibility for correcting reported inaccuracies, offering a model for textbook error-redressal systems.