

PRESS RELEASE

A response to the Indian Express (28 August 2025) report on the NCERT modules on 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day'

A report entitled 'Indian History Congress slams NCERT modules: Distorted polarizing history fed to school children's minds' appeared in the Indian Express, 28 Aug 2025 (online, 10:13 AM IST). It reports that a resolution by the Indian History Congress (IHC) has criticized the two new NCERT modules, one each for the Secondary and Middle stages, on 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day'.

According to the report the IHC resolution made the following charges against the module:

1. The IHC termed the modules as "falsehoods, with a clear communal intent," and said that "distorted polarizing history" is "being fed to tender minds of school going children."
2. It further said "... the modules hold not only the Muslim League but also the Indian National Congress responsible for the Partition of the country."
3. The IHC resolution also said that, "the British colonial rulers are given a clean chit in these modules."
4. According to the IHC resolution, "All descriptions in the modules refer to Hindus and Sikhs killed and humiliated and no mention of the retaliatory horrors inflicted on Muslims."

However, going through the modules under questions, all the four accusations are unfounded and false. Here is a point-wise rejoinder:

[1]. The IHC accuses the modules of 'falsehood' and 'distortion' but fails to mention a single sentence in any of the two modules to be false or distorted.

[2]. The IHC takes umbrage that the modules 'hold responsible also the Indian National Congress for the Partition of the country'. The modules (Secondary Stage module, pp. 5-6; Middle Stage module, pp. 4-6) have quoted Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the tallest Congress leaders of the time, clearly saying so. It is strange that the IHC chose to question it.

[3]. The IHC makes a false allegation that the modules give 'a clean chit to the British rulers'. This is far from reality. The module for the Secondary Stage (p. 8) clearly mentions the role of Lord Mountbatten in the Partition: "The blame, however, for arbitrarily shift the date of transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947 lies with Mountbatten. He secured agreement from all parties for this accelerated timeline. Due to it many essential arrangements that should have preceded Partition were never completed. The Partition became disorderly and chaotic."

28 July, 2025
New Delhi

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The module for the Middle Stage (pp.5-6), records: “But Mountbatten proved to be guilty of a major blunder. He preponed the date for the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947. He persuaded everyone to agree to this. Because of this, complete preparations could not be made before the Partition. The demarcation of the Partition boundaries was also done hastily. For that, Sir Cyril Radcliffe was given only five weeks. In Punjab, even two days after 15 August 1947, millions of people did not know whether they were in India or in Pakistan. Such haste was a great act of carelessness.”

Thus, the accusation of the IHC that the British are given ‘a clean chit’ in the modules is factually incorrect.

[4]. Finally, the charge of the IHC on the modules that “All descriptions in the modules refer to Hindus and Sikhs killed and humiliated and no mention of the retaliatory horrors inflicted on Muslims,” is also false. However, the fact is that these modules have not singled out any particular community as the only sufferers or the only perpetrators of suffering.

The module for the Secondary Stage (p.2) mentions: “One terrifying aspect of the Partition was the large-scale massacre of innocent people. Trains carrying refugees would sometimes arrive at their destinations filled only with corpses, having been slaughtered en route. Communal violence destroyed countless villages, or emptied them of an entire community.”

Likewise, the module for the Middle Stage (pp.1-2) records: “At least 6 lacs people were killed in communal violence during the Partition. Crores of people became homeless and, as refugees in their own country, were forced to search for shelter. The atrocities committed against women were unimaginable. In many places, to preserve their honour, they jumped into wells and gave up their lives. For all these reasons, the Partition turned into an unprecedented human catastrophe. All this did not occur as any natural calamity.”

It is clear that the modules have not communalized the sufferings of the partition. No community has been named as the only sufferer or the only villain.

Thus, all the reported accusations made by the IHC stand incorrect. The modules in question do not communalize the sufferers or the culprits of the partition of the country, and the modules have not recorded anything that is incorrect or inauthentic. It is unfortunate that the IHC resolution misleads the unsuspecting public.

These modules on Partition are about remembering the human cost and learning lessons for the future, not about alleging anyone. NCERT recommends that people should go through the modules themselves to ascertain the facts of the matter.