

Social Science

India and the Contemporary World - I

Textbook in History for Class IX



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognize that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavor by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

NCERT appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the Advisory Group on Social Science, Professor Hari Vasudevan and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor Neeladri Bhattacharya for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development

of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations, which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G. P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

Director

New Delhi
20 December 2005

National Council of Educational
Research and Training

History and a Changing World

As we live our life in the present and read about the happenings around the world in newspapers, we do not usually pause to think about the longer history of these events. We see change before our eyes, but do not always ask, why are things changing? Very often we do not even notice that things were not the same in the past. History is about tracking these changes, understanding how and why they are taking place, how the present world in which we live has evolved.

The focus of the history books of Classes IX and X is on the emergence of the contemporary world. In earlier classes (VI – VIII) you have read about the history of India. In the next two years (Classes IX and X) you will see how the story of India's past is related to the larger history of the world. We cannot understand what was happening within India unless we see this connection. This is particularly true about a world in which economies and societies have become increasingly inter-connected. History cannot be always contained within defined territorial boundaries.

In any case there is no reason to think of national territorial boundaries as the only valid unit of our study. There are times when a focus on a small region - a locality, a village, an island, a desert tract, a forest, a mountain - helps us understand the rich variety in people's lives and histories that make up the life of the nation. We cannot talk of the nation without the people, nor the locality without the nation. Borrowing from the statement of a famous French historian, Fernand Braudel, we may also say: it is not possible to talk of the nation without the world.

The textbooks you will read in the next two years will combine these different levels of focus. We move between a close focus on particular communities and regions to the history of the nation; between the histories as they unfold in India and Europe to the developments in Africa and Indonesia. Our focus will shift according to themes.

What are these themes and how are they organised? What is the logic behind the choices of themes?

All too often in the past, the history of the modern world was associated with the history of the west. It was as if change and progress happened only in the west. As if the histories of other countries were frozen in time, they were motionless and static. People in the west were seen as enterprising, innovative, scientific, industrious, efficient and willing to change. People in the east - or in Africa and South America - were considered traditional, lazy, superstitious, and resistant to change.

For many years now these notions have been questioned by historians. We know now that every society has had its history of change. So in understanding the making of the modern world we have to look at the way different societies experienced and

fashioned these changes. We have to see how the histories of these different countries were inter-linked. Changes in one society shaped the other; developments in India and other colonies impacted on Europe. The contemporary world was not shaped by the west alone.

So the history of the contemporary world is not only about the growth of industries and trade, technology and science, railways and roads. It is equally about the forest dwellers and pastoralists, shifting cultivators and small peasants. All these social groups in diverse ways have played their part in making the contemporary world what it is. And it is this varied world which you will learn about this year.

Section I, in both books, focuses on some of the events and processes that are critical to the understanding of the modern world. This year you will read about the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and Nazism in this section. Next year you will know about nationalism and anti-colonial movements in India and elsewhere.

Section II will move from dramatic events to the routines of people's lives – their economic activities and livelihood patterns. You will see what the contemporary world has meant for forest people and pastoralists; and how they have coped with and defined the nature of these changes. Next year you will read more about the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, capitalism and colonialism.

True, we read a lot about such issues. But what we read does not tell us about their histories. They give us no idea of how things have evolved and why they change. Once we learn to ask historical questions about all that is around us, history in fact acquires a new meaning. It allows us to see everyday things from a different angle. We realise that even seemingly ordinary things have a history that is important for us to know.

To know how the contemporary world has evolved we will therefore move from India to Africa, from Europe to Indonesia. We will read both about the big events and important ideas, as well as everyday life. In the process of these journeys you will discover how history can be exciting, how it can help us understand the world in which we live.

Neeladri Bhattacharya
Chief Advisor – History

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Shalini Advani did several rounds of copy editing with care, and ensured that the text was accessible to children. Shyama Warner has done more than proof reading. We thank them both for meeting our impossible deadlines and being so involved with the project.

We have made every effort to acknowledge credits at the end of the book; but we apologise in advance for any omissions that may have inadvertently taken place.

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For Extended Learning

You may access the following chapters through QR Code.

- Peasants and Farmers
- History and Sport: The Story of Cricket
- Clothing: A Social History

These Chapters were printed in the previous textbook; the same are being provided in digital mode for extended learning.