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NCERT tweaks Class 12 History book: Harappans indigenous, doubts over Aryan migration

These are some of the significant changes introduced by the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) in the history chapter meant for Class 12 students on the origins and fall of the Harappan civilisation.

Written by [Ritika Chopra](#) [Follow](#)

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These changes are part of the revision and updating of history textbooks undertaken by NCERT for the academic year 2024-25, which were recently communicated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

From the assertion that recent studies of ancient DNA obtained from archaeological sources at Rakhigarhi, an Indus Valley site in Haryana, rule out [Aryan immigration](#) to a call for more research into whether the Harappans and the Vedic people were the same. These are some of the significant changes introduced by the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) in the history chapter meant for Class 12 students on the origins and fall of the Harappan civilisation.

These changes are part of the revision and updating of history textbooks undertaken by NCERT for the academic year 2024-25, which were recently communicated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). NCERT, which advises the Union government on school education, is the apex body tasked with drafting school textbooks used by more than 60 crore students.

Although changes have been carried out in History textbooks for Classes 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12, the most substantive changes are in the new history chapter titled “Bricks, Beads and Bones – [The Harappan Civilisation](#)” in the Class 12 History textbook called ‘Themes in India History Part-I.’

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The additions and deletions related to the Harappan Civilisation have been justified on the grounds that “recent evidence from archaeological sites” warrants a “correction” in the said chapter. The additions primarily emphasise the “unbroken continuity for 5000 years” of the Harappan civilisation, reference recent archaeogenetic research conducted at the Rakhigarhi site to rule out Aryan immigration, and suggest that the Harappans practised some form of democratic system.

For instance, to emphasise “continuity”, NCERT has deleted a sentence that states “It appears that there was a break between the Early Harappan and the Harappan civilisation, evident from large-scale burning at some sites, as well as the abandonment of certain settlements.”

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The Council has added three new paragraphs on Rakhigarhi which mainly rejects Aryan immigration. “Harappans are the indigenous people of this region,”

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“The genetic roots of the Harappans go back to 10,000 BCE. The DNA of the Harappans has continued till today and a majority of the South Asian population appears to be their descendants. Due to trade and cultural contacts of the Harappans with distant regions there is a mixture of genes in small quantity. The

large-scale migration of the so-called Aryans. The research also indicates that the people coming from the bordering areas and distant regions were absorbed in the Indian society. At no stage, the genetic history of the Indians was either discontinued or broken. As the Harappans started moving towards Iran and Central Asia, their genes also gradually spread in those regions,” the new paragraph pertaining to the archaeogenetic research at Rakhigarhi, states.

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Further a sentence has been added calling for more research into the relation between Harappans and Vedic people. It states, “More research is also required on the relationship between the Harappans and the Vedic people as some scholars have argued that the authors of the Harappan civilisation and the Vedic people were the same.” This sentence, NCERT states, has been added for “critical thinking of the students.”

It’s pertinent to mention here that ancient Indian history, especially the origins of the Harappan Civilization, is a subject deeply divided by ideological perspectives. Pre-Marxist Indian historians believe that the source of Indian civilization lies with indigenous people who called themselves Aryans and were the same as the Vedic people. In contrast, Marxist historians support the Aryan migration theory, arguing that the Harappans were pre-Vedic.

Some of the other changes made in Sociology and History textbooks include:

In the Class 6 History textbook a Chapter titled ‘Tribals, Dikus and the Vision of a Golden Age’ talks about [Birsa Munda](#)’s opposition to “missionaries and Hindu landlords.” Here, the word Hindu has been dropped and justified stating that it reflects the “diverse social conditions of the time.”

In the Class 7 History textbook Our Past-II, A Chapter titled ‘The Divine’ has a section on Nayanars, saints devoted to Shiva during the seventh to ninth centuries. Under this section, a sentence states that there were 63 Nayanars, who belonged to the different caste backgrounds, such as potters, “untouchable” workers, peasants, hunters, soldiers, Brahmanas and chiefs. NCERT has dropped the words “caste backgrounds” from this sentence and replaced it “social backgrounds” with the justification that “workers peasants, hunters, soldiers reflect social background” and not caste.

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Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are social groups recognised by the Indian Constitution as specially marked by poverty, powerlessness and social stigma.”

The portion that states SCs and STs are marked by poverty, powerlessness and social stigma has been deleted. This has been justified by NCERT as “minor language editing for better construction of the sentence.”

Another example of Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada river under the same section on adivasi struggles has been edited. The original sentence reads: “Projects such as the Sardar Sarovar dam on the river Narmada in western India and the Polavaram dam on the river Godavari in [Andhra Pradesh](#) displace hundreds of thousands of adivasis, driving them to greater destitution.” The part on such projects driving tribals to “greater destitution” has been dropped.

An image of communal riots in the sixth chapter of the Class 12 Sociology textbook (Indian Society) has been dropped on the ground that it is “not relevant in the present time.” The photo accompanied text under section titled ‘Communalism, Secularism and the Nation-State’ in Chapter 6.

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Ritika Chopra

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An award-winning journalist with 17 years of experience, Ritika Chopra is the Chief of the National Bureau (Govt) and National Education Editor with The Indian Ex

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