

Textbook in History for Class XII

THEMES IN INDIAN HISTORY

PART III



12125

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NCERT

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

ISBN 81-7450-651-9 (Part I)
81-7450-753-3 (Part II)
81-7450-770-1 (Part III)

First Edition

July 2007

Sravana 1929

Reprinted

February 2008

Magha 1929

January 2009

Pausa 1930

January 2010

Magha 1931

November 2010

Kartika 1932

March 2013

Phalguna 1934

November 2013

Kartika 1935

December 2014

Pausa 1936

January 2016

Pausa 1937

February 2017

Magha 1938

December 2017

Pausa 1939

January 2019

Pausa 1940

PD 120T BS

© **National Council of Educational
Research and Training, 2007**

₹ 130.00

Printed on 80 GSM paper with NCERT
watermark

Published at the Publication Division
by the Secretary, National Council of
Educational Research and Training,
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016
and printed at Shree Ram Printers, D-6
& F-Shree Ram Printers, D-6 & F-455,
Sector-63, Noida - 201 301 (U.P.)

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Cover and Layout

Art Creations, New Delhi

Cartography

Cartographic Design Agency

FOREWORD

The *National Curriculum Framework* (NCF), 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 recognise 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 endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (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 in Social Sciences, Professor Hari Vasudevan, and the Chief Advisor for this book,

Professor Neeladri Bhattacharya, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi 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.

New Delhi
20 November 2006

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

DEFINING THE FOCUS OF STUDY

What defines the focus of this book? What does it seek to do? How is it linked to what has been studied in earlier classes?

In Classes VI to VIII we looked at Indian history from early beginnings to modern times, with a focus on one chronological period in each year. Then in the books for Classes IX and X, the frame of reference changed. We looked at a shorter period of time, focusing specifically on a close study of the contemporary world. We moved beyond territorial boundaries, beyond the limits of nation states, to see how different people in different places have played their part in the making of the modern world. The history of India became connected to a wider inter-linked history. Subsequently in Class XI we studied *Themes in World History*, expanding our chronological focus, looking at the vast span of years from the beginning of human life to the present, but selecting only a set of themes for serious exploration. This year we will study *Themes in Indian History*.

The book begins with Harappa and ends with the framing of the Indian Constitution. What it offers is not a general survey of five millennia, but a close study of select themes. The history books in earlier years have already acquainted you with Indian history. It is time we explored some themes in greater detail.

In choosing the themes we have tried to ensure that we learn about developments in different spheres – economic, cultural, social, political, and religious – even as we attempt to break the boundaries between them. Some themes in the book will introduce you to the politics of the times and the nature of authority and power; others explore the way societies are organised, and the way they function and change; still others tell us about religious life and ritual practices, about the working of economies, and the changes within rural and urban societies.

Each of these themes will also allow you to have a closer look at the historians' craft. To retrieve the past, historians have to find sources that make the past accessible. But sources do not just reveal the past; historians have to grapple with sources, interpret them, and make them speak. This is what makes history exciting. The same sources can tell us new things if we ask new questions, and engage with them in new ways. So we need to see how historians read sources, and how they discover new things in old sources.

But historians do not only re-examine old records. They discover new ones. Sometimes these could be chance discoveries.

Archaeologists may unexpectedly come across seals and mounds that provide clues to the existence of a site of an ancient civilisation. Rummaging through the dusty records of a district collectorate a historian may trip over a bundle of records that contain legal cases of local disputes, and these may open up a new world of village life several centuries back. Yet are such discoveries only accidents? You may bump into a bundle of old records in an archive, open it up and see it, without discovering the significance of the source. The source may mean nothing to you unless you have relevant questions in mind. You have to track the source, read the text, follow the clues, and make the inter-connections before you can reconstruct the past. The physical discovery of a record does not simply open up the past. When Alexander Cunningham first saw a Harappan seal, he could make no sense of it. Only much later was the significance of the seals discovered.

In fact when historians begin to ask new questions, explore new themes, they have to often search for new types of sources. If we wish to know about revolutionaries and rebels, official sources can reveal only a partial picture, one that will be shaped by official censure and prejudice. We need to look for other sources – diaries of rebels, their personal letters, their writings and pronouncements. And these are not always easy to come by. If we have to understand experiences of people who suffered the trauma of partition, then oral sources might reveal more than written sources.

As the vision of history broadens, historians begin tracking new sources, searching for new clues to understand the past. And when that happens, the conception of what constitutes a source itself changes. There was a time when only written records were acknowledged as authentic. What was written could be verified, cited, and cross-checked. Oral evidence was never considered a valid source: who was to guarantee its authenticity and verifiability? This mistrust of oral sources has not yet disappeared, but oral evidence has been innovatively used to uncover experiences that no other record could reveal.

Through the book this year, you will enter the world of historians, accompany them in their search for new clues, and see how they carry on their dialogues with the past. You will witness the way they tease out meaning out of records, read inscriptions, excavate archaeological sites, make sense of beads and bones, interpret the epics, look at the stupas and buildings, examine paintings and photographs, interpret police reports and revenue records, and listen to the voices of the past. Each theme will explore the peculiarities and possibilities of one particular type of source. It will discuss what a source can tell and what it cannot.

This is the last part of *Themes in Indian History*.

NEELADRI BHATTACHARYA
Chief Advisor, History

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Themes in Indian History, Part III is the result of a collective effort of a large number of educationists, school teachers, historians, editors and designers. Each chapter was discussed and revised over months of intensive discussion. We thank all those who participated in the process.

Several people read the chapters and provided support. We thank in particular the members of the Monitoring Committee, Prof. J. S. Grewal and Shobha Bajpai for their useful comments on earlier drafts. Prof. Narayani Gupta, Prabhu Mohapatra and Tarun Saint offered valuable suggestions. Mahmood Farooqi suggested extracts for Chapter 11. Partha Shil, Akhila Yachuri and Sabyasachi Dasgupta gave research support.

Many institutions and individuals provided visual resources for the book: Victoria Memorial Museum and Library, Kolkata; Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi; Alkazi Foundation for the Arts, New Delhi; The Osian's Archive and Library Collection, Mumbai; CIVIC Archives, New Delhi; Photo Division, Government of India; South Asia Centre, University of Chicago. Chittaranjan Panda, Kaushik Bhowmik, Pratik Chakrabarty, and Rahab Alkazi took personal care in procuring visual material for illustrations. Jutta and Jyotindra Jain opened up their vast collection of images with a generosity rare amongst collectors. We thank them all.

Shalini Advani and Shyama Warner did many rounds of editing with care and enthusiasm. Ritu Topa of Arrt Creations designed the book, working tirelessly to meet impossible deadlines. Albinus Tirkey provided technical support.

We have made every effort to acknowledge credits, but we apologise in advance for any omission that may have inadvertently taken place.

CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Defining the Focus of Study	v
How to Use This Book	xi

PART III

THEME TEN	257
COLONIALISM AND THE COUNTRYSIDE	
Exploring Official Archives	

THEME ELEVEN	288
REBELS AND THE RAJ	
The Revolt of 1857 and Its Representations	

THEME TWELVE	316
COLONIAL CITIES	
Urbanisation, Planning and Architecture	

THEME THIRTEEN	346
MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT	
Civil Disobedience and Beyond	

THEME FOURTEEN	376
UNDERSTANDING PARTITION	
Politics, Memories, Experiences	

THEME FIFTEEN	405
FRAMING THE CONSTITUTION	
The Beginning of a New Era	



PART I (Pages 1- 114)

THEME ONE

BRICKS, BEADS AND BONES
The Harappan Civilisation

THEME TWO

KINGS, FARMERS AND TOWNS
Early States and Economies
(c. 600 BCE - 600 CE)

THEME THREE

KINSHIP, CASTE AND CLASS
Early Societies
(c. 600 BCE - 600 CE)

THEME FOUR

THINKERS, BELIEFS AND BUILDINGS
Cultural Developments
(c. 600 BCE - 600 CE)



PART II (Pages 115 - 256)

THEME FIVE

THROUGH THE EYES OF TRAVELLERS
Perceptions of Society
(c. tenth to seventeenth century)

THEME SIX

BHAKTI-SUFI TRADITIONS
Changes in Religious Beliefs
and Devotional Texts
(c. eighth to eighteenth century)

THEME SEVEN

AN IMPERIAL CAPITAL: VIJAYANAGARA
(c. fourteenth to sixteenth century)

THEME EIGHT

PEASANTS, ZAMINDARS AND THE STATE
Agrarian Society and the Mughal Empire
(c. sixteenth-seventeenth centuries)

THEME NINE

KINGS AND CHRONICLES
The Mughal Courts
(c. sixteenth-seventeenth centuries)



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is the last part of *Themes in Indian History*.

- ✓ Each chapter is divided into numbered sections and subsections to facilitate learning.
- ✓ You will also find other material enclosed in boxes.

These contain:

Short
meanings

Additional
information

More elaborate
definitions

These are meant to assist and enrich the learning process, but are **not intended for evaluation**.

- ✓ Each chapter ends with a set of **timelines**. This is to be treated as background information, and **not for evaluation**.
- ✓ There are **figures, maps** and **sources** numbered sequentially through each chapter.
 - (a) **Figures** include illustrations of artefacts such as tools, pottery, seals, coins, ornaments etc. as well as of inscriptions, sculptures, paintings, buildings, archaeological sites, plans and photographs of people and places; visual material that historians use as sources.
 - (b) Some chapters have **maps**.

Sources

(c) **Sources** are enclosed within separate boxes: these contain excerpts from a wide variety of texts and inscriptions. Both visual and textual sources will help you acquire a feel for the clues that historians use. You will also see how historians analyse these clues. **The final examination can include excerpts from and/or illustrations of identical/similar material, providing you with an opportunity to handle these.**

- ☑ There are *two* categories of **intext questions**:

(a) those within a yellow box, which may be used for practice for **evaluation**.

(b) those with the caption ➡ **Discuss...** which are **not for evaluation**

- ☑ There are **four types** of assignments at the end of each chapter:
These include:



short questions



short essays



map work



projects

These are meant to provide practice for the final assessment and evaluation.

Hope you enjoy using this book.