



**THEMES IN  
INDIAN HISTORY**

**PART II**

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Textbook in History  
for Class XII

# THEMES IN INDIAN HISTORY

PART II



12094



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

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### OFFICES OF THE PUBLICATION DIVISION, NCERT

NCERT Campus  
Sri Aurobindo Marg  
New Delhi 110 016

Phone : 011-26562708

108, 100 Feet Road  
Hosdakere Halli Extension  
Banashankari III Stage  
Bengaluru 560 085

Phone : 080-26725740

Navjivan Trust Building  
P.O. Navjivan  
Ahmedabad 380 014

Phone : 079-27541446

CWC Campus  
Opp. Dhankal Bus Stop  
Panihati  
Kolkata 700 114

Phone : 033-25530454

CWC Complex  
Maligaon  
Guwahati 781 021

Phone : 0361-2674869

### Publication Team

Head, Publication Division : Anup Kumar Rajput

Chief Editor : Shveta Uppal

Chief Production Officer : Arun Chitkara

Chief Business Manager : Vipin Dewan

Production Assistant : Prakash Veer Singh

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K. Varghese

## 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 Part II, of *Themes in Indian History*. Part III will follow.

NEELADRI BHATTACHARYA  
Chief Advisor, History

# TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

## CHAIRPERSON, ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Hari Vasudevan, *Professor*, Department of History, University of Calcutta, Kolkata

## CHIEF ADVISOR

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

## ADVISORS

Kumkum Roy, *Associate Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi  
Monica Juneja, *Guest Professor*, Institut Furgeschichte, Vienna, Austria

## TEAM MEMBERS

Jaya Menon, *Reader*, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University,  
Aligarh, UP (Theme 1)  
Kumkum Roy (Theme 2)  
Kunal Chakrabarti, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (Theme 3)  
Uma Chakravarti, *Formerly Reader in History*, Miranda House,  
University of Delhi, Delhi (Theme 4)  
Farhat Hassan, *Reader*, Department of History,  
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP (Theme 5)  
Meenakshi Khanna, *Reader in History*, Indraprastha College,  
University of Delhi, Delhi (Theme 6)  
Vijaya Ramaswamy, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (Theme 7)  
Rajat Datta, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (Theme 8)  
Najaf Haider, *Associate Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi (Theme 9)  
Neeladri Bhattacharya (Theme 10)  
Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Executive Editor*, *The Telegraph*, Kolkata (Theme 11)  
Partho Dutta, *Reader*, Department of History, Zakir Hussain College  
(Evening Classes), University of Delhi, Delhi (Theme 12)  
Ramachandra Guha, *freelance writer*, anthropologist and historian,  
Bangalore (Theme 13)  
Anil Sethi (Theme 14)  
Sumit Sarkar, *Formerly Professor of History*, University of Delhi, Delhi (Theme 15)  
Muzaffar Alam, *Professor of South Asian History*,  
University of Chicago, Chicago, USA  
C.N. Subramaniam, *Eklavya*, Kothi Bazar, Hoshangabad  
Rashmi Paliwal, *Eklavya*, Kothi Bazar, Hoshangabad  
Prabha Singh, *P.G.T. History*, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Old Cantt.,  
Teliarganj, Allahabad, UP  
Smita Sahay Bhattacharya, *P.G.T. History*, Blue Bells School,  
Kailash Colony, New Delhi  
Beeba Sobti, *P.G.T. History*, Modern School, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi

## MEMBER-COORDINATORS

Anil Sethi, *Professor*, DESSH, NCERT, New Delhi  
Seema Shukla Ojha, *Lecturer*, DESSH, NCERT, New Delhi

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Finally, we look forward to feedback from the users of the book, which will help us improve it in subsequent editions.

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## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is Part II of *Themes in Indian History*. Part III will follow.

- ✓ 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.*